

# SAT Prep

## Expression of Ideas 2



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## What are “Transition” questions?

On the Reading and Writing section of your SAT, some questions will ask you to select the **most logical transition word or phrase** to connect information and ideas within a brief passage.

### Example:

Iraqi artist Nazik Al-Malaika celebrated as the first Arabic poet to write in free verse, didn’t reject traditional forms entirely; her poem “Elegy for a Woman of No Importance” consists of two ten-line stanzas and a standard number of syllables. Even in this superficially traditional work, \_\_\_\_\_ Al-Malaika was breaking new ground by memorializing an anonymous woman rather than a famous man.

### Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?

- A. in fact,
- B. though,
- C. therefore,
- D. moreover,



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## How should we think about transitions?

Transitions are the glue that holds ideas together. They connect sentences in ways that tell the reader *how* those sentences are related.

Is there an argument being made?

A story being told?

The transitions used in the text should reflect that relationship.

## The relationships between ideas usually fall into the following categories:

- Agreement or Disagreement
- Sequence and Order
- Addition and Exemplification
- Cause and Effect



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## Agreement or Disagreement

Do the sentences express the same underlying idea? If so, we may want to use an *agreement* transition like "similarly".

**Example:** Lentils are an excellent way to add plant-based protein to one's diet. Similarly, other legumes, like beans and chickpeas, can serve as integral protein sources for vegans and vegetarians.

Other common *agreement* transitions include again, also, correspondingly, equally, and likewise.

Do the sentences identify a disagreement or contrast? If so, we may want to use a *disagreement* transition like "however".

**Example:** The rock star Prince was a multi-instrumentalist, having played 27 instruments on his debut album. However, he is primarily remembered as a guitarist and vocalist.

Other common *disagreement* transitions include but, yet, conversely, though, still, in contrast, although, nevertheless, and on the other hand.



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## Sequence and Order

Are the events in the sentences being organized by time or by position? If so, we may want to use a *sequence* transition like "**previously**".

**Example:** The Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *A Confederacy of Dunces* was published in 1980, seventeen years after it was written. **Previously**, the novel had been rejected by many different publishers.

Other common *sequence* transitions include **then, later, before, first, finally, and subsequently**.



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## Addition and Exemplification

Does the second sentence elaborate on the first? If so, we may want to use an *addition* transition like "furthermore".

**Example:** Moles are highly suited to their lifestyle, with short, powerful forelimbs adapted for digging. Furthermore, moles have evolved to require less oxygen, allowing them to avoid suffocation while underground.

Other common *addition* transitions include additionally, also, too, moreover, and in fact.

Does the second sentence provide an example? If so, we may want to use an *exemplification* transition like "for instance".

**Example:** Throughout history, painters were endangered by poisonous ingredients in their paints. The use of lead in white paint, for instance, caused lead poisoning in many famous artists, including Vincent Van Gogh.

Other common *exemplification* transitions include for example, for one thing, and to demonstrate.



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## Cause and Effect

Is the second sentence caused by or a consequence of the idea in the first sentence? If so, we may want to use a *cause-and-effect* transition like "therefore".

**Example:** The Hubble Space Telescope has provided astronomical insights for over 30 years, but its eventual breakdown is inevitable. Therefore, its successor, the James Webb Space Telescope, was launched in late 2021.

Other common *cause and effect* transitions include since, because, subsequently, thus, as a result, and consequently.



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## How to approach transition questions

Transitions questions ask you to select the "most logical transition". However, these questions are actually as much about how well you understand the text as they are about the transitions themselves. So be sure to **read carefully!**

To answer a transition question, follow these three steps:

### **Step 1:** *Summarize the text in your own words*

Don't just skim the passage. Read it closely, and try to summarize the main idea in your own words. This can be tricky since an important transition word is missing. If you're struggling to understand the text, try to translate each sentence into a simple bullet point.

### **Step 2:** *Identify the relationship between the passage's ideas*

The transition we're asked to select will connect two ideas from the passage. How are those ideas related? Do they disagree? Does one cause the other? We should be able to place the relationship into one of the four categories discussed above.

### **Step 3:** *Select the transition that matches the relationship*

Only one of the choices will offer a transition that matches the relationship we identified. We can select it with confidence!

If you find yourself stuck between two choices, try plugging them each into the blank. Which transition creates the clearest meaning when placed in context?





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## Tips and Strategies

**Be flexible:** There is an enormous variety of transition words and phrases, and the exact transition you expect to see might not be offered in the choices. If you think the sentence needs a disagreement word, but "however" isn't an option, look for a transition with a similar function (like "on the other hand").

**Eliminate copycats:** If two choices seem to function in a similar or interchangeable way (like "also" and "in addition"), you can safely *eliminate them both*. They can't both be right, so they must both be wrong!



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Cause/ Effect	Contrast	Addition	Examples	Conclusion
for for the same reason obviously evidently indeed that is	on the other hand on the contrary by comparison compared to against but, although, conversely, meanwhile, after all, in contrast, although this may be true	and also furthermore in addition as well then moreover besides	for instance for example in particular to illustrate to demonstrate such as specifically	as shown as said hence therefore accordingly thus as a result consequently

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Cause/ Effect	Contrast	Addition	Examples	Conclusion
subsequently	but	and	for instance	overall
therefore	however	also furthermore	for example	in fact ultimately
correspondingly	although	in addition	in particular	in brief
as a result	nevertheless	as well	to illustrate	on the whole
since	despite	then	to demonstrate	summing up
because	on the other hand	moreover	such as	to conclude
	yet	besides	specifically	in conclusion

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1. Reforestation efforts, while undeniably valuable, often result in forests with limited biodiversity. \_\_\_\_\_ care should be taken to plant a wide variety of native flora in depleted woodlands.

**Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?**

- A. However,
- B. Accordingly,
- C. Nevertheless,
- D. Furthermore,

2. The "Gordie Howe hat trick", an unofficial feat in which a hockey player scores a goal, records an assist, and gets in a fight all in the same game, is named after hockey great Gordie Howe.

\_\_\_\_\_ Howe only achieved two such games in his professional career, far fewer than many other players.

**Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?**

- A. Despite the fact,
- B. As such,
- C. Afterwards,
- D. As a result,

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3. Justine refuses to continue the family legacy of bull-riding \_\_\_\_\_ the rodeo judges permit her to ride the same-sized bull that her father rode.

**Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?**

- A. unless
- B. and
- C. provided that
- D. instead

4. In 1892, Americans wanted a public structure to rival the Eiffel Tower, \_\_\_\_\_ an engineer named George Ferris designed the Ferris wheel.

**Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?**

- A. for
- B. although
- C. so
- D. or

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5. Andre and Chuck played chess together \_\_\_\_\_ after fifteen years, Andre had only won once.

**Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?**

- A. every day, but
- B. every day, since
- C. every day,
- D. every day, for

6. \_\_\_\_\_ the Declaration of Independence was approved on July 4 of 1776, it was not actually signed until August 2.

**Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?**

- A. Before
- B. Given that
- C. Because
- D. Although

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7. \_\_\_\_\_ it may not be the longest in history, one 2010 traffic jam near Beijing, China lasted for 12 days and spanned 62 miles.

**Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?**

- A. Whereas
- B. Considering
- C. But
- D. Although

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8. Transportation planners work closely with a number of community stakeholders, such as government officials and other interested organizations and individuals. \_\_\_\_\_ representatives from the local public health department might provide input in designing a network of trails and sidewalks to encourage people to walk more. According to the American Heart Association, walking provides numerous benefits related to health and well-being. Members of the Chamber of Commerce might share suggestions about designing transportation and parking facilities to support local businesses.

**Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?**

- A. To summarize,
- B. On the other hand,
- C. For example,
- D. Subsequently,



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9. Animals that live in the Everglades must tolerate periods of flood and drought; in fact, some species rely on them. The seeds of saw grass and cypress, for example, germinate primarily on dry ground, \_\_\_\_\_ the plants themselves can survive a year or more of rainfall. The annual wet season and prolonged periods of flood are a boon for birds that eat snails living in flooded marshes; the annual dry season and prolonged periods of drought are also a boon for birds that gorge on fish concentrated in the shrinking pools.

**Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?**

- A. even though
- B. similarly
- C. additionally
- D. for example

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10. Many common substances found in household items are dangerous to people's \_\_\_\_\_ that they are harmless in very small amounts. In addition, factors such as temperature or length of exposure may affect substances' potential to cause harm.

**Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?**

- A. health, however, experts insist
- B. health; however, experts insist
- C. health, but experts insisting
- D. health, nevertheless, experts insist

11. In the past, coffees were blended and branded to suit a homogenous popular taste, \_\_\_\_\_ that has recently changed in response to a growing awareness of regional differences.

**Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?**

- A. therefore
- B. but
- C. moreover
- D. so

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12. The Taj Mahal is regarded as one of the eight wonders of the world, \_\_\_\_\_ some historians have noted that its architectural beauty has never been surpassed.

**Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?**

- A. although
- B. and
- C. finally
- D. because

13. Although we know the fourth planet from the sun as "Mars" today, \_\_\_\_\_ it has had many names from many different cultures.

**Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?**

- A. because
- B. after
- C. given that
- D. yet

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14. Franklin struggled with French pronunciation, \_\_\_\_\_ his professor suggested that he watch French movies to become more familiar with the sound of the language.

**Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?**

- A. so
- B. because
- C. yet
- D. or

15. Some scientists propose that thumb sucking in children is a habit which is developed at birth, \_\_\_\_\_ a recent theory suggests that it is neurologically and genetically based.

**Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?**

- A. and
- B. considering that
- C. but
- D. since

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16. As the hot air balloon got close to the surface of the lake, Ginger jumped and landed in the water \_\_\_\_\_ she could not take one more terrible joke from the pilot.

**Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?**

- A. and
- B. but
- C. even though
- D. because

17. When surfing, I don't wear shiny jewelry or bright colors \_\_\_\_\_ I don't attract sharks.

**Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?**

- A. since
- B. so that
- C. and
- D. because

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18. As I learned, medieval castles served a primarily military purpose – \_\_\_\_\_ they housed armies and acted as garrisons that controlled a particular territory. Furthermore, castles were key staging points for conquests and defenses of territories. Many castles, particularly those that were part of fortified towns, sheltered the surrounding villagers in times of war and siege.

**Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?**

- A. that is,
- B. however,
- C. furthermore,
- D. likewise,

19. I'm going to give you the bad news first. The distances between stars are so large that they might be impossible to routinely cross. Sure, maybe you send robot probes that reach their target in two hundred years (and then you need another century or so for a message to get back). \_\_\_\_\_ the possibility that you, I, or anybody else can pop around to the best vacation planets in the galactic empire may simply be excluded by the laws of physics.

**Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?**

- A. And
- B. But
- C. So
- D. Or

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20. Greek yogurt is slightly lower in sugar and carbohydrates than conventional yogurt is. \_\_\_\_\_ because it is more concentrated, Greek yogurt contains slightly more protein per serving, thereby helping people stay satiated for longer periods of time.

**Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?**

- A. Also,
- B. In other words,
- C. Therefore,
- D. For instance,

21. Typically, the ice sheet begins to show evidence of thawing in the late summer, following several weeks of higher temperatures. \_\_\_\_\_ in the summer of 2012, virtually the entire Greenland Ice Sheet underwent thawing at or near its surface by mid-July, the earliest date on record.

**Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?**

- A. For example,
- B. However,
- C. As such,
- D. Moreover

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22. The spaces are usually stocked with standard office equipment, such as photocopiers, printers, and fax machines. \_\_\_\_\_ the spaces often include small meeting areas and larger rooms for hosting presentations.

**Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?**

- A. In these locations, however,
- B. In addition to equipment,
- C. For these reasons,
- D. Likewise,

23. Long viewed by many as the stereotypical useless major, philosophy is now being seen by many students and prospective employers as in fact a very useful and practical major, offering students a host of transferable skills with relevance to the modern workplace. \_\_\_\_\_ philosophy is the study of meaning and the values underlying thought and behavior.

**Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?**

- A. In broad terms,
- B. For example,
- C. In contrast,
- D. Nevertheless,



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24. The Groupon advertisement said these sensory deprivation sessions relax the mind. They start by placing you at square one—stripped all the way down to your skin. A session starts with a shower in which the dirt and grime of the world are scrubbed and shampooed away. \_\_\_\_\_, you step into the tank. It's warmed to the surface temperature of human skin and has about one thousand pounds of Epsom salt dissolved into 220 gallons of clean water.

**Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?**

- A. Next
- B. Yet
- C. Still
- D. Finally

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## Additional Class Questions

25. In a heated debate in biogeography, the field is divided between dispersalists and vicariancists. \_\_\_\_\_ there are those who argue that dispersal is the most crucial determining factor in a species' distribution and those who insist that vicariance (separation due to geographic barriers) is. Biogeographer Isabel Sanmartín counts herself among neither.

**Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?**

- A. Furthermore,
- B. By contrast,
- C. Similarly,
- D. That is,

26. Alexander Lawrence Posey (1873–1908) varied his focus and tone depending on the genre in which he was writing. In his poetry, he used heartfelt language to evoke the beauty and peacefulness of his natural surroundings; in his journalism, \_\_\_\_\_ he employed humor and satire to comment on political issues affecting his Muskogee Creek community.

**Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?**

- A. by contrast,
- B. granted,
- C. that is,
- D. similarly,

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27. “O2 Arena,” an award-winning science fiction story by Nigerian author Oghenechovwe Donald Ekpeki, takes place in an alternate version of Nigeria where breathable air is a rare commodity that is owned and sold by companies. \_\_\_\_\_ people must purchase it with a currency called O2 credits.

**Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?**

- A. Nevertheless,
- B. In any case,
- C. As a result,
- D. Earlier,

28. A 2017 study of sign language learners tested the role of iconicity—the similarity of a sign to the thing it represents—in language acquisition. The study found that the greater the iconicity of a sign, the more likely it was to have been learned. \_\_\_\_\_ the correlation between acquisition and iconicity was lower than that between acquisition and another factor studied: sign frequency.

**Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?**

- A. In fact,
- B. In other
- C. Granted,
- D. As a result,

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29. Before the 1847 introduction of the US postage stamp, the cost of postage was usually paid by the recipient of a letter rather than the sender, and recipients were not always able or willing to pay promptly. \_\_\_\_\_ collecting this fee could be slow and arduous, and heaps of unpaid-for, undeliverable mail piled up in post offices.

**Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?**

- A. Regardless,
- B. On the contrary,
- C. Consequently,
- D. For example,

30. It has long been thought that humans first crossed a land bridge into the Americas approximately 13,000 years ago. \_\_\_\_\_ based on radiocarbon dating of samples uncovered in Mexico, a research team recently suggested that humans may have arrived more than 30,000 years ago—much earlier than previously thought.

**Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?**

- A. As a result,
- B. Similarly,
- C. However,
- D. In conclusion,

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31. Seismologists Kaiqing Yuan and Barbara Romanowicz have proposed that the magma fueling Iceland’s more than 30 active volcano systems emerges from deep within Earth. The great depths involved—nearly 3,000 km—mark Iceland’s volcanoes as extreme outliers; \_\_\_\_\_ many of Earth’s volcanoes are fed by shallow pockets of magma found less than 15 km below the surface.

**Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?**

- A. consequently,
- B. in addition,
- C. indeed,
- D. nevertheless,

32. For years, biologists have experimented with using grime-eating bacteria rather than harsh chemicals to clean artworks, and results have been impressive overall. \_\_\_\_\_ these bacterial strains—which can metabolize centuries’ worth of oil, glue, dirt, and other surface impurities without creating harmful by-products—have proven more effective than traditional chemical cleaning methods.

**Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?**

- A. Additionally,
- B. In many cases,
- C. As a result,
- D. However,

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33. Researchers believe that pieces of hull found off Oregon’s coast are from a Spanish cargo ship that was lost in 1697. Stories passed down among the area’s Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians support this belief. \_\_\_\_\_ Siletz stories describe how blocks of beeswax, an item the ship had been carrying, began washing ashore after the ship was lost. **Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?**
- A. For this reason,
  - B. For example,
  - C. However,
  - D. Likewise,

34. When one looks at the dark craggy vistas in Hitoshi Fugo’s evocative photo series, one’s mind might wander off to the cratered surfaces of faraway planets. \_\_\_\_\_ it’s the series’ title, *Flying Frying Pan*, that brings one back to Earth, reminding the viewer that each photo is actually a close-up view of a familiar household object: a frying pan. **Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?**
- A. Alternatively,
  - B. Consequently,
  - C. Ultimately,
  - D. Additionally,

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35. “Wishcycling”—putting nonrecyclable items into recycling bins under the mistaken belief that those items can be recycled—ultimately does more harm than good. Nonrecyclable items, such as greasy pizza boxes, can contaminate recyclable materials, rendering entire batches unusable. \_\_\_\_\_ nonrecyclable products can damage recycling plants’ machinery.

**Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?**

- A. Moreover,
- B. Fittingly,
- C. Nevertheless,
- D. On the contrary,

36. The number of dark spots that appear on the Sun, known as sunspots, can vary greatly. For example, there were about 180 sunspots in November 2001. \_\_\_\_\_ there were only about 2 sunspots in December 2008.

**Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?**

- A. In other words,
- B. Similarly,
- C. Therefore,
- D. By comparison,

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37. Deer mice are noted for their dramatic population increase after forest fires. There are fewer obvious food sources in severely burned areas, and fires often remove all vegetation, giving mice no place to hide and increasing their risk of predation. \_\_\_\_\_ apparent disadvantages, it's actually possible that fires improve conditions for deer mice. Because severe fires burn the top soil layer, mice are able to access previously unexposed parts of the seed bank. Furthermore, although lack of vegetation cover greatly increases the hunting success of owls preying on deer mice, this effect is likely counterbalanced by a decrease in predators in burned areas.

**Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?**

- A. As these
- B. While these
- C. Since usually
- D. But despite these



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38. When composing music for film, Japanese composer Joe Hisaishi typically uses traditional orchestral instrumentation with the piano as the lead, resulting in emotional, contemplative melodies. \_\_\_\_\_ for the score of the animated film *Spirited Away*, he incorporated some unorthodox digital instruments, such as synthesized chimes and bells, to create the whimsical, otherworldly sound of the spirit world.

**Which choice completes the text with the most logical transition?**

- A. However,
- B. Moreover,
- C. Similarly,
- D. Therefore,



*Thank you*