

UTS:HELPS

HIGHER EDUCATION LANGUAGE AND PRESENTATION SUPPORT

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.

Sources:

The Learning Centre 2013, *Transition signals in writing*, UNSW, viewed 20 September 2013, < <https://student.unsw.edu.au/transition-signals-writing>>.

UniLearning 2000, *Transition signals*, UOW, viewed 20 September 2013, < <http://unilearning.uow.edu.au/effective/6c.html>>.

