TRANSITIONAL AND STOCK PHRASES

While most people realize that writing sophisticated, academic sentences for formal reports is difficult, they often overlook the challenges of linking these sentences together. Using transitional and stock phrases provides an organization and structure to a paragraph. This document covers both types of phrases, showing how to use them effectively when writing a formal document.

TRANSITIONAL PHRASES

The first category of phrases links a word or sentence with another word or sentence. Table 1 organizes these by both their purpose and the grammatical category of the word. The grammatical category determines how the transition word can be employed in terms of punctuation and sentence structure.

Table 1: Common linking words

Function	Coordinating Conjunctions	Correlative Conjunctions	Conjunctive Adverbs	Subordinating Conjunctions
Cause	For			Because Since As
Addition	And	Both… and Not only… but also	Additionally In addition Furthermore Moreover	
Negative addition	Nor	Neither… nor		
Contrast	But		However Conversely In/By contrast On the other hand	Whereas While
Alternative	Or	Either… or	On the other hand Otherwise	
Surprising contrast	Yet			Although While
Result	So		Therefore Thus Hence As a result Consequently	

Coordinating conjunctions can link either words/concepts or sentences. No punctuation is needed when connecting two words/concepts. When connecting two sentences, a comma is required.

- The water can be chlorinated **or** ozonated.
- The water can be chlorinated, **or** it can can be ozonated.

Correlative conjunctions are very similar. Note that only *both… and* uses plural agreement.

- **Either** chlorination **or** ozonation <u>is</u> acceptable.
- **Either** the water can be chlorinated, **or** it can be ozonated.

Conjunctive adverbs have a wide range of potential structures.

- Drinking water must be treated. **Otherwise**, people could contract a variety of illnesses.
- Drinking water must be treated; **otherwise**, people could contract a variety of illnesses.
- Drinking water must be treated. People could contract a variety of illnesses **otherwise**.
- Drinking water must be treated. People could **otherwise** contract a variety of illnesses.

Subordinating conjunctions connect two sentences as well. If the clause with the subordinating conjunction comes first, a comma goes between them. If the clause with the subordinating conjunction comes second, no comma is required. It should be noted that subordinating conjunctions of contrast may use a comma regardless of position.

- **Because** the drinking water was not treated, she contracted giardia.
- She contracted giardia **because** the drinking water was not treated.

In addition to the above linking words, Table 2 displays a listing of several other phrases used for a variety of purposes.

Table 2: Other linking words and phrases

Function	Linking word/phrase	Usage
Exemplification or listing	In fact	Conjunctive adverb
	For example	Conjunctive adverb or listing
	For instance	Conjunctive adverb or listing
	Namely	Listing
	Such as	Listing
	Including	Listing
Condition	If	Subordinating conjunction
	Provided that	Subordinating conjunction
Purpose	So that	Subordinating conjunction

For example and *for instance* are the most confusing entries in Table 2. They can be used like a conjunctive adverb, or they can begin a list of items within a sentence.

- Many chemicals are used in the treatment of drinking water. **For example**, the United States uses chlorine, chlorine dioxide, and ozone in its treatment systems.
- Many chemicals, **for example** chlorine and ozone, are used in the treatment of drinking water in the United States.

STOCK PHRASES

Stock phrases are expressions that are widely used in a certain context. For the purposes of this document, the stock phrases are in the context of academic writing. By themselves, stock phrases hold virtually no meaning; they require content to be added to them to actually mean something. In a way, a stock phrase is much like a picture frame. A picture frame by itself could hardly be considered art, but adding a picture to it makes it immediately recognizable as a piece of art and not just a sketch or a photograph.

Stock phrases are so popular and have so little meaning that their use is typically not considered plagiarism. Consider the following example:

The prime / primary / foremost cause of the discrepancy is due to / a result of / a consequence of X.

This phrase is attempting to explain why the results were either unexpected or inconsistent. The blue letters represent a choice of synonym available, while the orange X represents where the content must be added. Without this addition of content, the sentence essentially means nothing.

These phrases are used by all writers, and their use is almost instinctive. Writers have seen variations of the same phrase used so many times that they readily duplicate the phrase in their own writing, replacing the content with their own. Unless a stock phrase is copied from a source with the same content or topic, insinuations of plagiarism will not occur.

There are several online resources that maintain a list of stock phrases. The earlier example came from Springer (p. 271–293), which publishes a list of stock expressions to help aspiring authors. The University of Manchester has a similar listing called the Academic Phrasebank.

Below is a sample paragraph created using stock phrases from the Springer resource:

Chummyjiggers are among the most well-known types of doodads. Since 2011, there has been a rapid rise in the use of chummyjiggers [1], and by 2025, chummyjiggers will have become the only type of doodad supported by the top three global cell phone manufacturers [1], [2]. While the benefits of chummyjiggers have been touted since their introduction to the market, a major flaw in the design of chummyjiggers is their constant draw of energy, even when in their so-called "powered hibernate" state [3]. The aim of this report is to calculate exactly how much energy is expended by a chummyjigger when it is hibernating and to explore ways to make chummyjiggers more energy-efficient.