The relationship between sentences is the link that conceptually ties one sentence to another sentence. The relationship may be explicit, in which case a transition or clue word helps identify the connection. The relationship may be implicit, in which case you must closely examine the elements found in each sentence and often in the material between the sentences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPES OF RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SENTENCES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Addition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location or Spatial Order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cause and Effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Signal words or transitions help you determine the type of relationship between sentences. When the transition is missing, you may determine the relationship by supplying the correct signal word on your own.

**ADDITION**

These transitions tell you that the writer is presenting two or more ideas that continue along the same line of thought. They introduce ideas that add to a thought already mentioned. Here are common addition words:

- and
- in addition
- first of all
- furthermore
- also
- moreover
- second
- last of all
- another
- next
- third
- finally
- besides
- likewise
- too
- equally important

**Examples:**

- **Explicit**
  My friend Ellen is so safety-conscious that she had her wooden front door replaced with a steel one. *Also*, she had iron bars inserted on all her apartment windows.

- **Implicit**
  Richard, trying to please his irritated mother, picked up his clothes and faithfully brushed his teeth. *He even tried not to squirm in his seat at the dinner table.*
CLARIFICATION

These words signal that the author is about to clarify or interpret a certain point. They tell us that the second statement is an expansion of a previous one. Here are some common emphasis and clarification words.

Clarification word clues:
- Clearly
- Evidently
- In fact
- In other words
- Obviously
- Certainly
- To be sure
- Truly
- Of course
- As a matter of fact
- Undoubtedly
- Indeed

Examples:

Explicit  I hate sardines. In fact, if sardines were being served for dinner, I’d be at McDonald’s.

Implicit  Margaret is an uncompromising animal rights activist. She vigorously opposed the sacrifice of live animals in the name of scientific research.

COMPARISON

These transitions signal that the author is pointing out a similarity between two subjects. They tell us that the second idea is like the first one in some way. Here are some common comparison words.

- Like
- Likewise
- Similarly
- As
- In a like manner
- In a similar fashion
- Just like
- Equally
- In the same way
- Just as

Examples:

Explicit  When individuals communicate, they are more likely to solve their problems. In like manner, countries can best solve their problems through communication.

Implicit  The old neighborhood seemed centered around its activities – the summer barbecues, the bake sales held to raise funds for the elementary school. In the evenings, friends would gather to talk about nothing in particular. Here, in the new neighborhood, the same cookouts and school support unite people who gather to chat once the children are asleep about the same small and friendly matters.
CONTRAST

These transitions signal a change in the direction of the writer’s thought. They tell us that a new idea will be different in a significant way from the previous one. Here are some common contrast words.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>but</th>
<th>in contrast</th>
<th>conversely</th>
<th>on the other hand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>however</td>
<td>instead</td>
<td>nevertheless</td>
<td>on the contrary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yet</td>
<td>still</td>
<td>even though</td>
<td>although</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>despite</td>
<td>in spite of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example:

Explicit  Professional writers don’t wait for inspiration. *On the contrary,* they stick to a strict schedule of writing.

Implicit  Janice wrote her research paper using 5x7 note cards. Heather used stacks of books with pieces a paper marking specific pages.

EXAMPLE

These transitions indicate that an author will provide one or more examples to develop and illustrate a given idea. They tell us that the second idea is an example of the first. Here are some common example/illustration words.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>for example</th>
<th>for instance</th>
<th>that is</th>
<th>including</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>as an illustration</td>
<td>to illustrate</td>
<td>such as</td>
<td>to be specific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>once</td>
<td>specifically</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Explicit  My cousin Dave will do anything on a dare. *Once* he showed up for a family dinner wearing only swimming trunks and a snorkeling mask.

Implicit  Sarah has always been an optimistic person. She believes that when she graduates from college she will get the job of her choice.

LOCATION OR SPATIAL ORDER

Location transitions show relationships in space. They tell us where something is in relation to something else. Here are some common location words.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>above</th>
<th>adjacent to</th>
<th>below</th>
<th>beyond</th>
<th>close by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>elsewhere</td>
<td>inside</td>
<td>nearby</td>
<td>next to</td>
<td>opposite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>within</td>
<td>without</td>
<td>ahead of</td>
<td>far</td>
<td>over</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Explicit  On the wall *above* my daughter’s bed are several pictures of NSYNC members.
Implicit  The park was darkened by the school building’s shadow. However, the sun still splashed on the front windows with light.

CAUSE AND EFFECT

Cause and effect transitions signal that the author is going to describe results or effects. They tell us what happened or will happen because something else happened. Here are some common cause and effect words.

accordingly  as a result  because  consequently
hence  if . . . then  therefore  since
so  thus

Examples:

Explicit  My sister became a vegetarian because she doesn’t want to eat anything that had a mother.

Implicit  Kevin refused to put on any sun screen at the beach. He suffered with painful sunburn for days afterward.

SUMMARY

These transitions signal that the author is about to summarize or come to a conclusion. They tell us that the idea that follows sums up what has gone before it. Here are some common summary words.

in summary  all in all  to sum up  to conclude
in conclusion  in brief  on the whole  in short
in other words  ultimately

Examples:

Explicit  After a twenty-minute analysis of my financial situation, my accountant told me, “To sum up, Mr. Mills, you’re broke.”

Implicit  Andrew studies for an hour before school, on his breaks at work, for another hour after dinner, and again before bed. He’s a dedicated student.

TIME

These transitions indicate a time relationship. They tell us when something happened in relation to something else. Here are some common time words.
### Explicit

The car slid down the embankment. *Shortly thereafter,* curious onlookers had backed up traffic five miles.

### Implicit

Samantha watched the house slowly take shape. The foundation was poured, the framing went up, and the roofers attached trusses. Her sense of belonging and security grew and took shape too.

### PRACTICE EXERCISES

#### Exercise 1:
Read the following sentences and underline the signal word or words in each sentence. On the lines provided, indicate the type of signal of each underlined word, using the following key.

| a. | contrast |
| b. | addition |
| c. | clarification |
| d. | example |
| e. | time |
| f. | summary |

1. ____ The plane was scheduled to depart at 8:05 P.M. but due to a bomb threat, it was not cleared for take-off until two hours later.
2. ____ Ralph was a bright, highly motivated, and successful student. On the other hand, he was unable to excel in even one sport.
3. ____ Birds are beneficial to humans in many ways. For example, wild birds eat insects, wild seeds, and certain rodents.
4. ____ When selecting a campsite, you must consider several things. First, select a fairly open spot, level enough to be comfortable, not sloped enough for water drainage. Next, consider whether there are trees and a wood supply nearby. Finally, be sure to choose a site with available water for drinking and bathing.
5. ____ Although the criminal had a brilliant defense lawyer, he was sentenced to life in prison.
6. ____ Entrance test scores are one of the most important considerations for acceptance into college. However, high school grade-point average and accomplishments are also considered.

#### Exercise 2: Circle the correct answer to the following questions.

1. The rain poured down in sheets against the window. Roberto could not see anything outside. How are the two sentences related?
a. The two sentences create a contrast.
b. The second sentence locates the first in space
c. The first sentence establishes the cause of the second.
d. The second sentence provides an example of what is stated in the first.

2. Latoya strongly dislikes boastful people. She detests anyone who brags about personal accomplishments or possessions. How is the second sentence related to the first?
   a. It classifies what is stated in the first sentence.
   b. It contradicts the first sentence.
   c. It draws a conclusion from the first sentence.
   d. It clarifies the first sentence.

3. Reggie often says that appeals from charitable contributions make him depressed over the plight of unfortunate people. However, Reggie has never given even a dime to charity. What does the second sentence do in relation to the first?
   a. It follows logically from the first.
   b. It seems to contradict the first.
   c. It draws a conclusion from the first.
   d. It analyzes the reasoning of the first.

**ANSWERS**

Exercise 1
   1. a
   2. a
   3. d
   4. e
   5. a

Exercise 2
   1. c
   2. d
   3. b

This handout was adapted from Ophelia H. Hancock’s *Reading Skills for College Students*, fifth edition; John Langan’s *Ten Steps to Improving Reading Skills*; CLAST Reading Skills.