

# Teaching Students to Use Transitional Words



As teachers, we play a vital role in equipping our students with the tools and skills they need to become effective communicators. Teaching transitional words and phrases to upper elementary students can significantly improve their writing skills and help them express ideas more effectively.

Transition words and phrases improve writing flow by linking ideas, sentences, and paragraphs. They show relationships that help readers understand thoughts and concepts. Transitions may connect, contrast, show cause/effect, indicate order, and several other associations. Using transitions helps writing flow. Disconnected ideas turn into a unified whole. They prepare readers for what is coming next.

In alignment with the Common Core standards, students are encouraged to use various transitional words and phrases to manage the sequence of events and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.

### **Common Core**

Common Core addresses transitional words in the writing standards.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.3.C

Use a variety of transitional words and phrases to manage the sequence of events.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3.C

Use a variety of transitional words, phrases, and clauses to manage the sequence of events.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.2.C

Use appropriate transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.

While the standards are similar throughout the grade levels, each level adds additional components that students must master. Fourth and fifth graders should use transitions when writing a sequence; however, fifth graders use clauses in addition to words and phrases. Sixth graders begin adding other types of relationships. Think cause/effect, compare/contrast, add an example, etc.

**Hook Activity:** Show students the cards with short, choppy sentences and ask them to identify what is missing. Ask leading questions, encouraging students to suggest that a passage written with this type of sentence would be boring and challenging to read. Students will use these cards again in Activity 3.

### **Activity 1: Videos**

Sometimes, a little multimedia magic can truly captivate students' attention and deepen their understanding. In this activity, I recommend showcasing two videos: "Transition Words in Reading and Writing" and "Transitions by Shmoop."

These videos artfully explain the importance of transition words while providing examples that resonate with students.

**Transition Words in Reading and Writing** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7aksqJCgAMA> [5:36]

**Transitions by Shmoop** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v3OZn29K93> [3:20]

### **Activity 2: Resource Booklet**

I have prepared a concise and practical resource booklet. This eight-page booklet is a go-to guide for your students, providing them with a handy reference for selecting appropriate transitional words and phrases. Print the booklet for students. This short [resource booklet](#) requires only two pieces of paper plus an optional cover to print, yet it will be a valuable reference guide for your students when writing.

**Note:** The resource booklet was created with a different program, so I could not add it to the "Student Packet." You can get it two ways:

1. Click on the link provided.

### **2. I have merged this pdf with the booklet pdf. You will find it at the end of this document.**

The book may be printed and glued into an interactive notebook, placed in front of a writing journal, or dropped into a page protector sleeve and clipped into a three-ring binder.

Instruct students to use the booklet as a reference when they need to find appropriate transition words or phrases while writing. Encourage students to use a variety of transition words. Sometimes two words and phrases mean the same thing. Instead of repeating a phrase repeatedly, students can use slight variations. The word lists featured in the booklet will help students select alternate words and phrases.

### **Activity 3: Sorting and Rewriting**

Provide students with the handout "Examples of How Transitions Can Clarify the Meaning." Instruct students to work individually, with partners, or in small groups to sort the cards into the five categories on the handout: sequence, add information, contrast, cause and effect, and emphasis. Have students combine the short choppy sentences by adding a transition word from the respective category.

Remind students to refer to the resource booklet from Activity 2 for suggestions on transitional words to incorporate.

#### **Activity 4: Transitional Words Practice**

Reinforce students' understanding of transitional words through a cloze exercise. The provided cloze sentences prompt students to select the most fitting transitional word or phrase from a given word bank. This activity encourages students to think about the relationships between ideas and helps solidify their knowledge of transition usage.

By engaging students with captivating videos, providing practical resources, and offering interactive activities, students will gain a deeper understanding of transitional words and phrases, develop their skills in using them effectively, and enhance the overall quality of their writing.

Get ready to witness the magic of transitional words unfold in your classroom!

## Activity #3 Sample Answer Key

### Example 1 [Sequence]:

I opened the door. I stepped outside. **Revised:** I opened the door, and then I stepped outside.  
She packed her bag. She left for school. **Revised:** She packed her bag and then left for school.  
The bell rang. The students lined up. **Revised:** The bell rang, and the students lined up.  
He studied hard. He passed the test. **Revised:** He studied hard, and as a result, he passed the test.

### Example 2 [Add Information]:

The cake looked delicious. I took a slice. **Revised:** The cake looked delicious, so I took a slice.  
The sun was shining. We went for a walk. **Revised:** The sun was shining, so we went for a walk.

### Example 3 [Contrast]:

It was a hot day. I wore a jacket. **Revised:** It was a hot day, but I wore a jacket.  
She loves pizza. She's allergic to cheese. **Revised:** She loves pizza, despite being allergic to cheese.

### Example 4 [Cause/Effect]:

He forgot his umbrella. He got wet in the rain. **Revised:** He forgot his umbrella, so he got wet in the rain.  
The students studied hard. They scored well on the test. **Revised:** The students studied hard, and as a result, they scored well on the test.

### Example 5 [Emphasis]:

The movie was hilarious. It made us laugh out loud. **Revised:** The movie was hilarious; it made us laugh out loud.  
The roller coaster was thrilling. It gave me an adrenaline rush. **Revised:** The roller coaster was thrilling, giving me an adrenaline rush.  
She loves to dance. She's incredibly talented. **Revised:** She loves to dance, and she's incredibly talented.  
The thunderstorm was intense. It frightened the children. **Revised:** The thunderstorm was intense, which frightened the children.  
He practiced basketball every day. He became a skilled player. **Revised:** He practiced basketball every day, and as a result, he became a skilled player.  
The book was captivating. It kept me engaged till the end. **Revised:** The book was captivating, keeping me engaged till the end.

## Activity 4: Transitional Words Practice Answer Key

Use the word bank and type of transition clue to complete the sentences.

consequently	afterward	specifically	therefore
undoubtedly	in conclusion	in the same way	furthermore

Type of Transition	
Sequencing/Order	My family went to see the play <i>Shrek</i> , and <b>afterward</b> , we drove two hours to get back home.
Add an Idea	Recycling is good for our landfills; <b>furthermore</b> , it helps save natural resources.
Problems and Solutions	Jane could argue for hours; <b>consequently</b> , it made more sense to submit to her wishes.
Summarizing	<b>In conclusion</b> , Sam asked his mother if she would like to visit the Grand Canyon.
To Give an Example	There is no reason to fear insects – <b>specifically</b> ladybugs that eat aphids and do not hurt humans.
Compare/ Contrast	There is no reason why an electrician should also be a good carpenter. <b>In the same way</b> , a carpenter can be a bad electrician.
For Emphasis	The large size of the Ostrich is <b>undoubtedly</b> why it can't fly.
Cause and Effect	He forgot his homework at home; <b>therefore</b> , he received a lower grade.

# Examples of How Transitions Can Clarify the Meaning

## Example 1 [Sequence]

Stephen picked up John **before** stopped by McDonald's for lunch.  
Stephen picked up John **after** he stopped by McDonald's for lunch

## Example 2 [Add Information]

I eat green beans **because** they are healthy, **but** I hate them.

## Example 3 [Contrast]

We went to the fair, **in spite of the fact** that the weather was too cold to make it fun.

## Example 4 [Cause/Effect]

**Because** it is raining today, we are not going to school.  
It is snowing today. **As a result**, we are not going to school.  
It is snowing today. **Consequently**, we are not going to school.  
It is snowing today. **That is why**, we are not going to school.  
It is snowing today; **therefore**, we are not going to school.

## Example 5 [Emphasis]

Meghan decided not to go to the beach. **In fact**, she told me, "No, way."

# Student Packet





<p>I opened the door. I stepped outside.</p>	<p>The students studied hard. They scored well on the test.</p>	<p>The bell rang. The students lined up.</p>	<p>It was a hot day. I wore a jacket.</p>
<p>The roller coaster was thrilling. It gave me an adrenaline rush.</p>	<p>He practiced basketball every day. He became a skilled player.</p>	<p>He forgot his umbrella. He got wet in the rain</p>	<p>The cake looked delicious. I took a slice.</p>
<p>He studied hard. He passed the test.</p>	<p>She loves to dance. She's incredibly talented.</p>	<p>She packed her bag. She left for school.</p>	<p>The thunderstorm was intense. It frightened the children.</p>
<p>The book was captivating. It kept me engaged till the end.</p>	<p>The sun was shining. We went for a walk.</p>	<p>The movie was hilarious. It made us laugh out loud.</p>	<p>She loves pizza. She's allergic to cheese.</p>

## Activity 3: Sorting and Rewriting

### Examples of How Transitions Can Clarify the Meaning

#### Example 1 [Sequence]

Stephen picked up John **before** stopping by McDonald's for lunch.

Stephen picked up John **after** he stopped by McDonald's for lunch

#### Example 2 [Add Information]

I eat green beans **because** they are healthy, **but** I hate them.

#### Example 3 [Contrast]

We went to the fair, **even though** the weather was too cold to make it fun.

#### Example 4 [Cause/Effect]

**Because** it is raining today, we are not going to school.

It is snowing today. **As a result**, we are not going to school.

It is snowing today. **Consequently**, we are not going to school.

It is snowing today. **That is why** we are not going to school.

It is snowing today; **therefore**, we are not going to school.

#### Example 5 [Emphasis]

Meghan decided not to go to the beach. **In fact**, she told me, "No, way."

## Activity 4: Transitional Words Practice

Use the word bank and type of transition clue to complete the sentences.

consequently

afterward

specifically

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in conclusion

in the same way

furthermore

Type of Transition	
Sequencing/Order	My family went to see the play <i>Shrek</i> , and _____, we drove two hours to get back home.
Add an Idea	Recycling is good for our landfills; _____, it helps save natural resources.
Problems and Solutions	Jane could argue for hours; _____, it made more sense to submit to her wishes.
Summarizing	_____, Sam asked his mother if she would like to visit the Grand Canyon.
To Give an Example	There is no reason to fear insects – _____ ladybugs that eat aphids and do not hurt humans.
Compare/ Contrast	There is no reason why an electrician should also be a good carpenter. _____, a carpenter can be a bad electrician.
For Emphasis	The large size of the Ostrich is _____ why it can't fly.
Cause and Effect	He forgot his homework at home; _____, he received a lower grade.

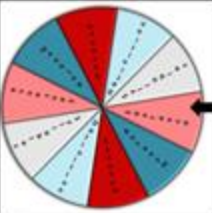
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S T U V W X  
Y Z

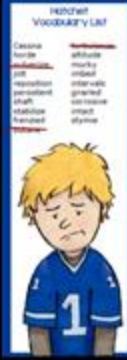
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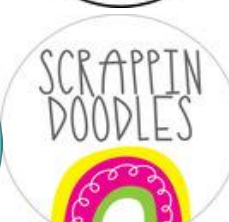
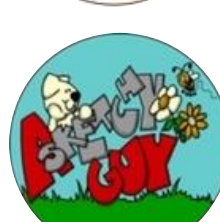
Play with any vocabulary list.

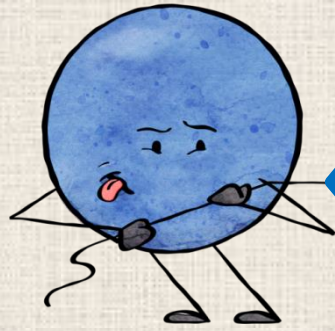


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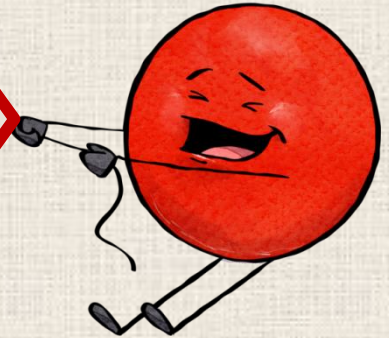




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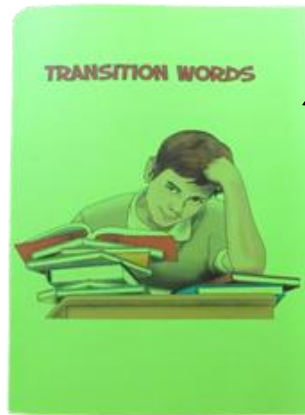


[Book Units Teacher Blog](#)



# Making the Mini-Book

I recommend that you duplicate the cover onto construction paper or card stock. Standard construction paper is 9 by 12 inches which makes the cover a bit larger than the pages inside.



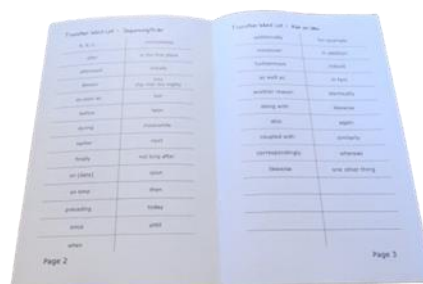
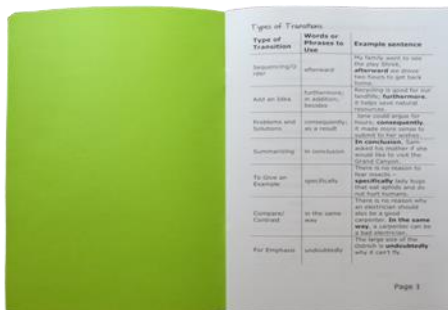
This book cover was printed on standard sized copier paper which will work equally well if you do not have a copier that will print construction paper.

Your pages must be duplicated on the front and the back. I ran my pages front and back directly from the printer. This is a simple process with only a few pages. Simply place the page that has been printed on one side back into the printer for the reverse side to be printed. Once all the pages have been printed arrange them in numerical order and staple down the middle to form the book.



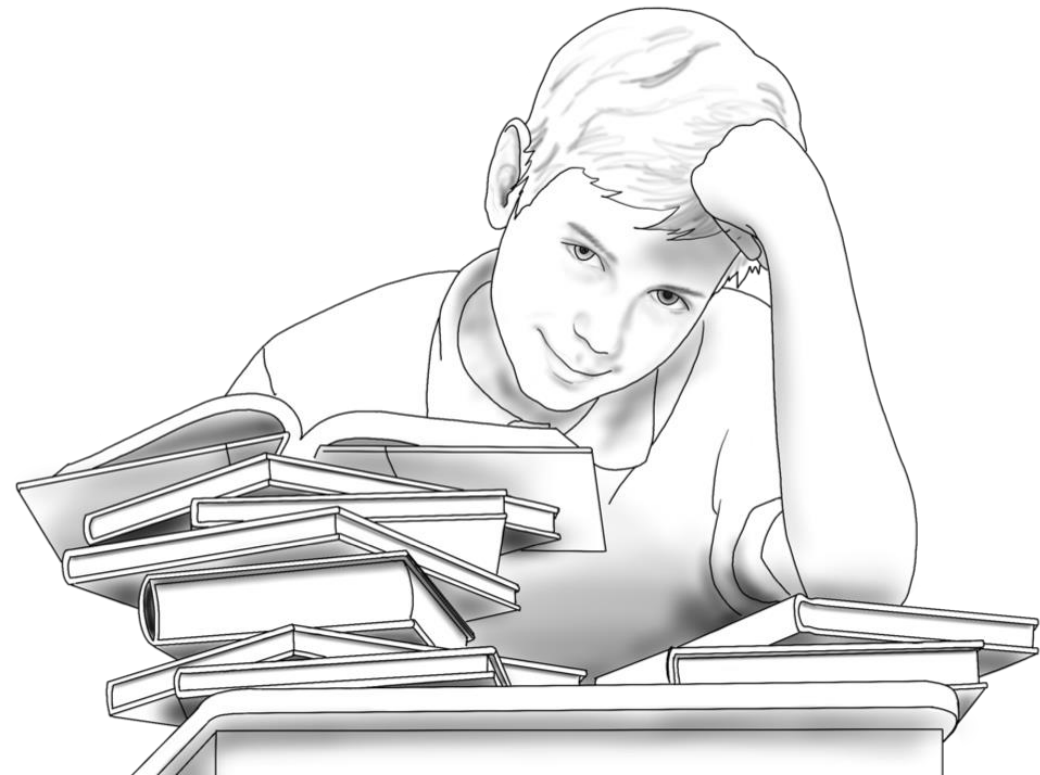
To print the 8 page resource book back-to-front follow this guide:

- Pages 8 & 1 front with Pages 2 & 7 on back
- Pages 6 & 3 front with Pages 4 & 5 on back

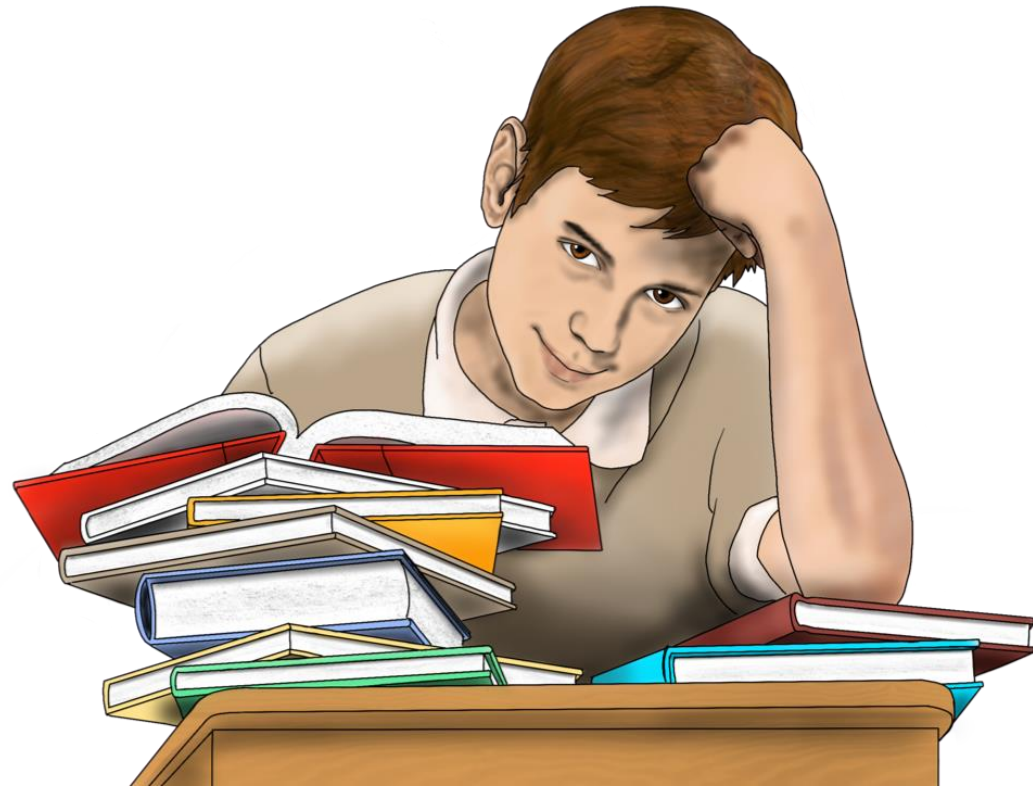




# TRANSITION WORDS



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## Transition Word List - For Emphasis

admittedly	granted
above all	generally speaking
as a rule	for the most part
as usual	in this situation
assuredly	no doubt (undoubtedly)
certainly	obviously
chiefly	of course
especially	ordinarily
particularly	unquestionably
singularly	usually

## Types of Transitions

Type of Transition	Words or Phrases to Use	Example sentence
Sequencing/Order	afterward	My family went to see the play <i>Shrek</i> , <b>afterward</b> we drove two hours to get back home.
Add an Idea	furthermore; in addition; besides	Recycling is good for our landfills; <b>furthermore</b> , it helps save natural resources.
Problems and Solutions	consequently; as a result	Jane could argue for hours; <b>consequently</b> , it made more sense to submit to her wishes.
Summarizing	in conclusion	<b>In conclusion</b> , Sam asked his mother if she would like to visit the Grand Canyon.
To Give an Example	specifically	There is no reason to fear insects – <b>specifically</b> lady bugs that eat aphids and do not hurt humans.
Compare/Contrast	in the same way	There is no reason why an electrician should also be a good carpenter. <b>In the same way</b> , a carpenter can be a bad electrician.
For Emphasis	undoubtedly	The large size of the Ostrich is <b>undoubtedly</b> why it can't fly.

## Transition Word List - Sequencing/Order

A, B, C . . . .	immediately
after	in the first place
afterward	initially
always	into (far into the night)
as soon as	last
before	later
during	meanwhile
earlier	next
finally	not long after
on [date]	soon
on time	then
preceding	today
since	until
when	

## Transition Word List - Compare and Contrast

Compare	Contrast
also	but
both	however
too	while
same (the same as)	although (although most)
as	instead
as well as	yet
like (likewise)	unless
alike	differ (different)
most important	unlike
have in common	whereas
similar (similarly)	on the other hand
resemble	even though
in the same manner (in the same way)	in contrast

## Transition Word List - To Give an Example

especially	for one thing
chiefly	as an illustration
for/as an example	illustrated with/by
for instance	in this case
specifically	this can be seen in
in fact	such as
in particular (particularly)	including
markedly	namely

## Transition Word List - Add an Idea

additionally	for example
moreover	in addition
furthermore	indeed
as well as	in fact
another reason	identically
along with	likewise
also	again
coupled with	similarly
correspondingly	whereas
likewise	one other thing

## Transition Word List - Problems and Solutions

answer	in order to
as a result [of] (resulting in)	leads to
because (because of)	one answer is
solved	the reason for (the reason was)
cause	one solution is
consequently	was responsible
clues	problem
dilemma is	question is
if...then...	question/answer
since	the puzzle is
so that	brought about
due to	therefore
on account of	to solve this...
the outcome was	this led to . . . so

## Transition Word List - Summarizing

after all	in any event
all in all	in brief
all things considered	in conclusion
briefly	in essence
by and large	indeed
hence	on the whole
in any case	overall
on balance	to put it differently
that is (that is to say)	to sum up (to summarize)
therefore	indeed
in any event	on the whole
in brief	overall
in conclusion	

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