Connecting Ideas in an Explanatory Draft

Use varied transitions to show cause, sequence, contrast, and qualification

Name: _____ Date: _____

Part 1: Choose transitions with a clear job

Directions: Revise the original classroom draft below. A **transition unit** is only the words you add at a numbered bracket. Do not mark or count other connecting words in the paragraph. Choose a transition that fits the relationship named at each bracket. Use a different transition phrase each time.

Transition ideas

Cause: as a result, therefore, because
Sequence: first, next, finally
Contrast: however, in contrast
Qualification: although, even though

Revision goal

Your transitions should help a reader follow the writer's explanation. More than one answer can work if it creates the stated logical connection and fits the sentence.

Original classroom draft: Refill Stations

Installing a refill station can reduce waste. [1 - Cause] fewer disposable bottles may enter trash bins. [2 - Sequence] the facilities crew checks the building's plumbing. Staff members also ask students where they would use the station. [3 - Contrast] the gym location is convenient, the library location would be quieter. [4 - Qualification] the gym location is convenient, it may be crowded at lunch. The school may start with one station [5 - Cause] its budget is limited. [6 - Sequence] the school can compare bottle use before and after installation.

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Part 2: Rewrite and explain your choices

1. Rewrite the full draft below. Add a transition at every numbered unit. You may make small punctuation changes so your sentences read smoothly.

2. Explain two choices. Name the transition you used and describe the relationship it makes clear.

Choice A
Unit number: ____
My transition: _____

Choice B
Unit number: ____
My transition: _____

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Answer key and teaching notes

Purpose: Students revise a short explanatory draft by adding varied transitions that express cause, sequence, contrast, and qualification. Only the six numbered brackets are transition units in this activity. Do not ask students to identify embedded connectors elsewhere in the paragraph.

Materials and setup: Supply page 1, page 2, and a pencil for each student. Optional: provide a highlighter for students to highlight each added transition after drafting. Print pages double-sided or distribute page 2 after students complete page 1. Do not display this key during revision.

Teacher script: “A transition does more than decorate a sentence. It tells the reader how one idea relates to another. Today, only the six numbered brackets count as transition units. Read the relationship label at each bracket, choose words that create that relationship, and vary your choices. More than one wording may be correct. After you rewrite, explain how two of your choices guide the reader.”

Suggested answers and reasoning:
1. *As a result,* fewer disposable bottles may enter trash bins. This shows the possible result of installing a station. Accept therefore, so, consequently, or another grammatical cause/result connection.
2. *First,* the facilities crew checks the building's plumbing. This begins the planning sequence. Accept next, before installation, or another logical sequencing phrase if the student adjusts punctuation.
3. *However,* the gym location is convenient; the library location would be quieter. This contrasts advantages of two locations. Accept in contrast or another clear contrast wording with needed punctuation revision.
4. *Although* the gym location is convenient, it may be crowded at lunch. This qualifies the convenience by naming a limitation. Accept even though, despite its convenience, or another concession/limitation connection.
5. The school may start with one station *because* its budget is limited. This gives a reason. Accept since, as its budget is limited, or another grammatical cause connection that fits directly in the bracket.
6. *Finally,* the school can compare bottle use before and after installation. This signals a later step. Accept afterward, then, or another fitting sequence connection.

Model rewritten draft: Installing a refill station can reduce waste. As a result, fewer disposable bottles may enter trash bins. First, the facilities crew checks the building's plumbing. Staff members also ask students where they would use the station. However, the gym location is convenient; the library location would be quieter. Although the gym location is convenient, it may be crowded at lunch. The school may start with one station because its budget is limited. Finally, the school can compare bottle use before and after installation.

Explanation samples: Unit 1: “I used *As a result* because fewer bottles in trash bins is an effect of installing the refill station.” Unit 4: “I used *Although* to show that the gym location has an advantage, but that advantage has a limit.”

Observation method: While students work, make a six-column checklist labeled 1-6. For each student, mark whether the transition creates the labeled relationship, is grammatically workable after reasonable punctuation revision, and is not an exact repeat of an earlier transition. During the explanation task, listen for the student to name both the transition and its logical relationship.

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Answer key and teaching notes (continued)

Quick feedback prompts: “What does your transition tell the reader about these two ideas?” “Does this word show a reason, an order, a difference, or a limit?” “Can you revise punctuation so the connection is clear?”

Scoring guidance: Award credit for logical fit, not for one preferred word. A strong revision includes all six units, at least one fitting transition for each stated relationship, and no exact repeated phrase. For each explanation, award credit when the student identifies a transition and accurately explains the connection it creates. Do not penalize a different valid transition choice.

Source credit: Original classroom draft created for this worksheet, 2026; no external factual source is used. Standard reference: New York Next Generation ELA 9-10W2d, https://lessonmakerpro.com/standards/ny-nextgen-ela/9-10w2d