

## Writing Resource: Transitions

**Transitions** are signal words that help your readers follow the direction of your thoughts and recognize when you are moving from one supporting idea to the next. Transitions show the relationship between ideas, connecting one thought to the next within and between paragraphs. They can be compared to road signs that guide travelers from one point to another on their way to the final destination.

**Note:** Whereas a paragraph might use a one-word or short phrase transition between ideas, an essay generally requires transitional sentences to begin a new paragraph: The transitional sentence (topic sentence) refers back to the idea in the preceding paragraph and connects that to your next point.

### Examples:

Not only does fear of outsiders lead to prejudice and discrimination, it ultimately leads people to hate and blame those they regard as the source of their anxiety. (Factors)

Although one would think America had learned from the mistaken assumptions that led to the Japanese-American relocation camps, society seems ready to repeat the past when it comes to Muslim Americans. (Episodes)

**Addition signals** (to move from one idea to the next):

first of all, for one thing, to begin with, second, also, next, another, in addition, moreover, furthermore, third, not only ... but ..., finally, last of all

**Time signals** (to move from one point in time to the next; chronological movement, as in a story):

first, then, next, after, as, before, while, meanwhile, now, during, finally

**Space signals** (to show location):

next to, across, on the opposite side, against, to the left, to the right, behind, in front, in back, above, below, nearby, on top, beside

**Change of direction of thought** (to make a contrasting point):

but, however, yet, in contrast, otherwise, on the other hand, still, although, nevertheless

**Illustration signals** (to lead into an example, instance, or illustration of your point):

for example, for instance, specifically, to illustrate, once, such as, one time, another time, this can be seen in/by

**Conclusion signals** (to signal that you are wrapping up your ideas and concluding):

therefore, consequently, thus, as a result, in summary, to conclude, as we/one can see, surely

**Example:** From these shameful episodes in our nation's past, one can see that fear of misperceived threat has always silenced liberty.