Transitions

As you move from one point to the next, give your audience some clear toeholds so that they can easily follow your points. Make sure that your ideas are arranged logically and smoothly. Lead your audience from point to point, example to example, and issue to issue. Never assume your audience knows where you are in your speech or that they will see the connections that you see between arguments, facts, points, and anecdotes.

Transitions are words, phrases, and sentences that link related ideas and parts of a speech. They keep your message moving forward. They perform the following functions:

- They tell how the introduction relates to the body of the speech
- They tell how one main point relates to the next main point
- They tell how your subpoints relate to the points they are part of
- They tell how your supporting points relate to the points they support

This chart lists different kinds of transitions you can use to convey different kinds of relationships between ideas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Transitional phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Place</td>
<td>At the side, adjacent, nearby, in the distance, here, there, in the front, in the foreground, in the back, in the background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>In brief, in conclusion, finally, on the whole, as a result, hence, in short</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Result</td>
<td>Therefore, thus, consequently, so, accordingly, due to this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Meanwhile, subsequently, immediately, at length, eventually, in the future, currently, before, soon, later, during, first, second, third, next, then, finally, afterward</td>
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<tr>
<td>Concession</td>
<td>Of course, to be sure, certainly, naturally, granted</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contrast</td>
<td>On the other hand, but, yet, however, nevertheless, nonetheless, conversely, in contrast, on the contrary, still, at the same time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison</td>
<td>Similarly, likewise, in like manner, in the same way, in comparison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example</td>
<td>For example, thus, as an illustration, namely, specifically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addition</td>
<td>Also, in addition to, moreover, and, besides, further, furthermore, equally important, next, then, finally</td>
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</tbody>
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Signposts

Another type of transitional element is called a signpost. Signposts are verbal “You are here” markers. They constantly remind the audience of the speech structure:

- Major topic changes:
  - Let me begin with…
  - First, second, third, finally
- Repetition of a key phrase to draw attention:
  - It is critical… It is critical… It is critical.
- To draw attention to important ideas:
  - The most interesting aspect of this is…
  - What is really exciting about this is…
• Draw attention to the conclusion of the speech:
  In conclusion
  Let me end today, …
  Recapping…
  Summing up…
  In retrospect, …
  [Avoid “Lastly”]

• Internal Previews
  Placed at the beginning of a main point, they let the audience know how this section of
  your speech is organized.
  “I’d like to start out by saying it is important to change the oil in your car every 3,000
  miles because it can save you both time and money.”

• Internal Reviews or Summaries
  Placed at the end of a main point, they remind the audience what the last section of the
  speech covered.
  “I think you’ll agree that regular oil changes can lead to major savings in both time and
  money.”

For further reading:

Books.