Paragraphs: Connecting Your Ideas

The connecting words within and between paragraphs are known as **transition signals**. They may be single words or phrases. Transition words give your paragraph **coherence** (unity) and demonstrate your writing skills. Moreover, they help the reader of your work to know, for instance, that a sequence of ideas, additional information, an opposite idea, a result, or an example follows. You will need to know about:

1. Use of transition signals
2. Examples of transition signals and their meaning
3. Placement of transition signals

1. Use of transition signals

The TWO paragraphs below show how transition words provide logical organisation of your writing and enhance the meaning of your text. Paragraph 1 is written **WITHOUT** transition signals. Paragraph 2 is written **WITH** transition signals. While **BOTH** paragraphs give the same information, it is quite clear that paragraph 2 is easier to understand because the reader is led from one idea to the next by the use of transition signals.

**Paragraph 1 - WITHOUT transition words**

The concept of fairness is central to understanding plagiarism. Fairness means being fair both to yourself and others. Everybody both gives and receives their proper due, and nobody has anything to complain about. An incident involving unfairness could be taking someone else’s work and passing it off as your own. The person whose work has been taken receives no recognition or acknowledgment for their research and thinking. Writers who plagiarise are not being fair to themselves either because they are not developing their own independent academic skills. Students who do their own work with due acknowledgement of the work of others should develop their own academic skills and self-confidence far more than those who merely misuse the work of others.

(Adapted from UNE, 2010, Avoiding coursework plagiarism and academic misconduct: Advice for students.)

**Paragraph 2 - WITH transition words**

The concept of fairness is central to understanding plagiarism. Fairness means being fair both to yourself and others. **Moreover**, everybody both gives and receives their proper due, and nobody has anything to complain about. **For example**, an incident involving unfairness could be taking someone else’s work and passing it off as your own. **As a result**, the person whose work has been taken receives no recognition or acknowledgment for their research and thinking. **Furthermore**, writers who plagiarise are not being fair to themselves either because they are not developing their own independent academic skills. **Therefore**, students who do their own work with due acknowledgement of the work of others should develop their own academic skills and self-confidence far more than those who merely misuse the work of others.

(Adapted from UNE, 2010, Avoiding coursework plagiarism and academic misconduct: Advice for students.)
2. Examples of transition signals and their meaning

This table provides a few of the most commonly used transition words.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meaning/function</th>
<th>Examples of sentence connectors</th>
<th>Example sentence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To sequence your ideas</td>
<td>first(ly), second(ly), third(ly), next, then, after this, last(ly), finally, accordingly, meanwhile, henceforth</td>
<td>Students receive a plagiarism warning. After this, penalties apply.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To introduce an additional idea</td>
<td>also, furthermore, additionally, in addition, moreover, similarly, likewise, as well as, besides, another, too</td>
<td>... Students, moreover, are expected to seek mandatory counselling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To introduce an opposite idea or contrast</td>
<td>in contrast, conversely, alternatively, yet, although, even though, nevertheless, notwithstanding, however, on the other hand, whereas, while, instead, otherwise</td>
<td>... In contrast, inadvertent plagiarism attracts lesser penalties because the student is still learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To add a similar idea</td>
<td>comparatively, coupled with, correspondingly, identically, likewise, similar to, together with, equally</td>
<td>... Together with this, the university offers students counselling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To introduce an example or illustration</td>
<td>for example, such as, for instance, to demonstrate, namely, in particular, specifically</td>
<td>... Inadvertent plagiarism, for example, can be caused by poor paraphrasing skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To indicate a consequence or result</td>
<td>consequently, accordingly, as a result, hence, subsequently, therefore, thus, thereupon, as a consequence, for this reason, wherefore</td>
<td>The student submitted another student’s essay. As a result, they failed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To introduce a restatement or explanation</td>
<td>that is, in fact, indeed, namely, specifically, thus</td>
<td>... More specifically, it is argued that unauthorised use of information is ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To emphasise or clarify a point</td>
<td>even more, above all, indeed, more importantly, besides</td>
<td>... More importantly, the university wishes to assist its students to succeed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To draw to a close or summarise</td>
<td>to conclude, as a final point, , in brief, in conclusion, indeed, in short, in summary, finally, lastly</td>
<td>... Finally, the university is committed to monitoring all academic tasks to eradicate plagiarism.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Placement of transition signals

Transition signals are usually placed at the start of sentences; however, they may also appear in the middle or end of sentences. They are ALWAYS SEPARATED from the rest of the sentence by commas.

You DO NOT need to use transition words in every sentence in a paragraph; however, good use of transition words will help to make the relationship between the ideas in your writing clear and logical.