Transitions are your way of letting your audience know that you are changing ideas. It is generally best to write clear, concise, and complete sentences for your transitions. Your presentation organization should be crystal clear to the audience. The organization starts with a clear preview in the introduction (see the “Introductions & Conclusions” handout), but transitions serve a vital role in keeping the audience on the same page. You should use transitions every time you change ideas. As a general rule, you should use transitions after your introduction, between each main point, and before your conclusion.

Here are some examples of common transitions:

**Internal Preview:** Highlighting what you are going to say  
Examples:  
- First, let’s consider the two main causes of public school budgetary shortfalls.  
- I’d like to begin by explaining the different types of school funding options.

**Internal Summary:** Reinforcing what you just said  
Examples:  
- With these cases in mind—a shrinking tax base and changing population—I hope the problem is clearer.  
- Now you may see why one funding option presents the best solution.

**Review-preview:** Combining the idea of the internal preview and internal summary.  
Examples:  
- Now that we’ve established a need for public transportation, let’s see which option might be most effective. I will focus on two types: buses and light rail.  
- In short, fundraising efforts are needed because of budget reductions and increased expenses. Next, we’ll look at our fundraising options.

**Rhetorical Questions:** A leading question that doesn’t invite an actual response, followed by the answer that you want  
Example:  
- Does the death penalty prevent crime? There’s actually no empirical evidence to show that it does.

**Signposting:** Short words or phrases that let your audience know where you are in your speech. For example: next, first, last, we now turn, on the other hand, finally, now let’s consider, and yet, etc.
Examples:
- Next, let’s consider the available options.
- Now that we understand the main issues, let’s consider the options for solving the problem.
- Secondly, consider the public option.

**Themed transitions:** Be creative! For example, some speakers choose to carry out a theme throughout the speech.

Examples:
- Let’s begin our journey by looking at the panhandle of Texas. . . The next stop on our journey is East Texas, known for its lush forests. . . Next, we will drive down to South Texas to explore the Valley. . . etc.

- Another option is to carry a story or example throughout the speech. Let’s say you tell a shocking story about a college student named Sara contracting bacterial meningitis in the introduction. The transitions might look something like this:
  - Like Sara, you are at risk for contracting bacterial meningitis. Let’s talk more specifically about how you can contract the disease. (transition from introduction to first main point)
  - Unlike Sara, you have the ability to prevent bacterial meningitis. (transition into second main point)
  - So, I encourage you to keep Sara’s story in mind as you make decisions over the next few stressful weeks. (transition into the conclusion)

Transitions are most noticeable when they are missing. By adding them when you change main points, the audience will most likely only notice your smooth delivery. The audience will also never have to guess where you are in your speech, what you just explained, or what is coming up next.