

TRANSITIONS

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What are Transitions?

- ▶ In order to join sentences, we use transitions.
- ▶ Transitions serve an important function in any piece of writing: they connect the ideas in sentences and paragraphs and show the reader how lines of reasoning are advancing. These simple words let the reader know when to expect more detail or when to expect a different topic or when to expect a counter-point.
- ▶ Transitions are tools to create coherence and consistency in your paper. Without them, your writing is likely to seem choppy or disorganized and the relationship between ideas may be unclear to the reader. English relies heavily on these transitional words to clarify relationships among ideas and sentences.

Types of Transitions

- ▶ There are three basic types of transitions:
 - I. generic transitions;
 - II. orienting transitions; and
 - III. substantive transitions.

Generic Transitions

- ▶ The most common way to join two wooden boards is with a foreign object—a metallic nail. In writing, the nails between two ideas are "generic transitions"—words or phrases we add solely for the purpose of signalling a transition from one sentence to the next.
- ▶ We should use generic transitions between sentences whenever our writing reflects a shift in our thoughts. For example, we can throw in a transition such as "also" to indicate a new, but similar, point; we can insert a transition such as "however" to indicate a contrary point. By including this one word in the sentence, we can help our readers smoothly transition from the ideas in the first sentence to the ideas in the second.

Generic Transitions

- ▶ Some of the most common types of generic transitions show addition; comparison or contrast; illustration or explanation; and conclusion. Even within these categories, different words can have slightly different meanings, so be sure to use the most appropriate and precise transition
- ▶ It is important that a writer is careful not to make the sentence construction wobbly by choosing the wrong transition word. Instead of helping readers follow the flow of the analysis, an inappropriate transition can create confusion and lead readers astray.
- ▶ We do not want to start a sentence with "similarly" if our objective is to distinguish that sentence from the ideas in the previous sentence.

Examples of Generic Transitions

- ▶ Below is a sampling of some common generic transitions:
 - I. To add a new point: and, also, next, further
 - II. To indicate a difference: however, but, in contrast, alternatively
 - III. To indicate a similarity: also, like, as, similarly
 - IV. To illustrate or explain an idea: for example, for instance, specifically
 - V. To conclude: therefore, thus, in conclusion.²

Orienting Transitions

- ▶ Orienting transitions provide a context for the information that follows. They help readers locate-physically, logically, or chronologically -the ideas or points in the rest of the sentence. They give readers context to understand the information that follows in a sentence.
- ▶ Two common orienting transitions in legal writing are those that include times and dates and those that refer to cases. Examples include:
 - a) On October 26, 2003, Leonard Thomas was admitted to Mountain View Rest Home and Retirement Village.
 - b) At 2.00 a.m. on January 1, 2009, John Wakioma was arrested and charged with reckless driving and driving while intoxicated.
 - c) In the instant case, there is no indication that the defendant intended to deceive the plaintiff about her rights under the contract.

Orienting Transitions

- ▶ Other orienting transitions create a context by directing the reader to adopt a certain point of view, by supplying the source of the information that follows, or by locating the information historically or chronologically. Examples include:
 - a) From the bank's perspective, granting a second loan to the borrower will be ill advised and risky.
 - b) As set out in the Investigating Officer's report, Officers Otieno and Mawele entered the godown at 2.30 a.m.

Orienting Transitions

- ▶ Orienting transitions frequently occur at the beginning of a section. They are not so much connections between points within the writing as they are connections between the writing and the mind of the reader.
- ▶ Orienting transitions also occur at the beginning of paragraphs. From this position, they help readers adjust or 'shift gears' as they mentally move along a line of reasoning within a large idea. They may also occur within a paragraph, and when they do, they work like all other transitions to bridge the gap between sentences and between ideas.

Orienting Transitions

- ▶ Orienting transitions therefore provide a context for what follows in a variety of ways:
 1. To give a historical perspective: e.g. In the case of John Mark v Wanjiru Mark [2018] eKLR, court redefined “contribution” in a marriage by holding that a woman’s contribution must be actual in order to have a valid claim to matrimonial property.
 2. To give a chronology: e.g. In March 2004, Nakumatt was advised that their store on Thika Road was built on a road reserve. In response, Nakumatt claimed previous and current exclusive right, as well as title and interest to the property.

Orienting Transitions

3. To suggest a case's importance: e.g. In the often cited case of *Republic v Kamotho* [2019] eKLR, the court held that bail is a constitutional right.
4. To announce a shift in topic: e.g.
 - ▶ (a) As for damages, the court will probably enjoin those activities that constitute a private nuisance.
 - ▶ (b) With regard to the prosecution's allegation that Mr. Mahoya's original advocate thwarted the discovery process, Mr. Mahoya will point out that he was unaware that his original Advocate shredded the requested document.

Orienting Transitions

- ▶ Some legal writers avoid the orienting transitions beginning with ‘as for,’ ‘as to,’ ‘with regard to,’ and ‘regarding’ in sentences like the preceding examples on grounds that these transitions are an abrupt, ineffective, and lazy way to make a significant shift in topic. These writers prefer that significant shifts in topics be introduced by full sentences.
- ▶ Revised Examples:
 - a. The question of damages will be more difficult to predict. The court will probably enjoin the activities that constitute a private nuisance, but awarding damages for Peter’s lost profits is less likely.
 - b. The prosecution’s second allegation that Mr. Mahoya’s original advocate thwarted the discovery process, should be directed at Mr. Mahoya’s original advocate, not at Mr. Mahoya. Mr. Mahoya was unaware that his original advocate shredded the requested document. He cannot be held responsible for the unsanctioned actions of his lawyer.

Substantive Transitions

- ▶ Substantive transitions provide context, new content, a connection, and substance. Substantive transitions are formed by using a technique called dovetailing.
- ▶ Dovetailing is really a simple pattern: place information from the first sentence (old information) at the beginning of the second sentence and then introduce new information.
- ▶ The substantive overlap can come from repeating words or phrases from the first sentence in the one that follows.

Substantive Transitions

An example:

- ▶ *To meet its substantive obligation under the Act, the school must offer a course that is reasonably calculated to enable a child to make progress appropriate in light of the child's circumstances. The "reasonably calculated" qualification reflects a recognition that crafting an appropriate program of education requires a prospective judgment by school officials.*
- ▶ The repetition of reasonably calculated in the sentences serves as a transition-it is the old information from the first sentence that is repeated in the second. This is the simplest form of a dovetail-the repetition of a phrase from the first sentence in the second sentence.

Substantive Transitions

- ▶ Writers can use the following techniques to create substantive transitions:
 1. Move the connecting idea to the end of the first sentence and to the beginning of the second sentence;
 2. Repeat key words from the first sentence in the second sentence;
 3. Use pronouns in the second sentence to refer back to nouns in the first sentence;
 4. State the connecting idea in a specific form in the first sentence and then restate it in a summarizing noun or phrase in the second sentence;
 5. Use hook words such as "this" "that" "these" "those" and "such" before a repeated key word or summarizing noun or phrase.

QUESTIONS?