Making Smooth Transitions

Sentences in English typically begin with the grammatical subject, followed immediately by the predicate. However, this pattern is sometimes altered by the addition of an introductory word or phrase. The purpose of such an addition is usually to show some sort of connection between sentences, to transition from one to the next.

Grammatically, these transition elements are nearly always some type of modifier. This broad category includes 1) adverbs, 2) prepositional phrases, 3) infinitives, 4) participial phrases, and 5) subordinate clauses.

1) Similarly, However, Therefore, Specifically,
2) For example, In other words, In particular, As a result,
3) To reiterate, To put it briefly, To better understand the situation,
4) Considering the drawbacks, Given the consequences, All things being equal,
5) Although this sounds reasonable, If this is the case, When all is said and done,

Writers use transitional expressions to link ideas within sentences, sentences within paragraphs, and paragraphs within essays. A truly comprehensive list of all the transitional words and phrases in the English language would literally go on forever, but the following is a good start. These expressions are sorted according to their usual function in writing.

Sequence: First of all, Second, Next, Finally, Lastly, In the past, Previously, Initially, Before, In modern times, Currently, During, Meanwhile, Subsequently, Later, As soon as, After, Eventually,

Cause/Effect: Because ____, Because of ____, Since ____, As ____, Due to ____, Therefore, Consequently, Thus, As a result, Accordingly, For this reason, This is why So that ____, In order to ____, For ____, If ____, If this is true, then Otherwise, In any case,

Comparison: Similarly, Similar to ____, Likewise, In the same vein, Along the same line, Compared to ____, Unlike ____, Whereas ____, In contrast, However, Nevertheless, That said, Although ____, Even though ____, Despite ____, ____ notwithstanding, On one hand, On the other hand,

Support: In fact, For example, For instance, In particular, Specifically, In other words, Furthermore, Moreover, Also, All in all, Again, Besides ____, In addition, Additionally, Of course, Incidentally,

Conclusion: In short, To sum up, To put it briefly, Overall, Given ____, Given that ____, All things considered, In conclusion,