

Text Structure

Examining Text Structure

NAME: _____

CLASS: _____

When you read, it is helpful to pay attention to the words an author uses. An author may use certain words to let you know when something in the text is about to change. These kinds of words are called transition words. “Transition” means some kind of movement or change. A transition word acts as a signal. It lets you know that something in the text, such as an idea or a character, is moving or changing. A group of words that does this is called a transition phrase.

Some transition words and phrases give the idea that whatever comes next will agree with, or add to, information that was already stated.



My dog knows the commands “sit” and “stay.” Also, he’s learning “roll over.”

The word “also” is a signal that more of the same kind of information is coming.



My brother is a good cook. For example, he made a tasty dinner last night.

The phrase “for example” is a signal that a certain detail or piece of support is coming.

Other transition words and phrases do the opposite. They give the idea that whatever comes next will not agree with information that was already stated. Or, it may move the action or idea in the sentence in another direction.



Ted wanted to ride his bike but decided to take a walk.

The word “but” is a signal that the action in the second half of the sentence is different than the action in the first half. The action changed from riding a bike to taking a walk.



Simone said she left the book on the desk, yet when she went back to get it, it was not there.

The word “yet” is a signal that the information that follows it does not agree with the information that came before it. The book was there, then it was not.

Here are some transitional words and phrases that are used to show agreement or addition.

also	for example	in addition	as well as
another	like	together with	again
such as	actually	further	plus
too	first, second	in order to	so

Here are some transitional words and phrases that are used to show opposites or disagreement.

but	yet	although	however
then again	though	unlike	besides
rather	or	on the other hand	in contrast
otherwise	still	even though	even if

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► Read these paragraphs and answer the questions that follow.



*What if you had no name? What would your life be like? You may hear “Hey, you!” a lot. **For example:** “Hey, you! Time to eat!” **And,** “Hey, you! Want to play ball?” There is **also,** “Hey, you! How come you don’t have a name?”*

1. In the paragraph above, the transition words “for example,” “and,” and “also” (in bold) are signals that the information that follows them



- A. agrees or adds to the information that came before them.
- B. has nothing to do with the information that came before them.
- C. gives actions that must be done in a certain order.
- D. does not agree with anything stated in the paragraph.



*Billy lived with his mother and sister in a very small house. Billy’s room was the tiniest. It was up, up, up in the attic. **But** Billy didn’t mind. He thought sleeping in his room was almost like sleeping in a tree house.*

2. In the paragraph above, the transition word “but” (in bold) is a signal that whatever comes next will not agree with what came before it. It means that Billy



- A. was angry that his sister picked her room first.
- B. was fine with a room that was both tiny and way up.
- C. wanted a different room in the house.
- D. wanted to sleep in the trees.



*When Jane Goodall was one year old, her father gave her a special gift: a toy chimpanzee. It was brown and cuddly. Jane loved it as soon as she saw it. She took her new friend with her wherever she went. That was the first time Jane ever saw a chimpanzee. **Yet** it would not be her last. Today Jane Goodall is known as one of the best chimpanzee scientists in the world.*

3. In the paragraph above, the transition word “yet” (in bold) is a signal that the information that follows it will be opposite of what came before it. It gives the idea that Jane



- A. is a famous scientist.
- B. had many toy chimpanzees.
- C. liked making new friends.
- D. would see more chimpanzees.

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► Read this paragraph and answer the question that follows.



*A long time ago, people began to sail on the sea. The sea was new to them. They did not know much about it. Often, they were scared of the sea. Why? **Unlike** land, the sea moves. It is cold and dark. It is deep. People cannot live in the sea. We cannot drink seawater.*

4. In the paragraph above, the transition word “unlike” (in bold) is a signal that the information that follows it will not agree with the information that came before it. It means that



- A. people do not like sailing.
- B. the sea is different from land.
- C. people were scared of the land.
- D. the sea has no end.