

## How to use words appropriately

### Before you begin

#### What you need:

Related text: **“Cranes Fly South” by Edward McCourt**

*Exit with Success* and *The Bare Essentials Plus* (optional)

An English dictionary

Approximate time this exercise should take you: **15 minutes**

### Reminder

You must be careful to select the most appropriate words to convey your intended meaning. One area of word choice that is very important is the selection of the correct transitional word. Transitional words or phrases are used to relate one point to the next and to add coherence to each paragraph and, of course, to the essay as a whole. Effective word choice here will help you maintain a well-structured response. Your transitional words should guide your reader to the next point you are planning to make. If you select the wrong transitional word, your reader could be confused. Transitions are commonly used to **show a time relation**, to **add an idea**, to **show contrast**, to **show cause and effect** or to **set up concluding remarks**.

Below is a list of some common transitional words and phrases. For others, consult *Exit with Success*.

**To show a time relation:** afterward, finally, next, first/second/third

**To add an idea:** in addition, similarly, for example, for instance

**To show contrast:** nevertheless, on the other hand, however, in contrast

**To indicate cause and effect:** as a result, consequently, thus

**To indicate concluding remarks:** finally, all in all, in brief, in conclusion, in short

## Instructions

In the following exercise, you will practise choosing transitional words and phrases in a paragraph analysing Edward McCourt's short story "Cranes Fly South." Underline the most appropriate transitional word or phrase in each of the numbered choices in the paragraph below. The first correct choice is underlined as an example. Note that you should always insert a comma after using a transitional word at the beginning of a sentence.

# Exercise

McCourt uses symbolism to associate the grandfather with the whooping cranes. **Consequently/For example/However**, the grandfather emphasizes that the cranes are nearly extinct: “Ain’t no whooping cranes nowadays [...] Boy I ain’t seen a whooper for forty years.” **1. In contrast/However/Instead**, he remembers them distinctly and nostalgically: “First you hear a sound far off and you figger it’s thunder—and it gits louder and nearer, and soon it’s like a freight train right over your head [...]” **2. In fact/Finally**, Grandpa identifies with this extinct bird as is clear when he says “you feel like you want to go too [...] Breaks your heart almost, you want to go that bad, when you hear that thunder [...]” **3. In addition/On the contrary**, Lee points out that the birds migrate south in the winter. **4. Finally/Accordingly**, the grandfather responds, “I’m going south too [...] You can set in the sun all winter and see things beside flatness. Man gets mighty tired of flatness—after eighty years.” **5. Therefore/On the contrary**, when they finally see the crane, it is described in terms of a religious experience. **6. Thus/Formerly**, “They stood together, man and boy, held by an enchantment that was no part of the drab, flat world about them. The great bird rose steadily higher [...] He seemed to hang immobile, suspended in space beyond the limits of the world. Then the whiteness faded, blended with the pale of the sky and was gone.” **7. Appropriately/However**, the grandfather exclaims, “Great God in heaven.” **8. On the contrary/Furthermore**, McCourt prepares the reader for the grandfather’s death. **9. In particular/Nevertheless**, the flight of the birds is associated with darkness, and the darkness that comes to the grandfather as “the light in his eyes faded and went out” seems welcome. **10. Even so/Finally**, both the bird and Grandpa have gone south.

# Answer key

*If you are unsure of the exact meaning of the correct choice of transitional word, look it up in your dictionary.*

*Compare your answers to the underlined choices in the paragraph below.*

McCourt uses symbolism to associate the grandfather with the whooping cranes. **For example**, the grandfather emphasizes that the cranes are nearly extinct: “Ain’t no whooping cranes nowadays [...] Boy I ain’t seen a whooper for forty years.” **1. However**, he remembers them distinctly and nostalgically: “First you hear a sound far off and you figger it’s thunder—and it gits louder and nearer, and soon it’s like a freight train right over your head [...]” **2. In fact**, Grandpa identifies with this extinct bird, as is clear when he says “you feel like you want to go too [...] Breaks your heart almost, you want to go that bad, when you hear that thunder [...]” **3. In addition**, Lee points out that the birds migrate south in the winter. **4. Accordingly**, the grandfather responds, “I’m going south too [...] You can set in the sun all winter and see things beside flatness. Man gets mighty tired of flatness—after eighty years.” **5. Therefore**, when they finally see the crane it is described in terms of a religious experience. **6. Thus**, “They stood together, man and boy, held by an enchantment that was no part of the drab, flat world about them. The great bird rose steadily higher [...] He seemed to hang immobile, suspended in space beyond the limits of the world. Then the whiteness faded, blended with the pale of the sky and was gone.” **7. Appropriately**, the grandfather exclaims, “Great God in heaven.” **8. Furthermore**, McCourt prepares the reader for the grandfather’s death. **9. In particular**, the flight of the birds is associated with darkness, and the darkness that comes to the grandfather as “the light in his eyes faded and went out” seems welcome. **10. Finally**, both the bird and Grandpa have gone south.