What are transition signals?

Transition signals are connecting words or phrases that strengthen the internal cohesion of your writing. Transition signals act like bridges between parts of your writing. They link your sentences and paragraphs together smoothly so that they flow and there are no abrupt jumps or breaks between ideas.

Transition signals also act like signposts making it easier for the reader to follow your ideas. They help carry over a thought from one sentence to another, from one paragraph to another, or between separate sentences, paragraphs or topics.

There are several types of transition signals. Some lead your reader forward and imply the building of an idea or thought, while others make your reader compare ideas or draw conclusions from the preceding thoughts.

Sample text

During [1] the early twentieth century, in addition [4] to industrialisation, urban growth and technological development, Australian society was experiencing a transformation of the domestic ideal. Consequently [5], people were subject to an increasing array of government and professional programs aiming to manage and regulate life, particularly [6] family life. Some of these programs were designed to counter social changes, others were designed to engineer them; overall [2] they each heralded a growing expert encroachment into the private sphere.

Intervention and influence took three forms [3]. Firstly [3], techniques designed to maximise efficiency were introduced into the home and scientific principles were applied to its design. In addition [4], housework and parenting methods were scrutinised and subject to unprecedented standards. Secondly [3], all aspects of reproduction attracted increasing intervention from government and the medical profession. Thirdly [3], state, professional and philanthropic groups began to usurp the parental role within the family through instruction and policy. Ultimately [2], the development of ‘modern’ social ideals brought regulation, intervention and ever-increasing unrealistic standards.

The following words and phrases can be used to indicate transitions and to cue your reader about how ideas are logically connected in your writing. This list is also helpful for providing alternative options if you find yourself constantly using the same linking word or phrase.

**To indicate sequence or to logically order ideas**

- first, second, third etc.
- followed by
- then
before, after
next, finally
previously, subsequently
initially, followed by
concurrently
at that time

To refer to a specific incident or example
for example
to illustrate
for instance
in the case of case
specifically
namely
in this case
such as
on this occasion
notably

To provide emphasis or indicate importance
indeed
above all
especially
particularly
crucially

To indicate time
thereafter
initially
at that/this point
immediately
finally
simultaneously
before, after
then, later
at that/ this time
formerly
meanwhile
prior to
previously
during
at present

To compare and/ or contrast

To compare:
• on the one hand
• conversely
• while
• similarly
• correspondingly
• whereas
• in the same way
• similar to

To contrast:
• in contrast
• on the other hand
• unlike
• a different view is
• on the contrary
• differing from
• however
• balanced against
• by/ in comparison
• (and) yet

To indicate result or cause and effect

as a result (of this)
consequently
as a consequence
therefore
thus
hence
accordingly
for this reason
because (of this)
so much (so) that

To introduce a similar idea
simply
equally
in the same way
likewise

To add another idea or more information
in addition
furthermore
besides
also
it could also be said
additionally
another
further
moreover

To introduce an opposite idea, to show exception or concession
alternatively
however
on the other hand
it could also be said that
in contrast
instead
whereas
nevertheless
despite/in spite of (this)
even though
admittedly
nonetheless
albeit
notwithstanding (this)
although
regardless (of this)
(and) yet
on the contrary

To give an example
take the case of
for example
for instance
in this case
to demonstrate

To identify or clarify
that is (to say)
namely
specifically
thus
in other words

To summarise or conclude
finally
in brief
on the whole
overall
therefore
in conclusion
in other words
thus
consequently
as a result
ultimately
in summary
hence
to summarise