

Transitional Words and Phrases

Key Terms

- **transition:** a way to move from one idea to another
- **transitional word:** a word that helps shift from one idea to another
- **transitional phrase:** a phrase that helps shift from one idea to another
- **sequence:** the order in which something happened

Instruction

Good writers create a sense of order in their writing. They use words and phrases that help **transition** the reader from one idea to the next. A transition is a signal to the reader that the writer is moving on to the next idea. **Transitional words** and **transitional phrases** help shift from one idea to the next.

Transitional words and phrases can help show the **sequence** of events in writing. The sequence of events tells when something happened in time. It shows when one event happened in relation to another.

For example, you may need to tell about an important event. You will want to give the details in the order in which they happened in time. Time-order transitional words and phrases can help you do this. See the table below for examples.

Time-Order Transitional Words and Phrases			
about	immediately	today	when
after	finally	first	until
afterward	later	third	yesterday
at	last	second	as soon as
before	meanwhile	tomorrow	in the meantime
during	next	soon	at the same time

Transitional words and phrases can be used to tell narratives or describe recent events. Read the paragraph below and see how transitional words help explain narratives.

We played baseball at recess. When Susie was up to bat, she hit a double. Next up was Ryan. First, he swung and missed. Then, he hit a deep fly ball. He ran to second base. At the same time, Susie was able to score.

Writers also use transitional words and phrases to describe events from history. Read the paragraph below to learn about the history of baseball.

Baseball has been around for centuries. After the Civil War, the United States started the first professional baseball league. By the early 1900s, most large cities in the East had professional baseball teams. During this time, baseball teams were separated into the National League and the American League. At the end of each season, the winning teams in each league played against each other in the World Series. Currently, the leagues still play in the World Series each year.

Additionally, transitional words and phrases can be used to give instructions. Read the paragraph below to learn how to swing a bat.

First, pick a bat that is the right size and weight. Ask an adult for help with sizing. Second, put on your batting helmet. This will help protect your head. Next, you should “choke up” on the bat. This means to move your hands up a few inches on the handle of the bat. Then, you can get into the batter’s box near home plate. Finally, wait for a good pitch. When you see one, swing the bat as hard as you can.

Self Practice: Activity #1

Read the passage below. For each blank, add a transitional word from the word bank that helps show the sequence of events.

Word Bank				
finally	first	then	tomorrow	when

I remember my first baseball game. It didn't go as planned. _____, I had trouble putting on my cleats. _____, I somehow lost my baseball bat. I tried borrowing other players' bats, but they were too heavy. _____, I found one I liked. _____ I was up to bat, I swung so hard that I fell over. The only thing I hit that day was the dirt! _____, I have another game. I hope it goes better.

