Mini Lesson: **Transitional Words & Phrases**

Transitional words are used to show how ideas are connected. Transitions take your reader from one thought to another. More importantly, if you don't make connections between your ideas, the reader will probably insert their own thoughts—not always a good idea. In persuasive writing, it's important that you lead the reader in the direction you want them to go—don't allow them to make their own connections.

Important Slides from video:

Which transition do you think should be chosen?
Here's a list of commonly used transitional words and phrases:

- and
- to sum up
- but
- because
- or
- to sum up
- while
- consequently
- although
- first
- unlike
- next
- while
- sometimes
- however
- surely
- in other words
- on the other hand

Transitional words are very useful in argumentative and informational writing because they help the essay flow smoothly and enable you to show both sides of the arguments.
Let's say that you've just finished reading about the Iditarod (a sled dog race) and want to use that race as a basis for your argumentative writing. In particular, you plan to present a greater amount of evidence that the animals are treated cruelly, yet, because this is an argumentative piece presumable written by a thinking person (you!), you need to be measured and balanced in your analysis. Appropriately, you will need to concede, or admit, that other arguments do exist. In other words, you need to discuss both sides of the argument.

Animal rights groups say the Iditarod race is cruel to dogs and should be discontinued. Mushers, or dog racers, on the other hand, say their dogs are treated better than most animals and are bred to race.

In this example, on the other hand, is the transitional phrase.

Select the most appropriate transition word or phrase for each sentence, and indicate where you think it belongs.

1. In an effort to cut down on discipline problems, our school has decided to require students to wear uniforms; most students are opposed to the idea.
   A. of course
   B. but

2. Many scholars believe that Amelia Earhart was one of the most influential people in women's history; others feel that Susan B. Anthony played a more important role.
   A. Unless
   B. However

3. The principal added additional detention time for students caught littering the school grounds; the campus became much cleaner almost overnight.
   A. consequently
   B. but

4. The Iditarod can be a grueling race; the dogs sometimes run for hours at a time without a break.
   A. while
   B. for instance

5. Jacob can't seem to get enough sugar, he loves cookies and cupcakes.
   A. in particular
   B. similarly

6. Below is a passage from a book called Jack's Black Book. Jack is taking an aptitude test and has broken his pencil. The rigid Mr. Ploof will not allow him to start over or use a sharpener because the rules say he “must keep going.” See if you can fill in the blanks with transitions:

   I didn’t have a pencil sharpener __________ I began to gnaw at the wood around the lead, spitting out the pulp,
   __________ I exposed the blunt end. I felt even more like a white laboratory rat, __________ I pulled myself together and raced through the test. __________ It didn’t seem too difficult or take very long __________ got off to a rough start (p. 16).