Transitions for essays cheat sheet

Transitions grouped by job

Job	What the next idea does	Transitions to use
Addition	Adds another point on the same side	additionally, furthermore, moreover, in addition
Similarity	Gives a parallel case	likewise, similarly
Contrast	Shows a difference or opposing point	however, by contrast, on the other hand, yet
Concession	Admits a limit but keeps the point	nevertheless, even so, still, that said
Cause and effect	Gives a result or a conclusion from evidence	therefore, consequently, as a result, thus
Example	Gives one case of a general claim	for example, for instance, specifically
Sequence	Puts events or steps in order	first, next, then, later, meanwhile
Emphasis	Strengthens the point just made	indeed, in fact
Ending	Says what the argument adds up to	ultimately, overall, taken together

The blank test: five steps

1. Cover the transition. Read the two sentences or paragraphs with no linking word between them.
2. Say the connection in plain words: another reason, the other side, a limit, a specific case, or so this follows.
3. Find that job in the table and choose the most precise word.
4. For a big jump between paragraphs, write a bridge sentence that names the idea you finished and the idea you're starting.
5. Read it again. If the link is already clear, you may not need a transition.

Quick checks

- For example: can you say what it's an example of?
- Likewise or similarly: is the second case truly parallel?
- Then, later, meanwhile: do you mean time, or cause?
- Therefore: does something earlier justify this conclusion?
- Don't double up: "but however" marks the same contrast twice.

Overused transitions and what to try instead

Overused	Try instead
Firstly, secondly, thirdly	Name the link: "A bigger cost is..."
Also / Another reason is	A bridge sentence that ranks the reasons

Overused	Try instead
However (everywhere)	Check the job; often "and" or nothing
Therefore (unsupported)	"This suggests that", or add the missing step
Furthermore, moreover	One addition word, or join the sentences
In conclusion	A last sentence about what it all means
On the other hand	By contrast, or however

From Medly's SAT Reading and Writing lessons on transitions. Practice more at medlyai.com.