TRANSITION SIGNALS

What are transition signals?
Transition signals are linking words or phrases that connect your ideas and add cohesion to your writing. They signpost or indicate to the reader the relationships between sentences and between paragraphs, making it easier for the reader to understand your ideas. We use a variety of transition signals to fulfill a number of functions. Some of these functions include: to show the order or sequence of events; to indicate that a new idea or an example will follow; to show that a contrasting idea will be presented, or to signal a summary or a conclusion.

How are transition signals useful?
Transition signals will:
• make it easier for the reader to follow your ideas.
• create powerful links between sentences and paragraphs to improve the flow of information across the whole text. The result is that the writing is smoother.
• help to carry over a thought from one sentence to another, from one idea to another or from one paragraph to another.

How are transition signals used?
• Transition signals are usually placed at the start of sentences; however, they may also appear in the middle or end of sentences.
• A transition signal, or the clause introduced by a transition signal, is usually separated from the rest of the sentence by commas.
• You DO NOT need to use transition signals in every sentence in a paragraph; however, good use of transition words will help to make the relationship between the ideas in your writing clear and logical.

Which transition signals can I use?
Before choosing a particular transition signal to use, be sure you understand its meaning and usage completely and be sure that it’s the right match for the logic in your paper. Transition signals all have different meanings, nuances, and connotations.

• To introduce an example:
specifically in this case to illustrate for instance
for example one example of this is to demonstrate on this occasion

• To introduce an opposite idea or show exception:
alternatively in contrast on the other hand but
despite in spite of still instead
whereas even though nevertheless while
however one could also say yet
- To show agreement:
  accordingly   in accordance with

- To introduce an additional idea:
  additionally   as well as   in addition   again
  also         besides     moreover     equally important
  and           furthermore  one could also say  further
  and then

- To indicate sequence or order, or logically divide an idea:
  after     eventually    previously    next
  finally  first        second      third
  at this point followed by subsequently simultaneously
  at this time last        concurrently ultimately
  before    meanwhile    and then

- To indicate time:
  after     earlier    previously    later
  at this point finally    prior to    formerly
  soon      at this time immediately then
  before    initially    thereafter    during

- To compare:
  likewise    like       just like    another way to view this
  by comparison balanced against whereas    while
  similarly

- To contrast:
  a different view is even so   nevertheless    yet
  balanced against in contrast  still       however
  but          on the contrary  unlike    notwithstanding
  conversely  on the other hand differing from

- To show cause and effect:
  and so        consequently    therefore    as a consequence
  as a result   for this reason   thus       hence
To summarise or conclude:

- as a result
- in conclusion
- therefore
- as shown
- in other words
- thus
- consequently
- in summary
- to conclude
- finally
- on the whole
- to summarise
- hence
- summing up
- ultimately
- in brief

Example

The example below illustrates how transition signals can be used to improve the quality of a piece of writing. Note how the ideas flow more smoothly and the logical relationships between the ideas are expressed clearly.

At HELPS, we endeavour to support UTS students in a number of ways. First, we offer 15-minute ‘drop in’ sessions with a HELPS Advisor. Making an appointment for these sessions is not necessary. Here, students can gain assistance with their academic writing and presentation skills. Specifically, students may ask for assistance with: understanding an assignment question; understanding assessment criteria; clarifying an assignment type (e.g. what’s a literature review?); planning for an assignment; strategies for effective reading/ note-taking skills; and obtaining information from self-study resources. During this time, the HELPS Advisor may refer students for a longer, 40-minute consultation. Students cannot, however, book one-to-one advice sessions online; only a HELPS Advisor can do that.

Getting one-to-one advice is an opportunity for an in-depth discussion with a HELPS Advisor in relation to your specific needs on an assessment. For example, you may require assistance preparing for an oral presentation. Alternatively, you may ask a HELPS Advisor to discuss a draft of an assignment to ensure that you have addressed the assessment criteria. While HELPS Advisors cannot edit your work, they can point out persistent errors in your text and show you how to correct these. In other words, they can help you to edit your own work. In addition, they can help you to prepare for an IELTS exam.

In brief, there are many ways that HELPS can support UTS students. Students are encouraged to drop by the HELPS office which is situated in Building 1, level 3, room 8 (opposite the Careers Service).

Sources:
