

Showing contrast and cause

If you repeat the same words and structures, your writing will become monotonous. Good writers always make a conscious effort to avoid repeating vocabulary within the same paragraph if possible. Fortunately, in English we can express the same idea in very many ways.

Showing opposition or contrast

Ideas that can be expressed using the coordinating conjunctions *but* and *yet* can also be expressed using the subordinating conjunctions *though*, *even though*, and *although*.

Study the examples given below.

It was raining, but we went out.

It was raining, yet we went out.

Though / although / even though it was raining, we went out.

We can also express the same ideas using the transitional adverbs *however*, *nevertheless* and *nonetheless*.

It was raining; however, we went out.

It was raining; nevertheless / nonetheless, we went out.

Note that transitional adverbs (also called conjunctive adverbs) are not conjunctions. They cannot connect two clauses. A transitional adverb usually goes at the beginning of a clause and is separated by a full stop or a semicolon from the clause that goes before it.

Some prepositions can also be used to show contrast. Examples are: *in spite of* and *despite*. Note that prepositions are followed by nouns or pronouns which act as their objects.

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In spite of the rain, we went out. OR Despite the rain, we went out. (NOT In spite of it was raining, we went out.)

Showing cause

We can show the cause of an action or a situation using several different structures.

Study the examples given below.

He was never on time, so he lost his job.

He was never on time and therefore he lost his job.

He was never on time and consequently he lost his job.

He was never on time and as a result he lost his job.

The expressions consequently, therefore, and as a result are transitional adverbs. They cannot connect two clauses; however, when they are preceded by the conjunction and, they act like conjunctions.

Compare:

He worked hard and therefore he succeeded.

OR

He worked hard; therefore, he succeeded.

Note the use of the semicolon in the second sentence.