Transitions

The transitions you build between sentences will help readers follow the logical connections you are making from one idea to the next. Transitions can be as small as repeating a key word from the previous sentence to remind your reader what you’ve been talking about or using pointing words like “this” and “that” to emphasize a connection between the previous sentence and the new one. In addition, the fabulous variety of transitional words and phrases available to you, will allow you to pinpoint the exact logic that connects two or more sentences, two or more paragraphs, two or more writers.

When one sentence echoes or builds on the ideas of the previous sentences, try: similarly, in the same way, furthermore, moreover, in addition

Example: Writer 1 argues that only by contributing to our community can we develop ourselves as individuals. Moreover, she points to specific ways in which community involvement creates a healthy sense of personal identity.

Example: Writer 1 argues that only by contributing to our community can we develop ourselves as individuals. Similarly, Writer 2 demonstrates the rewards of community involvement through his life story.

When a sentence introduces an idea that is contrasting or contradictory to the previous sentence, try: in contrast, on the other hand, however, rather instead, although, whereas

Example: Writer 1 argues that only by contributing to our community can we develop ourselves as individuals. However, she also points to the numerous ways in which our culture rewards individual achievement over community activism.

Example: Whereas Writer 1 argues that only by contributing to our community can we develop ourselves as individuals, Writer 2 shows the identity crisis that can result when a person becomes overly invested in community and family life.

When a sentence introduces an idea that is a result or consequence of the previous sentence, try: accordingly, consequently, hence, therefore, as a result, thus, thereby

Example: Writer 1 argues that only by contributing to our community can we develop ourselves as individuals. Therefore, he claims, we must learn to reject the cult of celebrity and embrace a culture of activism and involvement.

Example: Writer 1 argues that only by contributing to our community can we develop ourselves as individuals. Accordingly, as Writer 2 points out, the time spent cooking for
the church bake sale or knocking on doors for a political campaign is adding to our personal enrichment.

When a sentence gives an example that illustrates the ideas in the previous sentence, try: for example, for instance, specifically, in particular

Example: Writer 1 argues that only by contributing to our community can we develop ourselves as individuals. In particular, she advocates getting to know every single neighbor within a one-block radius.

Example: Writer 1 argues that only by contributing to our community can we develop ourselves as individuals. For instance, as Writer 2 demonstrates, building houses with Habitat for Humanity volunteers did more to heal his personal grief than years of soul-searching.

Sample Exercise Sequence:

1. Take two simple sentences and practice joining them using some of the following conjunctions:
   
   Aunt Nancy has Alzheimer's disease.
   
   (and)
   
   Aunt Nancy prays.
   
   Conjunctions: and, but, for, or, so, yet
   
   What happens to the logical relationship between these two sentences when you change the conjunction?

2. Try the same exercise using two sentences based on the reading you are doing.

3. Now see what happens when you connect two sentences (or two writers) using the following transition words:
   
   whereas, because, although, while, if, just as, even though
   
   For example, which transition words best connect the following sentences?
   
   Mike Rose tried to limit his achievement.
   
   Gary Soto dreamed of achieving the perfect family he saw on TV.

4. Create 4-5 sentences based on class readings and using some of the following transition words:
besides, furthermore, moreover, in addition
likewise, similarly, in the same way
however, nevertheless, still nonetheless, otherwise, instead, in contrast, on the other hand
accordingly, consequently, hence, therefore, as a result,
thus, thereby,
for example, for instance, in particular
meanwhile, then, subsequently, afterward, earlier, later

5. Choose two sentences from your draft that involve two different writers and see what happens when you connect them using some of the transition words on this page.