

Transition Expressions

In process writing, transition words and expressions are needed specifically to make the steps in the process clear. These transition expressions help the ideas or steps in the process flow from one to the next so that the reader can follow them logically and easily. Without the appropriate transition expressions, the paragraph is just a list of steps.

Each unit features instruction on key problematic transition expressions

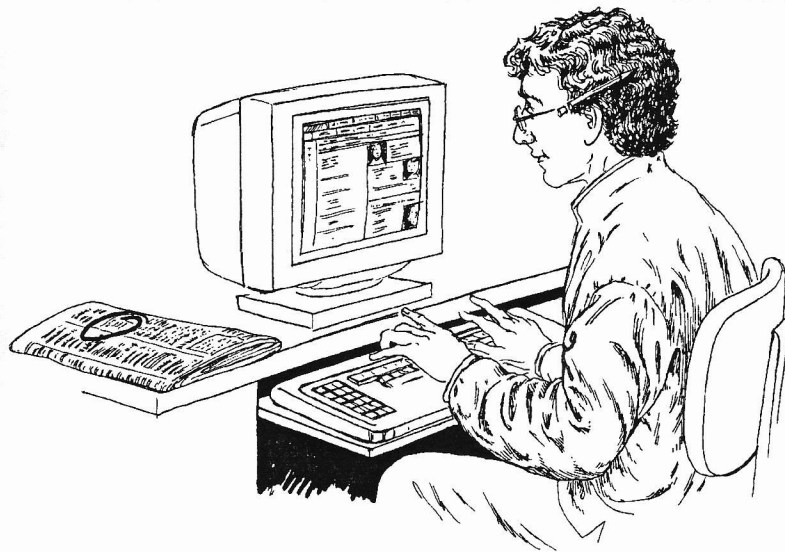
Unit 3 Transition Expressions: *first*, *next*, *then*, and *finally*

First

Function: signals the first step

Use: *First* is an adverb and is usually followed by a subject and a verb. However, *first* can also come in the middle or at the end of the sentence. In many cases, the imperative verb form (command form) comes after the word *first* to give directions.

Example: First, apply for the job.



Punctuation Note: When *first* comes at the beginning of a sentence, it is followed by a comma.

Example: First, Emilio applied for the job.

When *first* comes in the middle or at the end of a sentence, no comma is necessary

Examples: Emilio first applied for the job.

Emilio applied for the job first.

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Practice: Find the sentence in Source 1 that contains the word *first*. Write it here.

CAREFUL! *Firstly*, *secondly*, and *thirdly* are commonly used in British English but not in Standard American English.

Next

Function: signals the step after the previous step or action

Use: *Next* is an adverb. It can come at the beginning or at the end of a sentence. Just as you can with *first*, you can follow *next* with a subject and a verb or use the imperative form.

Example: Next, schedule an interview.

Punctuation Note: When *next* comes at the beginning of a sentence, it is followed by a comma.

Example: Next, Emilio scheduled an interview.

When *next* comes at the end of a sentence, no comma is necessary.

Example: Emilio went for an interview next.

Practice: Find the sentence in Source 1 that contains the word *next*. Write it here.

Then

Function: signals the step after the previous step or action

Use: *Then* is an adverb. The most common position for *then* is at the beginning of a sentence, followed by the subject and verb.

Example: Then Emilio waited for an offer.

A more formal position of *then* is directly after the subject and before the verb.

Example: Emilio then waited for an offer.

Punctuation Note: No comma is necessary with *then*.

Practice: Find the sentence in Source 1 that contains the word *then*. Write it here.

Find the sentence in Source 2 that contains the word *then*. Write it here.

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Finally

Function: signals the last step in the process or action

Use: *Finally* is an adverb. It is used at the beginning of a sentence to signal the last, or final, step of a process.

Example: Finally, send the company a thank-you note for the interview.

Finally can appear in the middle and at the end of the sentence. In these cases, it means “at last” and does not signal the last step in a process.

Example: Emilio finally made an appointment for an interview.

Punctuation Note: When *finally* comes at the beginning of a sentence, it is followed by a comma.

Practice: Find the sentence in Source 1 that contains the word *finally*. Write it here.

CAREFUL! Do not confuse the transition words **finally** and **in conclusion**. The adverb **finally** is not used to signal the end of the paragraph. It is used to signal the final step (reason, example) in a sequence.

Example: *First*, weigh the patient on the scale. *Next*, take the patient’s temperature. *Then* take his or her blood pressure. *Finally* (NOT *in conclusion*), tell the patient to wait for the doctor.

EXERCISE

Students are given the opportunity to immediately practice what they learn.

WORKING WITH TRANSITION EXPRESSIONS

Read the paragraph. Fill in each blank with *first*, *next*, *then*, or *finally*. Some transitions may fit into more than one blank. Add correct punctuation where necessary.

It is easy to make a telephone call if you follow these simple directions. To make the call, _____ you must know the telephone number you are dialing. _____ pick up the phone and listen for the dial tone. _____ you can start dialing the telephone number. If the person answers the phone, begin speaking. If an answering machine clicks on, wait for the beep and record your message. _____ hang up the phone when you have finished your call.