Transitional Devices

Transitional devices are like bridges between parts of your paper. They are cues that help the reader interpret ideas as a paper develops. Transitional devices are words or phrases that help carry a thought from one sentence to another, from one idea to another, or from one paragraph to another. And finally, transitional devices link sentences and paragraphs together smoothly so that there are no abrupt jumps or breaks between ideas.

There are several types of transitional devices, and each category leads readers to make certain connections or assumptions. Some lead readers forward and imply the building of an idea or thought, while others make readers compare ideas or draw conclusions from the preceding thoughts.

Here is a list of some common transitional devices that can be used to cue readers in a given way (with an example for each represented in italics):

**To Add:** and, again, and then, besides, equally important, finally, further, furthermore, nor, too, next, lastly, what's more, moreover, in addition, first (second, etc.)

*Texas School for the Deaf is perfectly located. Moreover, it has a strong academic program. For example, the school has a preschool program where both deaf and hearing children learn together.*

**To Compare:** whereas, but, yet, on the other hand, however, nevertheless, on the contrary, by comparison, where, compared to, up against, balanced against, vis a vis, but, although, conversely, meanwhile, after all, in contrast, although this may be true

*Compared to seven years ago when the printer worked well, it has been "ill" a great deal of the time in recent weeks.*

**To Prove:** naturally, because, for, since, for the same reason, obviously, evidently, furthermore, moreover, besides, indeed, in fact, in addition, in any case, that is

*Naturally, Steven is not going to agree with that plan. In fact, he thinks that the idea of setting up a business selling scarves on K Street would surely fail.*

**To Show Exception:** yet, still, however, nevertheless, in spite of, despite, of course, once in a while, sometimes

*Amber, Sharon, and Megan went to Busch Gardens for the day. In spite of the cold weather, they enjoyed themselves.*

**To Show Time:** while, immediately, thereafter, soon, after a few hours, finally, then, later, previously, formerly, first (second, etc.), next, and then

*While Missy was driving to work, she saw a deer by the roadside. She slowed down to watch the deer for a short time, then continued on her way to work.*
To Repeat: in brief, as I have said, as I have noted, as has been noted
In other words, it was a mess.

To Emphasize: definitely, extremely, obviously, in fact, indeed, in any case, absolutely, positively, naturally, surprisingly, always, forever, perennially, eternally, never, emphatically, unquestionably, without a doubt, certainly, undeniably, without reservation
Undeniably, our presence at the conference made a difference to the public face of our organization.

To Show Sequence: first, second, third, and so forth. A, B, C, and so forth. next, then, following this, at this time, now, at this point, after, afterward, subsequently, finally, consequently, previously, before this, simultaneously, concurrently, thus, therefore, hence, next, and then, soon
An exhibition of works by Monet was held concurrently with the conference.

To Give an Example: for example, for instance, in this case, in another case, on this occasion, in this situation, take the case of, to demonstrate, to illustrate, as an illustration, to illustrate
Many parents and students have been complaining about the Language Arts program. For example, scores on the end-of-term exams have gone down from last year; teachers are not very motivated; and everyone is frustrated. To sum up, some improvements in the middle school program need to be made.

To Summarize or Conclude: in brief, on the whole, summing up, as I have shown in, as I have said, hence, therefore, accordingly, thus, as a result, consequently
(From above) To sum up, some improvements in the middle school program need to be made.

In addition to simple transitions, here are some examples of sentences that need transitions because they fail to show connections between ideas, and the successful revisions that focus the reader on the logical connections:

Example: Overall, Management Systems International has logged increased sales in every sector, leading to a significant rise in third-quarter profits.
Another important thing to note is that the corporation had expanded its international influence.
Revision: Overall, Management Systems International has logged increased sales in every sector, leading to a significant rise in third-quarter profits.
These impressive profits are largely due to the corporation’s expanded international influence.

Example: Fearing for the loss of Danish lands, Christian IV signed the Treaty of Lubeck, effectively ending the Danish phase of the 30 Years War.
But then something else significant happened. The Swedish intervention began.
Revision: Fearing for the loss of more Danish lands, Christian IV signed the Treaty of Lubeck, effectively ending the Danish phase of the 30 Years War.
Shortly after Danish forces withdrew, the Swedish intervention began.

Example: Amy Tan became a famous author after her novel, The Joy Luck Club, skyrocketed up the bestseller list.
There are other things to note about Tan as well. Amy Tan also participates in the satirical garage band the Rock Bottom Remainders with Stephen King and Dave Barry.
Revision: Amy Tan became a famous author after her novel, The Joy Luck Club, skyrocketed up the bestseller list.
Though her fiction is well known, her work with the satirical garage band the Rock Bottom Remainders receives far less publicity.