**Transitions**

Students sometimes write good essays, essays with a sense of organization, with some supporting examples and even good sentence structure. But something remains “wrong”; somehow the reader still has trouble following the flow of ideas. Almost always the problem is that the writer had neglected to connect his or her ideas. New thoughts, additional thoughts and further insights were never signaled to the reader by those unglamorous but crucial words, transitions.

Imagine yourself driving on a road in an unfamiliar area; suddenly, you notice that there are no street signs: no names, no yellow caution signs, no red stop signs—no road signs at all. Rare indeed is the driver who will get where he or she is going in a timely manner.

Writing without transitions is like driving without the help of road signs. Turns of thought are missed, continuation of argument is lost and alternate ways of seeing an idea become confused.

Transitions are words and phrases that connect one idea to another. They show relationships, such as time, space, cause and effect, part and whole. Transitions may also be accomplished by repetition of key words, frequently at the end of one paragraph with the word repeated at the beginning of the next. Transitions can also be done through pronouns, such as “this”, “that”, or “these”. It is better to use too many transitional words than not enough, enough, especially in early drafts. During revision you might want to vary the phrasing or even eliminate some if possible.

**The following words and phrases signal the relationships listed**

**Transitions and Linking Words/ Phrases**

**Words used to show location**

above

across

against

along

among

around

away from

behind

below

beneath

beside

between

beyond

by

down

in back of

in front of

inside

into

near

off

onto

on top of

outside

over

throughout

to the right

under

**Words used to clarify**

To illustrate

For example

In other words

For instance

To put another way

**Words used to show time and order**

afterwards

about

after

at

as soon as

before

during

first

first of all

second

then

third

until

meanwhile

today

tomorrow

next week

yesterday

soon

later

afterward

immediately

finally

last

next

presently

shortly

to begin with

until

**Words used to compare things (show similarities)**

between

while

in the same way

similarly

likewise

like

as

also

**Words to show contrast (show differences)**

despite

as though

but

however

otherwise

yet

although

still

though

unfortunately

on the other hand

even though

in spite of

instead of

nevertheless

not withstanding

on the contrary

**Words used to emphasize a point**

besides

at last

as a matter of fact

to repeat

for this reason

to emphasize

truly

thus

to illustrate

in fact

again

most

importantly

naturally

**Words used to conclude or summarize**

consequently

after all

as a result

in brief

therefore

finally

last

in conclusion

to conclude

since

then

thus

this resulted in

so that

in summary

to summarize

hence

Words used to add information

in fact

further

furthermore

equally important

accordingly

again

also

additionally

hence

to illustrate

in addition

another

and

besides

for example

for instance

moreover

for instance

moreover

next

similarly

this resulted in

likewise

finally

as well

moreover

along with

equally important

specifically