



GOAL To apply typical language used in reports.

In this activity, you will:

- Use transition words to show how ideas are connected.
- Use proper tone and language register.
- Quote properly using "quotation marks."
- Practise typical language used in reports.

Task A: Transition Words

Transition words help guide your readers by making your text easier to follow. Each transition word is like an arrow pointing the readers in the right direction, i.e. where your reasoning is taking them.

Here are some common ones.

Function	Within One Sentence		Within One Sentence or Between Sentences
	Coordinators	Subordinators	Conjunctive Adverbs
To add an idea	And	Who(m), that	Also, besides, furthermore, in addition, moreover
To contrast	But, yet	Although, even though, whereas, while	However, nevertheless, on the other hand, still
To give a choice or to set a condition or restriction	Or	If, unless	Instead, otherwise
To show cause and effect, or result	So	As, because, since, so that	As a result, consequently, thus

The above transition words in the right column can help you put your ideas in order. These help guide the readers and provide nuances, or subtle differences in meaning. In the table below are some examples showing how these transition words can be used. The addition marker is usually followed by a comma.

Here is an example:

He was seen at a restaurant with the boss's wife. Moreover, he left on a trip with her in a company car just before losing his job.

Note how the addition marker "Moreover" adds additional information and refers back to the first sentence.

Adding an Idea

First Idea—action, event, or situation	Addition Markers	Action, or Event That Is Added
He was seen at a restaurant with the boss's wife.	Also Besides (<i>used to add a negative idea</i>) Furthermore In addition Moreover	he left on a trip with her in a company car just before losing his job.

Contrasting Ideas

First Idea—action, event, or situation	Contrast Markers	Idea That Shows a Difference with the First Idea
The president was not found guilty of fraud.	However	two managers were sent to jail.
They tried inserting secret coded messages in emails.	Nevertheless	the police was able to prove intent.
The case was solved.	Still Yet	many questions remain.

Giving a Choice, Setting a Condition or Restriction

First Idea—action, event, or situation	Transition Words	Idea That Would Not Happen without the Condition or Restriction
Many secretaries have to tell lies to callers.	Otherwise	the boss wouldn't get any work done.

Showing Cause and Effect, or Result

First Idea—action, event, or situation	Cause and Effect Markers	Result
Some fish from the St. Lawrence River might be toxic.	As a result Consequently Therefore	the Fisheries and Ocean Department has listed some fish that should not be consumed.

Here are more examples of markers.

Showing Time or Sequence

First Idea—action, event, or situation	Time or Sequence Markers	Action, or Event That Covers or Follows a Period of Time
She got a job a year ago.	Afterward At the time Next Soon Then	her boss harassed her and another worker.
His paintings were very popular in Ottawa.	Meanwhile	he could not find a gallery that would take his work in Vancouver.
She underwent twelve plastic surgeries.	Nowadays	she walks around with regrets.

Comparing or Showing Similarity

First Idea—action, event, or situation	Similarity Markers	Idea That Is like the First One
Most marketing employees' computers were infected with the virus.	Likewise Similarly	a few computers were infected in the Human Resources Department.

Task B: Practice

17 Choose the correct transition words.

- Some dangerous bacteria do not survive over 40 degrees Celsius. (Nevertheless | Likewise) meat should be cooked properly.
- I am not sure the news is true. (However | Otherwise), we should try to confirm it.
- We cannot publish false information. (Meanwhile | Otherwise), we will lose all credibility.
- We learned a lot about Mars. (Still | Therefore), a lot more has to be studied.
- Simple ideas can save energy in your home. (As a result | Similarly), changing the way you drive can save you money.

See Answer Key



Task C: Tone and Language Register

A transcript of your conversations would not look serious in a report. Written English in a report must be formal. This means that in your writing you need to use the proper **register**, that is, the word that is appropriate for the context. For example, when you talk to friends, you are less careful in your choice of words than you are with customers if you work part-time in a store.

Using the proper register allows you to choose the terms that are appropriate in a given context. In a conversation, you might say: "Her kids look just like her." In a report you might write: "Offspring inherit their parents' genes."

You should also use the proper tone. **Tone** refers to how a text sounds: friendly, funny, melancholic, or other. A report written for people you do not know should neither be too friendly in tone, nor try to be funny.

18 Can you find which words would be more appropriate in a report? Write **W** if the sentence is appropriate in Writing. Write **C** if the sentence is appropriate in casual conversations with friends.

- a) The movie sucked big time. _____
- b) The film lacked any redeeming quality. _____
- c) The delivery will be delayed. _____
- d) The delivery is gonna be late. _____
- e) She underwent breast enhancement surgery. _____
- f) She had an operation to get bigger boobs. _____
- g) What Mr. Langston said in the documentary was a load of bull. _____
- h) Many of Mr. Langston's assertions were questionable. _____
- i) Some of the things they showed in the documentary were kind of yucky. _____
- j) Some parts of the documentary were disgusting. _____
- k) A whole bunch of people can't read. _____
- l) A significant number of people are deemed illiterate. _____
- m) He badmouthed many of his bosses. _____
- n) He criticized many of his superiors. _____
- o) We got your question. _____
- p) We received your query. _____

See Answer Key



LS

6

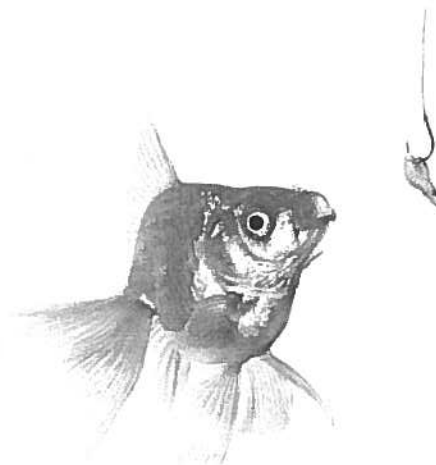
GOAL To write a first draft of an informative text

In this activity, you will:

- Write the first draft of the feature article.
- Lead to a conclusion, summarizing the point of the feature article or its final outcome.

Task A: Begin with a Hook or Lead

Most people will not read a text unless the title and the introduction appear of interest to them. In order to achieve that, you need a good lead. A lead is usually one or two paragraphs that attempt to hook the readers. Keep in mind that the paragraphs are often one or two sentences long. Unlike a news article that begins with the 5 Wh-questions, a feature article often begins with an intriguing opening that makes the readers want to learn more and see where the article is going. A good beginning sets the mood and style of the text. It makes the readers want to read further and should help the readers understand the purpose of the article.



Beginning: the Hook or Lead	Example
<p>Many strategies are possible in writing a lead or hook:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inner thoughts, often attempting to be funny • flashback to an event or a situation • description of a place or people • an anecdote or some dramatic event and what led to it • dialogue <p>If two paragraphs are needed for the lead, the second paragraph will expand on your lead or hook. The readers should learn more about the story and why it's worth reading. What matters about it?</p> <p>If necessary for comprehension, include where and when the story takes place. Include any references that help provide a context for your article.</p> <p>In the example on the right, the last sentence tells you that the mood of the story will be light. We also understand that the writer does not tackle the children for real.</p>	<p><i>My father's recliner chair was right by the telephone. Not once in his life did he get up to pick up the phone. My son's cell is permanently on "silent," not even "vibrate," so we can't reach him unless he calls back. The males in my family seem to have this wish to remain incommunicado, a world away from social interaction. I, on the other hand, would drop everything, tackle my children, trample the dog, and shove aside any competitor to get to the phone before the second ring. Can people who are never told they have won free cruises be normal?</i></p>

LS
9

Task B: The Middle or Body

Use your outline to ensure your text has a good structure. However, as you write, you may get away from it if you find an interesting thread that you had not thought about while planning your article. The middle of the article should maintain the readers' attention, trigger emotions, and make the readers learn something.

Hint

Thread

- The thread connects the different parts of a feature article. It can be a person, an event, or a recurring thing that weaves through the story. It links the lead to the body and the body to the conclusion as a unifying factor.

Middle or Body

The body of the story should provide background information and make the thread clear, with the help of appropriate transitions.

If needed, dialogue or quotes could be included.

A new paragraph should be used for each main idea.

Make sure every idea is related to your focus and purpose, and appeals to your audience.

Example

I can see the point of people with a phone aversion. Telephone calls force you to exchange pleasantries and niceties about your caller's personal life. "Is your cat doing better today?" is not something that my father would have cared to say to my mom's sister. Yet, if you get right down to business and do not chit-chat, some people will take offence. Better let your voice mail do the work.

At work, I can also see why. Even I would rather use email because it traces the evolution of a project. When I am forced to settle something over the phone, I promptly write an email confirming what was just said. This often comes in handy weeks later when we try to recall what we had decided. And before sending an email, you can think. Over the phone, you just react.

We wanted to ask psychology professor Lucy Mariner if phone aversion is in the same range as phobias. Fortunately, she answered the phone. Her response was a flat no. "I think this is more of a personal preference than any embedded fear," she offered. When I asked her if anything negative might affect people who refuse to answer the phone, she stated that, "People may have to deal with angry friends and family, and will eventually end up on the outside of circles of other people. Nobody will try to reach them. It may turn them into outcasts. Mind you, in a lot of cases, this might be getting exactly what they wanted in the first place."

How about people like my weird brother who is assuredly not a phone person? His wife does all the calling. When she is not home, he would rather go and wait at the pizza joint than call and have the pizza delivered. Ms. Mariner explained, "Again, this is more of an aversion, a preference, not what we would consider a phobia." What? My brother is normal?

Some studies show that 90% of cell phone users ignore calls on a regular basis. Clearly, we cannot think that all these people are not normal. Whatever they text you a little later on, "I was driving," "I was in the bathroom," "I was with people and I didn't want them to overhear our conversation," don't take it personally. They live by their own rules and one of these rules is "Don't pick up the phone."

13

In the body of the text above, how is the text organized?

14 What is the thread of the article? Give examples supporting your answer.

See Answer Key 

Task C: Writing the Ending

The ending has to be strong, to make the readers think, remember, or smile.

Ending	Example
<p>The kind of ending may be influenced by your purpose. If your purpose is to inform, you can highlight or summarize what should be remembered. If your purpose is to explain, you may restate some main points. If you want to entertain, you can end with a twist that serves as the final outcome of your story, or you could finish with something that will make the readers think. You can also use a tragic ending if it supports the points you are making in the article, or a happy ending if it fits in with your story.</p> <p>You can also use a quote from one of the people interviewed for the article, but if your article covers different points of view, this may introduce bias.</p>	<p><i>Some people's contempt, or even hatred, for the telephone seems like a journey onto themselves. It is not as if they were at the office, working on projects they can invoice. Meanwhile, I am a slave to the gadget even if this hurts. I just rushed to the phone and bruised my knee in a major way on the coffee table as I reached for the phone. At least, for my trouble, I was offered a free cruise.</i></p>

15 What is the twist at the end of this article?

See Answer Key 

Task D: Write Your First Draft

Use the templates of **Beginning: the Hook or Lead**, Middle or Body, and Ending above to guide you in writing the first draft of your feature article. Use looseleaf or a copybook.

Checklist for your first draft	Yes	No
The text has a hook or introduction that makes the readers want to read the article.		
The text has a clear beginning, middle, and ending.		
The readers can follow the organization of the text.		
The ending matches the purpose of the text.		
Transition words help the readers follow the logic of the text.		

ACTIVITY 3 Revise and Improve Your Text



2 hrs

GOAL To edit your text in order to improve it.

In this activity, you will:

- Link your ideas with appropriate transitions.
- Quote properly.
- Make sure you keep your focus.
- Work on your style.

Task A: Choose the Title

Choose a title that can hook the readers and say something showing what the article is about. If you choose a headline that does not mean much to the readers, they might not want to read the article.

A title like *PM Tickles Ivories* might leave many readers wondering what the article is about. Would everyone understand at once that this is about the Prime Minister playing the piano?

- 16** Suggest a title for the article that you read above about people who don't answer the phone.

See Answer Key



Task B: Link Your Ideas with Appropriate Transitions

Feature articles, in addition to order of importance and comparison / contrast that you have seen earlier, make use of several other methods of organization in order to structure a text.

To make your text coherent and help the readers follow your logic, use transition words whenever they can guide your readers.

Here are some of the main transitions that you saw in Learning Situation 7.

Cause and Effect	<i>Because, consequently, therefore, as a result, since, due to . . .</i>
Chronological Order	<i>First, second, afterward, at the time, then, next, soon, following that, meanwhile . . .</i>
Listing of Ideas or Sequence	<i>First, next, then, before, lastly . . .</i>
Explanation	<i>First, next, because, this results in, behind, following that, to the right of, across from, below that, above that . . .</i>
Example or Illustration	<i>For example, for instance, such as, like, in other words, that is . . .</i>

Here are other transitions that can make your text coherent.

Addition (if you want to sound more sophisticated than just using and)	<i>As well as, besides, in addition, moreover, furthermore</i>
Comparison	<i>Similarly, likewise</i>
Contrast	<i>Yet, however, still, on the other hand, on the contrary</i>
Condition	<i>Otherwise, unless</i>
Emphasis	<i>In fact, indeed</i>
Clarification	<i>In other words, in short, of course</i>

Task C: Quote Properly

Quoting properly is very important to avoid passing off someone else's ideas as your own. This would be plagiarism.

In your article there are two ways you can quote someone: directly or indirectly.

In a direct quotation, you use quotation marks to indicate that the words inside the quotation marks are the words of someone else:

"Unfortunately, the patient was not told about the risks of infection," said Dr. Lou-Ann Palmiero from the MUHC, "and she was negligent about her personal hygiene."

In an indirect quotation, you integrate the person's idea into your text without quotation marks:

Dr. Lou-Ann Palmiero from the MUHC noted that that the patient had not been told about the risks of infection and was negligent about her personal hygiene.

Note that in both direct and indirect quotes the words and ideas are acknowledged as belonging to someone other than yourself. Failure to use direct or indirect quotes is called plagiarism and is against the law.

For more on direct and indirect quotations, refer to Learning Situation 5

Task D: Focus, Style, and Tone

Focus

From the ideas you included in your outline or added as you were writing, double-check to ensure that each one works for your purpose and target audience. You can ask someone to read your article and point out any idea that is not clearly related to your topic. The readers should be able to see a thread through the article.

You can pull out the main idea from each paragraph and see if it goes with the others, like the exercise you did previously in this Learning Situation.

Style

In a feature article, paragraphs are longer than the ones you wrote when you created a news report. They will often contain a topic sentence, the focus of the paragraph, and supporting ideas that add information and details to that focus.

The style in feature articles is often more conversational than in newspaper articles if the subject is primarily of human interest. The language will be more formal when the subject is more serious or if it is published in some formal types of publications.

Here is an example that uses some formal terms:

When the sense of smell flags, the treatment strategy depends on the underlying cause. Antihistamines can help if allergies have led to rhinitis. Leukotriene inhibitors can reduce the size of nasal polyps. Antibiotics are warranted if there's a bacterial sinus infection, although there is a history in the United States of overusing antibiotics for sinus problems.

One of the most effective treatments can be a short course of an oral corticosteroid like prednisone, a powerful anti-inflammatory that shrinks swollen nasal and sinus tissue and "cools off" other aspects of the inflammatory process that may be interfering with olfactory receptors.

Tone

Inconsistency in tone can be identified when informal words and phrases are used in a formal letter, for instance to administrators, or when formal, almost stilted, expressions are used in a text that is intended as friendly.

Avoid an aggressive or an unpleasant tone. For example, don't say that something is *stupid*. The word "stupid" is vague and often insulting. If you disagree with something, say what it is that you disagree with.

Task E: Aesthetic Language, Connotations, and Overused Words

Aesthetic Language

As a writer, you need to find your voice: the characteristics you use to convey emotions, to express your tone, or to add colour to your text. This may imply the use of aesthetic language: figures of speech, e.g. metaphors or hyperboles. See Learning Situation 8 for more information on aesthetic language.

Connotations

A connotation is a cultural or emotional association, either positive or negative, that the word suggests. The association is separate from its literal meaning, which is also called the denotation of the word. For example, the literal meaning of "gold" is a shiny, yellow metal. The connotation, or what gold suggests, is wealth, riches, prestige or other terms that imply being rich. The connotation of the word is different from its actual denotation or literal meaning. For more information on connotations, please refer to Learning Situation 3 and Learning Situation 4.

Practice with Connotations

For terms with similar meanings, e.g. *laugh* and *giggle*, is there any difference in what is suggested and in the tone that is conveyed?

Example:

Why don't you just *shut up* for a change?

You have the right to *remain silent*.

Both terms mean to refrain from speaking. The first one is aggressive and rude. The second one implies that the person just got arrested by the police and is told in a polite manner that remaining silent is a right.

17 Describe and compare what each of the terms in italics might suggest. Identify each phrase in terms of denotation (or literal meaning), positive connotation, or negative connotation.

- a) I thought his solution was *cunning*.

- b) I thought he was *brilliant* in finding the solution.

- c) How many people have been *complaining* about the phone?

- d) Can't you get Joe to stop *whining* about his phone?

- e) Jad comes across as *cocky*.

- f) Jad always looks *proud*.

- g) Joe is too *fat* for sports.

- h) Joe is quite *heavysset* for an athlete.

- i) They want to live ecologically and are quite *frugal*.

- j) You were right. We went for a drink with Al and he's really *tight*. Wouldn't buy a round.

See Answer Key



Task F: Revising Your Text

Wait a couple of days before looking at your text again. This will give you a fresh perspective—what can be deleted? Can some descriptions be simplified? Do some points need to be clarified? Ask a friend or family member to read it and give you feedback. Are there things that need to be explained in a better way?

First, examine the way you developed your text with the first checklist below. Then, go over your text again, this time using the second checklist to ensure that you correct the linguistic problems.

Hint

Overused Words

As you edit your text, look out for terms that are too common and see if you can replace them with more meaningful synonyms. You can find synonyms in a thesaurus which can be found online or in print. Note that most of the words in the list below are informal.

- a lot
- amazing
- awesome
- awfully
- bad
- big
- great
- interesting
- just
- kind of
- many
- pretty
- quite
- really
- so
- totally
- whatever

Editing Checklist for Text Development		Yes	Needs Improvement
Lead or Hook: Does the beginning of the text appeal to readers and say something about the content?			
Paragraphs: Does each paragraph start with a new idea?			
Focus: Is each main idea related to the topic, purpose, and target audience? This will ensure that the text is coherent.			
Support: Are the main points supported with sufficient appropriate examples or references from experts?			
Transitions: Do transitions for subordination and transitions between sentences guide the readers to perceive the logic of the ideas? Are subheadings used to point out main ideas?			
Ending / Conclusion: Does the ending highlight or summarize what the readers should remember? Does the text end with a twist, a quote, or an idea that concludes the article in a suitable manner?			
Accuracy: Is the information accurate? Does it include facts, names, references, or quotes from the persons who were interviewed?			

LS

9

Linguistic Checklist	Yes	Needs Improvement
Agreement: Does the subject in the third person singular agree with a verb in the present tense? If so, -s or -es is needed to be added to the verb.		
Apostrophes: Did you show possession or relationship by using an apostrophe before -s for singular nouns, after -s for regular plural nouns? Use -s without an apostrophe to create the plural form of nouns. If you are not sure about <i>it's</i> and <i>they're</i> , use the full form: <i>it is</i> ; <i>they are</i> .		
Capital Letters: Did you check if days, months, historical events, holidays, geographic areas, nationalities, languages, organizations, including acronyms like NASA, are capitalized? Check the first letter of every sentence.		
Loose or Ambiguous References: Can the readers know who or what a pronoun is referring to?		
Punctuation: Are commas used properly, especially when there is a subordinate clause in the sentence?		
Reported Speech: Do quotations follow the proper format with quotation marks and commas?		
Spelling: Did you double-check words that could often cause problems?		
Verb Tenses and Verb Tense Sequence: Do the chosen verb tenses correspond to the time of the action? In reported speech, the time references need to be adjusted.		
Word Choice and Level of Language: Are the chosen terms appropriate to the context? Is the text about a serious analysis or could it use a lighter tone? Informal language of everyday conversations should not be used in a text about a serious topic. Connotations and figures of speech can help reflect the overall meaning.		
Overused Words: Can synonyms be used instead of words that are overused?		

ACTIVITY 4 Laying It All Out



2 hrs

GOAL To design the layout of your feature article.

In this activity, you will:

- Choose where to place the title.
- Choose where to place the byline.
- Determine if you want one, two, or three columns.
- Determine whether you need some subheadings.
- Add pictures and captions if necessary.
- Add a sidebar if necessary.