

Canal Connections

Track how transitions guide an explanation from need to impact.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.2c "Use varied transitions and sentence structures to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline every word or phrase that signals a relationship among ideas. Then number the sentences that introduce the background, construction, and effects sections as 1, 2, and 3.

A Waterway That Connected Markets

- ① In the early 1800s, moving goods across the United States was slow and expensive. Farmers in the Great Lakes region could send crops east by wagon, but rough roads and mountain barriers raised costs. Meanwhile, New York City wanted a stronger trade connection to western communities. These needs led state leaders to propose a canal between the Hudson River and Lake Erie. Critics called the plan "Clinton's Folly," doubting that workers could cut a 363-mile waterway. Yet the proposed route promised to link inland farms with Atlantic markets.
- ② Construction began in 1817, and the project demanded more than digging a long ditch. Engineers designed locks, chambers that raised or lowered boats as the land changed elevation. In addition, crews built aqueducts to carry the canal over rivers and used new tools to cut through rock. The work was dangerous, and many laborers were Irish immigrants. After eight years, the canal opened in 1825. A ceremonial boat traveled from Buffalo to New York City, where Governor DeWitt Clinton poured Lake Erie water into New York Harbor. The opening, therefore, showed both an engineering achievement and a public claim that the state could connect distant regions.
- ③ The canal quickly changed the flow of trade. Because freight could move more cheaply by water, farmers and merchants sent larger amounts of grain, lumber, and other goods east. In turn, manufactured products traveled west, while towns such as Rochester and Buffalo grew along the route. However, the canal did not benefit everyone equally: it helped New York become a commercial center while redirecting trade away from some older routes. Later railroads offered faster transportation, so the canal lost some importance. Even so, its early success demonstrated how a transportation project could reshape settlement, business, and political power.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What cause-and-effect relationship does the sentence beginning “These needs led” clarify in paragraph 1?

2 How does the transition “In addition” help connect the ideas in paragraph 2?

3 What idea does “However” introduce in paragraph 3, and how does it change the discussion of the canal’s benefits?

4 Compare “Later” and “Even so” near the end of paragraph 3. What relationship does each transition show?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a three-paragraph explanation, 120 to 150 words, about a change at a school or in a community and its effects. Use at least four transitions that show sequence, addition, cause or effect, and contrast or qualification, and include at least one compound sentence and one complex sentence.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline every word or phrase that signals a relationship among ideas. Then number the sentences that introduce the background, construction, and effects sections as 1, 2, and 3. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What cause-and-effect relationship does the sentence beginning “These needs led” clarify in paragraph 1?	High transportation costs and New York City’s desire for western trade led state leaders to propose the canal.
2	How does the transition “In addition” help connect the ideas in paragraph 2?	It adds aqueducts and rock-cutting tools as more examples of the engineering work, following the explanation of locks.
3	What idea does “However” introduce in paragraph 3, and how does it change the discussion of the canal’s benefits?	It introduces a contrast by explaining that the canal’s benefits were unequal and that some older trade routes lost business.
4	Compare “Later” and “Even so” near the end of paragraph 3. What relationship does each transition show?	“Later” shows time and introduces the rise of railroads. “Even so” shows concession by emphasizing the canal’s lasting significance despite losing importance.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our town library recently began staying open until 8:00 p.m. on three weeknights. At first, the change seemed small, but it gave students a quiet place to work after sports practices and family dinners. Because buses stop near the building, many teenagers can reach it without a ride. Additionally, the later hours allow adults to use computers, print forms, and ask librarians for help. The library added two evening staff members, and they organize short research workshops. As a result, visitors can complete tasks that might otherwise wait until the weekend. However, extended hours cost money for staff and utilities. Although the library cannot stay open late every night, the three evening sessions serve people who need them most. Therefore, the schedule shows how a limited change can improve access while respecting the library’s budget.

Accept answers that accurately explain how a named transition connects ideas in the passage, even when students use different wording. For the writing task, accept varied topics if the response has three coherent paragraphs, meets the word range, and uses the required transition relationships and sentence structures.