Help your students make powerful connections in their writing! This lesson will teach your learners about using the correct transition words when writing personal narratives.

**Learning Objectives**

Students will be able to use transition words and phrases to indicate sequential events in a personal narrative.

**Materials and Preparation**

- Notecards with transition words (e.g. first of all, before long, or afterwards) written on them, one per student
- Chart paper
- Writing journals

**Key Terms**

- transition words

**Introduction (5 minutes)**

- Ask the class to put their thumbs up if they have ever baked cookies or a cake.
- Engage the class in discussion by asking, "When you start reading the directions, does it ever say, 'Last, add the sugar. Next, crack the eggs. First, pour in the flour'?
- Challenge students to think about why these directions are not correct.
- Invite a volunteer put the directions in the correct order. Ask the volunteer to explain how they know this is the correct order.

**Explicit Instruction/Teacher Modeling (5 minutes)**

- Share that using the correct transition words makes a big difference. Transition words are the words that signal the order of events. They let you know what is happening first, second, third, and so on. There are many different transition words you could use to let your audience know the events in your narrative. You could use first, next, then, and last. You could use first, second, third, and finally. You could start with first of all, afterwards, soon after that, and later. There are many different options that show the transition from one thought to the next.
- Remind them that they always need to add a comma after using a transition word.
- Write the transition words out on chart paper while you give them as examples.
- Ask learners to turn and talk to a partner about the following questions: What are examples of transition words? Why is it important to use transition words in personal narratives?

**Guided Practice/Interactive Modeling (10 minutes)**

- Prepare a fill-in-the-blank story (with blanked transition words) on the board prior to the beginning of the lesson. For example:

  A year ago, I was just a little girl. I lived with my parents, sister, and brother. One day we were out for a walk and we found a snake. ________, my sister screamed! She hates snakes. ________, my brother started looking for a stick so he could kill the snake. ________, my dad shouted, “Stay away from that snake!” ________, we turned around and ran as fast as we could all the way
home!

- Explain to the class that during Guided Practice, they will each have a notecard with a transition word. They will listen to a story written on the board and they will hold up their notecard if they think their transition word could fit at that point in the story. There may be more than one correct answer per blank, so share that it may be necessary to stop and pause to see if the whole class agrees with the transition words chosen for each blank.

**Independent Working Time (20 minutes)**

- Give students 20 minutes to either write their first draft of their personal narratives (including transition words) or read through what they might have already written and add transition words.
- Engage the class in a discussion about why it is so important that we add transition words when writing narratives.
- Have students work on the assignment independently.

**Differentiation**

- **Enrichment:** If you have students who finish early and need an extra challenge, have them exchange stories with other students and have them give two comments of feedback to each other.
- **Support:** Students struggling with writing a longer personal narrative may need to draw pictures of each event. The students could then choose one transition word to add per picture. Make sure they also have access to a list of transition words so they can choose the best ones.

**Assessment (10 minutes)**

- Circulate and conduct mini conferences with students while they work. See if they understand how to incorporate transition words successfully into their personal narrative.
- Display three sentences on the board and have students fill in the blank with an appropriate transition word. For example:

  One day I made lunch all by myself. _____ I got out the bread. _____ I spread peanut butter over the bread. _____ I added the jelly. _____ I ate it all up!

  - Remind students to add the correct punctuation as well.

**Review and Closing (5 minutes)**

- Have students turn and talk to a partner to create one sentence to answer the following question: Why is it so important to add transition words in narratives?
- Accept student answers, and challenge them to orally produce a few sentences that use transition words to signal an order of events.