

General Writing

Skill 1 Transition Words and Phrases

Transition words and phrases connect your ideas. These transitions help your reader follow your ideas from one sentence to the next or from one paragraph to the next. Transition words can show sequence, degree, comparison and contrast, and cause and effect. They can also be used to add additional information or to refer to something mentioned before.

Useful words and phrases

Time	Degree	Cause and Effect
after	above all	as a result
at the same time	first, firstly	because
before	in the first place	because of
meanwhile	in the second place	consequently
next	less important	due to
since	most important	for this reason
soon	principally	owing to
then	primarily	since
while	second, secondly	so
	third, thirdly	so that
	to a lesser degree	therefore
		thus

Look for words and phrases from the above list in these examples.

Example 1

From my point of view, a new shopping mall in my neighborhood would bring more problems than benefits. First, during the construction period there will be a lot of noise and dirt at the construction site. Meanwhile, we will have to endure heavy construction vehicles traveling through the neighborhood at all hours. After the mall is completed, people will come from all over to shop there. As a result, traffic in our neighborhood will increase.

Example 2

In my opinion, earning a high salary is very important. In the first place, we need to be able to pay for our basic necessities, such as food and clothing. At the same time, we all like to have luxuries such as nice vacations, more comfortable houses, and maybe even private school for our children. Above all, a high salary is a measure of respect. It reflects your status at your place of work and within your profession.

Useful words and phrases

Comparison

also
at the same time as
both
in the same way
just as
like
likewise
similarly
similar to

Contrast

although/even though
but
different from
however
in contrast to
nevertheless
on the other hand
unlike
yet

Look for words and phrases from the above list in this example.

Example 3

Large schools offer students a variety of resources that are often not available at small schools. Small schools, however, offer children a greater sense of security. Older students might do well in larger schools. Young children, on the other hand, need the feeling of safety that a small school offers. Both large schools and small schools can provide children with a good education, but small schools are the better choice for young children.

Useful words and phrases

Explanation

for example
for instance
in other words
like
namely
such as
that is
to clarify
to illustrate

Adding More Information

also
as well as
besides
furthermore
in addition
moreover
what's more

Look for words and phrases from the above list in this example.

Example 4

I enjoy spending my vacations traveling from place to place. I like seeing what different cities look like. It is also fun to meet all different kinds of people. In addition, I like visiting a lot of different museums, parks, and other tourist sites. In other words, I want to see as much as possible when I travel.

Practice

Read the following paragraphs. Choose the appropriate transition word or phrase from the box below each paragraph. Use a capital letter where needed.

Children these days definitely spend too much time indoors. (1) _____, they are in school all day. (2) _____ when they get home, they stay inside doing their homework or watching television. This is one reason why children often have health problems. If they spent more time outdoors, (3) _____, they would be much healthier. They would have the opportunity to get all kinds of physical exercise (4) _____ playing sports or riding bicycles.

in the first place such as then on the other hand

Our school has a nice gym that is very large and in good condition. (5) _____ the gym, our library is in need of renovations. Many of the rooms could use a new coat of paint. (6) _____, a lot of things should be replaced. The elevators, (7) _____, are very old and often break down. (8) _____, I think we should spend money on fixing up the library.

unlike for example therefore furthermore

From my point of view, it is a very good idea for families to have pets. Children usually enjoy taking care of pets. (9) _____ they are feeding the cat or walking the dog, they are learning some important lessons about responsibility. (10) _____, they develop a sense of compassion. (11) _____, pets provide children with a special kind of companionship. (12) _____ I think every family should have at least one pet.

moreover while at the same time for these reasons