

189 TOEFL Writing Transition Words

Phrases, how to use them, and test-style examples for Write an Email and Academic Discussion

Stating your position

Use in: Academic Discussion

PHRASE	HOW TO USE IT	EXAMPLE
☐ In my view,	Opens your main claim; more formal than I think	In my view, first-year students should be required to live on campus.
☐ From my perspective,	Signals a personal angle on the issue	From my perspective, online classes work best for students who already have strong study habits.
☐ I firmly believe that	Strong, clear position; good first sentence	I firmly believe that schools should teach basic financial skills.
☐ I strongly agree that	Agreeing with the professor's statement	I strongly agree that cities should invest more in public transportation.
☐ I am inclined to think that	Softer position when the issue is two-sided	I am inclined to think that a shorter school week would hurt younger students.
☐ As far as I am concerned,	Personal stance, slightly formal	As far as I am concerned, the benefits of social media outweigh the risks.
☐ It seems to me that	Cautious opinion	It seems to me that most students choose a major too early.
☐ My position is that	Direct, academic statement of your side	My position is that homework should be optional in elementary school.
☐ I would argue that	Makes a claim you will defend	I would argue that public libraries are more important now than ever.
☐ I am convinced that	Confident claim	I am convinced that group projects prepare students for real jobs.
☐ When it comes to	Narrows the topic before your opinion	When it comes to learning a language, daily practice matters more than talent.
☐ Personally,	Short personal signal; use once	Personally, I prefer studying in a quiet library to studying at home.
☐ I tend to agree with the idea that	Moderate agreement	I tend to agree with the idea that uniforms reduce peer pressure.
☐ There is no doubt that	Introduces a point everyone accepts	There is no doubt that smartphones have changed how teenagers communicate.

Giving reasons

Use in: Email · Academic Discussion

PHRASE	HOW TO USE IT	EXAMPLE
☐ This is mainly because	Explains the cause of the sentence before	Many students skip breakfast. This is mainly because their first class starts too early.
☐ The main reason is that	Introduces your strongest reason	The main reason is that students learn faster when they teach each other.
☐ The primary reason for this is	Formal version of the main reason	The primary reason for this is the high cost of living near campus.

PHRASE	HOW TO USE IT	EXAMPLE
☐ One reason is that	First of several reasons	One reason is that remote work saves employees hours of commuting.
☐ Another reason is that	Second reason, clean and safe	Another reason is that small classes allow more questions.
☐ This is because	Basic cause signal	Some companies ban phones in meetings. This is because people stop listening.
☐ due to	Followed by a noun phrase, not a clause	The event was canceled due to heavy rain.
☐ owing to	Formal; followed by a noun	Owing to budget cuts, the library now closes at 6 p.m.
☐ since	Reason the reader already accepts	Since most students work part-time, evening classes are very popular.
☐ given that	Uses a known fact as a reason	Given that tuition keeps rising, students need more scholarship options.
☐ in light of	Formal; reason based on new information	In light of the new research, the school changed its start time.
☐ That is why	Links a reason back to your claim	Exercise improves focus. That is why I think schools need longer breaks.
☐ for the simple reason that	Stresses that the reason is obvious	I support the policy for the simple reason that it saves time.
☐ What makes this important is that	Raises the stakes of your reason	What makes this important is that habits formed in college often last for life.
☐ I say this because	Natural bridge to a personal example	I say this because I saw the same problem in my own high school.

Explaining in more detail

Use in: Academic Discussion

PHRASE	HOW TO USE IT	EXAMPLE
☐ In detail,	Opens a closer description of the point	In detail, the program pairs each new student with an older mentor for one semester.
☐ To be more specific,	Moves from general to specific	To be more specific, students spend about two hours a day on social media.
☐ In other words,	Restates the idea more simply	In other words, the rule protects students who cannot afford new devices.
☐ That is to say,	Formal restatement	Teachers should be facilitators. That is to say, they should guide rather than lecture.
☐ To put it another way,	Second angle on the same point	To put it another way, cheap food is not really cheap if it makes us sick.
☐ What I mean is that	Clarifies your own sentence	What I mean is that students need time to rest, not just more classes.
☐ More specifically,	Adds precise detail	More specifically, the app reminds users to review words they missed.
☐ To elaborate,	Expands on the previous claim	To elaborate, part-time jobs teach time management in a way classes cannot.

PHRASE	HOW TO USE IT	EXAMPLE
☐ Put simply,	Summarizes a complex idea in plain words	Put simply, the policy costs more than it saves.
☐ This means that	Spells out the consequence of a fact	This means that students would lose their only chance to practice speaking.
☐ In particular,	Focuses on one group or case	In particular, first-generation students benefit from extra advising.
☐ Specifically,	Introduces a concrete fact	Specifically, the survey found that most users quit within a week.
☐ Namely,	Names the exact items you meant	Two groups would benefit most, namely commuters and working parents.
☐ The point is that	Brings the reader back to your core idea	The point is that technology should support teachers, not replace them.

Giving examples

Use in: Email · Academic Discussion

PHRASE	HOW TO USE IT	EXAMPLE
☐ For example,	The default example signal	For example, my cousin learned to code entirely through free online courses.
☐ For instance,	Same as for example; use to avoid repetition	For instance, many museums now offer free virtual tours.
☐ To illustrate,	Introduces a longer example or scenario	To illustrate, a student who reads 20 minutes a day finishes about 15 books a year.
☐ such as	Lists examples inside the sentence	Outdoor activities such as hiking and cycling reduce stress.
☐ A good example of this is	Introduces one strong case	A good example of this is Finland, where students have very little homework.
☐ Take ... as an example.	Puts a specific case in front	Take my high school as an example. It banned phones, and grades went up.
☐ In my experience,	Personal evidence; strong in discussion posts	In my experience, study groups work only when someone sets clear goals.
☐ When I was in high school,	Opens a short personal story	When I was in high school, our teacher let us choose our own project topics.
☐ like	Informal such as; fine in short examples	Small changes, like turning off notifications, can improve focus.
☐ including	Lists some members of a larger group	The club offers many activities, including weekend hikes and film nights.
☐ Consider	Invites the reader to picture a case	Consider how much time students spend commuting to campus each week.
☐ Imagine	Hypothetical example	Imagine a student who has to work 30 hours a week while studying full-time.
☐ to name a few	Ends a short list	Cafes, libraries, and parks, to name a few, all offer free Wi-Fi now.
☐ As an illustration,	Formal example signal	As an illustration, the city's bike-sharing program cut car trips by a noticeable amount.

Adding a point

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PHRASE	HOW TO USE IT	EXAMPLE
☐ In addition,	Adds a new point of equal weight	In addition, living on campus makes it easier to join clubs.
☐ Moreover,	Adds a stronger point	Moreover, the new schedule gives teachers more time to plan.
☐ Furthermore,	Formal addition	Furthermore, online courses let students review lectures as often as they need.
☐ Also,	Simple addition; fine in emails	Also, public transportation is better for the environment.
☐ On top of that,	Conversational addition; good in emails	On top of that, the program is completely free for students.
☐ Besides,	Informal; adds a supporting point	Besides, most students already own a laptop.
☐ What is more,	Adds a surprising extra point	What is more, the library stays open until midnight during exams.
☐ Not only ... but also	Two benefits in one sentence (note the inversion)	Not only does exercise improve health, but it also boosts concentration.
☐ Along with	Adds a noun-phrase point	Along with lower costs, remote work offers more flexibility.
☐ As well as	Joins two nouns or verbs	Tutors help with writing as well as with test preparation.
☐ Another point to consider is	Introduces a new angle	Another point to consider is the cost of maintaining the new buildings.
☐ Equally important,	Second point with the same weight	Equally important, students need someone to talk to when they struggle.
☐ Additionally,	Formal; common in emails	Additionally, I would like to ask whether the deadline can be extended.
☐ Not to mention	Adds an obvious extra point	The commute is long, not to mention expensive.

Contrasting and conceding

Use in: Academic Discussion

PHRASE	HOW TO USE IT	EXAMPLE
☐ However,	Main contrast signal; start of a sentence	Some people think homework is useless. However, it builds discipline.
☐ On the other hand,	Shows the other side of the same issue	Living alone is expensive. On the other hand, it teaches responsibility.
☐ Although	Concession inside one sentence	Although online classes are flexible, many students feel isolated.
☐ Even though	Stronger although	Even though the plan costs more, it will save money in the long run.
☐ While	Concession at the start of a sentence	While technology helps, it cannot replace a good teacher.
☐ Nevertheless,	Your point stands despite the problem	The rule is unpopular. Nevertheless, it keeps students safe.

PHRASE	HOW TO USE IT	EXAMPLE
☐ Despite	testpracticelab.com/toefl-writing-transition-words-en/ : © testpracticelab Followed by a noun phrase	Despite the high cost, many families choose private tutoring.
☐ In contrast,	Compares two different things	City schools have large classes. In contrast, rural schools are often very small.
☐ Instead,	Offers an alternative	Schools should not ban phones. Instead, they should teach students to use them wisely.
☐ Admittedly,	Concedes a weakness before defending	Admittedly, the policy will be difficult to enforce at first.
☐ It is true that ..., but	Classic concession pattern	It is true that dorms are expensive, but they save students time and travel costs.
☐ That being said,	Natural turn after a concession	Online learning is convenient. That being said, it requires strong self-control.
☐ Even so,	Short concession	The new library is far from the dorms. Even so, students use it every day.
☐ Rather than	Compares two choices and picks one	Rather than banning junk food, schools should offer healthier options.
☐ Whereas	Contrasts two groups in one sentence	Some students like group work, whereas others prefer to study alone.
☐ Conversely,	Formal reversal	Strict rules can reduce cheating. Conversely, they can also reduce trust.

Responding to classmates

Use in: Academic Discussion

PHRASE	HOW TO USE IT	EXAMPLE
☐ I agree with ... that	Names the classmate and the exact idea	I agree with Kelly that living on campus helps students make friends.
☐ I understand ...'s point about ..., but	Polite disagreement; very common opener	I understand Andrew's point about cost, but the benefits are worth it.
☐ While ... makes a good point,	Respectful concession before your view	While Maria makes a good point about safety, I think the rule goes too far.
☐ Building on ...'s idea,	Adds to a classmate instead of repeating	Building on Daniel's idea, schools could also offer weekend workshops.
☐ ... raises an interesting point, but	Acknowledges, then pivots	Emily raises an interesting point, but she overlooks the cost to taxpayers.
☐ I see where ... is coming from, but	Natural, friendly disagreement	I see where Jason is coming from, but not every student can afford a laptop.
☐ Unlike ..., I believe that	Clear opposite position	Unlike Sarah, I believe that exams are still the fairest way to measure learning.
☐ I partly agree with ..., but	Middle position	I partly agree with Tom, but I think the rule should apply only to younger students.
☐ Like ..., I think	Short agreement, then add your own reason	Like Kevin, I think teachers should give fewer but better assignments.
☐ ... overlooks the fact that	Points out a gap in the argument	Andrew overlooks the fact that many dorms offer financial aid.

PHRASE	HOW TO USE IT	EXAMPLE
☐ What ... does not mention is	Adds what the classmate missed	What Lisa does not mention is how long the training would take.
☐ To add to ...'s argument,	Supports and extends	To add to Chris's argument, smaller classes also reduce noise and stress.
☐ I would go further than ... and say	Takes the classmate's idea further	I would go further than Anna and say that the policy should be national.
☐ Both ... and ... make valid points, but	Acknowledges both posts at once	Both Kelly and Andrew make valid points, but I lean toward Kelly's side.

Showing results

Use in: Email · Academic Discussion

PHRASE	HOW TO USE IT	EXAMPLE
☐ As a result,	Most common result signal	The cafeteria added healthy options. As a result, fewer students eat off campus.
☐ Therefore,	Logical conclusion	The bus is often late. Therefore, students should be allowed some flexibility.
☐ Consequently,	Formal result	Prices rose sharply. Consequently, many students moved back home.
☐ Thus,	Formal, compact	The test is shorter. Thus, students have less time to recover from mistakes.
☐ As a consequence,	Often a negative result	As a consequence, the city had to close two libraries.
☐ This leads to	Cause to effect inside one sentence	Less sleep leads to lower grades and more stress.
☐ This results in	Formal cause and effect	Skipping practice results in slower progress.
☐ Because of this,	Plain result signal	Because of this, many students never ask for help.
☐ For this reason,	Turns your reason into a conclusion	For this reason, I think the school should keep the program.
☐ so	Simple; joins two clauses	The library was full, so we studied in a cafe.
☐ Hence,	Very formal; use sparingly	The data is incomplete. Hence, the conclusion may be wrong.
☐ which means that	Adds a result to the same sentence	The deadline moved up, which means that we have only two days left.
☐ In turn,	Chain of effects	Better sleep improves focus, and focus, in turn, improves grades.
☐ As a result of	Followed by a noun	As a result of the new policy, attendance went up.

Comparing

Use in: Academic Discussion

PHRASE	HOW TO USE IT	EXAMPLE
☐ Similarly,	Shows two things work the same way	Libraries offer quiet space. Similarly, study cafes give students a place to focus.
☐ Likewise,	Formal similarly	Teachers need feedback. Likewise, students need clear goals.

PHRASE	HOW TO USE IT	EXAMPLE
☐ In the same way,	Parallel example	In the same way, companies benefit when workers rest.
☐ Compared to	Compares with a reference point	Compared to ten years ago, students today read far fewer printed books.
☐ Just as ..., so	Elegant comparison	Just as athletes need rest, so do students before exams.
☐ Unlike	Contrast between two things	Unlike traditional classes, online courses can be taken at any time.
☐ much more ... than	Strong comparison	Group study is much more effective than studying alone for some subjects.
☐ By comparison,	Puts a second item next to the first	Bikes are cheap to maintain. By comparison, cars cost thousands each year.
☐ the same is true of	Extends a claim to another case	Exercise improves mood, and the same is true of spending time outdoors.
☐ is far better than	Clear preference	Learning by doing is far better than memorizing rules.

Conditions and what-ifs

Use in: Academic Discussion

PHRASE	HOW TO USE IT	EXAMPLE
☐ If ..., then	Clear condition and result	If schools start later, then students will sleep more.
☐ Unless	Negative condition	Unless the city adds more buses, traffic will keep getting worse.
☐ As long as	Condition for something to be allowed	Phones are fine in class as long as students use them for research.
☐ Provided that	Formal as long as	Remote work can succeed, provided that teams meet regularly.
☐ Otherwise,	Shows the bad result if not done	Students need breaks. Otherwise, they lose focus quickly.
☐ In that case,	Follows up a situation	Some students cannot attend in person. In that case, recorded lectures help.
☐ Without	Shows what is needed	Without clear rules, group projects become unfair.
☐ If this happens,	Predicts a consequence	Funding may be cut. If this happens, the program will close.
☐ Even if	Result stays true in any case	Even if the course is optional, most students would take it.
☐ Suppose that	Sets up a hypothetical	Suppose that every student had a personal tutor. Grades would rise quickly.

Adding emphasis

Use in: Academic Discussion

PHRASE	HOW TO USE IT	EXAMPLE
☐ Indeed,	Confirms and strengthens the last point	Sleep matters. Indeed, it may matter more than extra study hours.
☐ In fact,	Adds a surprising true fact	Many people think cycling is slow. In fact, it is often faster in city traffic.
☐ Above all,	Marks your most important point	Above all, students need teachers who believe in them.

PHRASE	HOW TO USE IT	EXAMPLE
☐ Most importantly,	Strongest point in a list	Most importantly, the policy protects students' mental health.
☐ Clearly,	Signals an obvious conclusion	Clearly, the old system is not working.
☐ Obviously,	Use with care; can sound dismissive	Obviously, no single rule will solve the problem.
☐ It is worth noting that	Highlights a useful fact	It is worth noting that the program is already used in several countries.
☐ Especially	Narrows emphasis to a group	Especially for younger students, routine is very important.
☐ Undoubtedly,	Confident statement	Undoubtedly, the internet has made research easier.
☐ The key point is that	Focuses the reader on one idea	The key point is that students learn best when they are curious.

Ordering your points

Use in: Email · Academic Discussion

PHRASE	HOW TO USE IT	EXAMPLE
☐ First of all,	Opens the first point	First of all, I want to thank you for your quick reply.
☐ To begin with,	Starts a list of reasons	To begin with, uniforms save families money.
☐ Firstly, / Secondly,	Numbered reasons	Firstly, the plan is cheap. Secondly, it is easy to start.
☐ Next,	Moves to the next item; emails	Next, I would like to ask about the meeting time.
☐ Then,	Time order	We could meet at the library. Then, we could go to the lab together.
☐ After that,	Time order in plans	After that, I will send you the final draft.
☐ Finally,	Last item in a list	Finally, I would appreciate it if you could confirm the date.
☐ Lastly,	Last point; same as finally	Lastly, the program builds confidence.
☐ To start with,	Casual first point	To start with, the room is too small for our group.
☐ At the same time,	Two things true together	At the same time, we should listen to students' concerns.
☐ Meanwhile,	Parallel actions	I will finish the slides. Meanwhile, could you check the data?
☐ Before that,	Earlier step	Before that, I need to finish my lab report.

Wrapping up

Use in: Academic Discussion

PHRASE	HOW TO USE IT	EXAMPLE
☐ Overall,	Short wrap-up that fits a 100-word post	Overall, the benefits of the program clearly outweigh the costs.
☐ For these reasons,	Ties your reasons to your position	For these reasons, I support Kelly's view.
☐ That is why I believe	Restates your claim after the reason	That is why I believe schools should start later.

PHRASE	HOW TO USE IT	EXAMPLE
☐ All things considered,	Balanced final judgment	All things considered, online learning is a good option for adults.
☐ In the end,	Final takeaway	In the end, the choice should belong to the students.
☐ Ultimately,	Deepest or final point	Ultimately, a good teacher matters more than any technology.
☐ To sum up,	Summary of points; use only if space allows	To sum up, uniforms save money and reduce pressure.
☐ In short,	Quick one-line summary	In short, the plan is cheap, fast, and fair.
☐ In conclusion,	Classic, but heavy for a 100-word post	In conclusion, I believe the city should invest in bike lanes.
☐ This is why	Conversational wrap-up	This is why I would choose the second option.
☐ On balance,	Weights both sides before deciding	On balance, the rule does more good than harm.
☐ Taking everything into account,	Formal final judgment	Taking everything into account, I would support the proposal.

Email-only phrases

Use in: Email

PHRASE	HOW TO USE IT	EXAMPLE
☐ I am writing to	States the purpose in the first line	I am writing to ask about the summer research program.
☐ I am writing about	Names the topic right away	I am writing about a used textbook I bought last week.
☐ I hope this message finds you well.	Polite opener; optional, costs words	Dear Professor Kim, I hope this message finds you well.
☐ I would like to	Polite request or intention	I would like to request a short extension on my essay.
☐ Could you please	Standard polite request	Could you please tell me when the office opens?
☐ Would it be possible to	Very polite request	Would it be possible to move our meeting to Friday?
☐ I would appreciate it if you could	Formal request	I would appreciate it if you could send me the reading list.
☐ Unfortunately,	Introduces a problem politely	Unfortunately, I will not be able to attend the meeting on Monday.
☐ The problem is that	Names the issue clearly	The problem is that the heater in my room stopped working.
☐ As you may know,	Shared background	As you may know, the project is due next Friday.
☐ I was wondering if	Soft question	I was wondering if there are any spots left in the workshop.
☐ In addition to this,	Adds a second request	In addition to this, I would like to know the total cost.
☐ As a result of this,	Explains the impact of a problem	As a result of this, I missed the first two classes.
☐ I would be happy to	Offers help	I would be happy to help with the event setup.
☐ Please let me know if	Standard closing line	Please let me know if you need any more information.
☐ Thank you for	Thanks for something specific	Thank you for your help with my application.

PHRASE	HOW TO USE IT	EXAMPLE
☐ I look forward to	Closing line, followed by -ing	I look forward to hearing from you.
☐ Thank you in advance for	Closing before a request is answered	Thank you in advance for your time.
☐ If it is not too much trouble,	Softens a request	If it is not too much trouble, could you check my registration?
☐ I apologize for	Apology in emails	I apologize for the short notice.