WRITING – Organization

Organization is important in writing because it helps readers follow your ideas. It is the logical progression (movement) and completeness of ideas in a text. When you use signals to direct a reader, it helps to create organization. Cohesive, or transitional, words and phrases are examples of these types of signals. When you don't use them, your writing may be difficult for your reader to follow because it seems choppy, or rough, and unconnected.

Sequence/order
first, second, third, next, then, to begin, to conclude, finally

Reinforcement/similarity
also, furthermore, in addition, besides

Alternative/contrast
on the other hand, alternatively, however

Example
for example, for instance, that is, in other words

Result/consequence
therefore, as a result

Summary/conclusion
In conclusion, to summarize, therefore

Here is what it looks like in a sentence.
Can you spot the transitional words or phrases?

The nurse began gathering the patient's health history. First, she confirmed the patient's name.

Nurses' working hours will increase by 25%. As a result, it is expected that fewer trainee nurses will join the profession.

(Answer: first, as a result)

Add a transitional expression

In the following sentence, a nurse narrates details of an incident that happened on her ward. Use one of the following expressions to show how the two sentences are related (therefore, then, besides).

Example

Use **then** to show how sentences 1 and 2 are related.

1. I helped the patient get back into bed.

2. I checked her for injuries.

(I helped the patient get back into bed. *Then* I checked her for injuries.)

Additional strategies to develop organization in your writing

✓ Check your writing for a beginning, a middle, and an end.

✓ Connect ideas and actions.

✓ Repeat key words or use pronouns and synonyms to link sentences.

✓ Apply parallel structure to parts of a sentence and to sentences within a paragraph.

✓ Provide transitions within and between sentences.

✓ Maintain a consistent tone and point of view.