

TRANSITIONAL DEVICES

There are two basic types of transitions, conjunctive adverbs and conjunctions. Another type of transition is called a referent. Transition words and phrases are used to clarify the relationships between sentences. Transitions can be divided into groups according to their functions.

Types of Conjunctive Adverbs

A conjunctive adverb modifies the action by creating logical connections in meaning between independent clauses. Unlike conjunctions, conjunctive adverbs are not always at the beginning of the clause.

1. Of addition

Examples:

- also, besides, furthermore, moreover, etc.
- The condo complex has tennis courts; *besides this*, it has an indoor pool.
- He must have got stopped at the border crossing; *otherwise*, he would have arrived by now.
- The lecturer had a monotonous voice; *furthermore*, he jumped from one idea to another so that the lecture was very difficult to follow.

2. Of contrast

Examples:

- however, still, nevertheless, conversely, nonetheless, instead, etc.
- The printers are on strike; registered students will, *nevertheless*, receive course packages on time.
- We were able to run only four courses; *still*, this compares favourably with other summer programmes.
- It's really cold today; we can't complain, *however*, as it's been mild overall.

3. Of comparison

Examples:

- similarly, likewise
- Paul went to Lakeland college; his daughter, *likewise*, did her studies there.
- Kate is engrossed in her dogs; Martha is *similarly* obsessed with her horses.

4. Of result

Examples:

- therefore, hence, thus, consequently, etc.
- He rarely produced a day's work; he *consequently* lost his job.

- Caffeine is a stimulant; *thus*, it can keep a person awake at night.
- We discovered Ida's activities were duplicating those of Marla; we, *therefore*, assigned Ida other tasks.

5. Of time

Examples:

- next, then, meanwhile, finally, subsequently, etc.
- The chairman will be late for the meeting; *meanwhile*, we're to hand out minutes of the last meeting to the board members.
- The network has crashed; *next*, the power will go off.
- First boil the water; *then*, pour it over the tea bag.

Types of Conjunctions

A conjunction is used to join words or groups of words.

1. Coordinating conjunctions

- join grammatically equivalent sentence elements

Examples:

- and, for, or, yet, but, nor, so
- Edmonton *and* Calgary are the two largest cities in Alberta. (*And* joins two nouns.)
- Look in the cupboard *or* in the drawer. (*Or* joins two phrases.)
- You can't do that kind of heavy work, *nor* should you be expected to. (*Nor* joins two clauses.)

2. Correlative conjunctions

- pairs of words that join words, phrases, and clauses of equivalent grammatical structure

Examples:

- both . . . and
either . . . or
neither . . . nor
not . . . but
not only . . . but (also)
whether . . . or
- *Both* Susan *and* Bill received their ten-year pin this year.
- *Either* you get a job *or* you go back to school.

- *Whether* you stay *or* leave is entirely your decision.

3. Subordinating conjunctions

These join clauses that are not equivalent grammatical structures. Subordinating conjunctions introduce dependent clauses. These clauses cannot stand by themselves but must be joined to a main or independent clause. The following is a list of words most often used as subordinating conjunctions:

after	even though	than	wherever
although	if	that	whether
as	in order that	though	which
as if	in order to	unless	while
as though	rather than	until	who
because	since	when	
before	so as to	whenever	
even if	so that	where	

4. Examples:

- *In order to* make feasible projections, we need to have reliable data.
- He's taller *than* you are.
- He looks *as if* he were about to cry.

Referents*

A referent is a noun or noun phrase that occurred earlier in the text and is subsequently referred to using words such as *it* or *this*.

Example: Traditionally, business simply meant exchange or trade for things people wanted or needed. Today, *it* has a more technical definition. (*it* refers to *business*.)

Example: However, there is one other important factor. *This factor* is the creation of profit or economic surplus. (*this factor* refers to the same concept — *one other important concept* — in the previous sentence.)

* This information on referents is adapted from Business Concepts for English Practice by Marianne McDougal Arden and Barbara Tolley Dowling.

Note: there are other words and phrases that can also be used as referents.