Transitional Words and Phrases

Writers use transitional words and phrases to improve coherence between sentences or parts of sentences. Readers use transitional words and phrases to determine how the writer has organized the material and to improve their comprehension. There are a number of categories of transitional expressions:

**Signal Words** are used to indicate that the information is especially important:
this, that, these, those, one

-est forms of adjectives (safest, greatest, highest)

main and finally above all
especially indeed vital primary
key major despite just as
principal central chief significant
moreover still of course even though
distinctive naturally of course even though
should be (remembered, noted, observed) not only . . . but also
most (important, noteworthy, obvious)

**Illustration Words** indicate to the reader that examples or illustrations will follow to clarify, define, explain, or develop an idea or a generalization:

that is (to say) such as specifically for instance as
to illustrate for example as when the following

**Order of Sequence Words** indicate that the arrangement of events, reasons, issues, etc. is according to their order of importance (emphatic order) or the order in which they happened (chronological order):

first second key after vital indeed
especially before despite until meanwhile
and finally there here next
presently from... to whenever when subsequently
ultimately most important then

**Addition Words** indicate that the writer's idea will continue in the same direction with more points or details added:

in addition also next (reason, quality, example, event)
moreover another other (reason, qualities)
furthermore again
Comparison Words signal similarity:

Similarly    likewise    both    just as . . .    so
comparatively alike    same    also
each can be compared

Contrast Words signal the opposite view or change the direction of a previously stated idea. They may signal that the writer may slightly alter or modify an earlier statement:

however    still    even though    instead
despite    although    though    conversely
more than    less than    on the other hand    yet
one . . . the other    but    different from    each
some . . . others    while neither . . . nor/either . . . or
then . . . in contrast    nevertheless    whereas
-er (forms of adjectives)    than (higher than, safer than, greater than)

Cause/Effect Words signal a reason and result relationship:

because    then    since    until
when    whenever    thus    after
as a result    consequently    therefore    hence
from . . . to    if . . . then

Summary Words signal the conclusion of a topic. Sometimes they indicate the most important point within a paragraph or at the end of a longer discussion:

finally    in brief    last    last of all    again
therefore    to repeat    hence    above all
to summarize    to sum up    most important    in conclusion
to conclude    ultimately    to reiterate