USING THE RIGHT LANGUAGE
LINKING WORDS AND PHRASES

USING THE RIGHT LANGUAGE

When you are writing it is important that the connections between your ideas are made clear so your reader will make the connections you have intended. You can do this by using linking words and phrases. For this reason, linking words and phrases are often called **connectives**.

Connectives act like a road map for the reader to indicate the flow and order of your writing. These play an important role in showing the logical connections between your ideas, the literature, and the statements you are making.

This is particularly important in **argumentative writing**. Merely making a claim and presenting evidence beside it will not qualify as an argument unless you show *how* they support your claims.

SEE THE GUIDE ON WRITING AN ARGUMENT

A WORD OF CAUTION

Connectives can be very effective, but many students overuse them. It's important to consider **why** you are using them and not to include them just to sound 'more academic'.

In particular, students overuse conjunctions such as 'however', 'moreover', 'furthermore', and 'therefore' at the beginning of sentences. Consider *other* types of connectives and their placement in the sentence. Often, a simple 'but' will suffice!

DISCOURSE MARKERS

Discourse markers act as **connectives**. They play an important role contextualising own claims, premises, and conclusions and demonstrating the relationships between premises and the evidence that supports them.

TO SHOW SUPPORT

To link supporting statements, use discourse markers such as:

TYPE OF LINK	HOW IT IS USED	EXAMPLES
ADDITION	to add to what has been previously stated:	*additionally …, and also …, apart from this …, furthermore …, in addition …, moreover …, further …, what is more …*
COMPARISON	to show how things are similar:	*similarly …, equally …, in the same way …, likewise …, correspondingly …*
EMPHASIS	to put forward a point or idea more forcefully:	*indeed …, it should be noted …, most importantly …, to repeat …, unquestionably …, in particular …, notably …, particularly …, especially …, above all …*
CAUSE	to provide reasons for what has been stated or has occurred:	*because …, due to …, given that …, in order that …, since …, as …*
EFFECT	to provide the effect of what has been stated or has occurred:	*as a result …, consequently …, for this reason …, hence …, therefore …, thus …, as a consequence …*
GENERALISATION	to make a general statement:	*as a rule …, for the most part …, generally …, in general …, on the whole …, usually …, in most cases …*

For example:

- The Government should spend more money on healthcare *because* the population is aging.
- *Given that* the population is aging, the Government should spend money on healthcare.

TO SHOW DISAGREEMENT

To link to counter evidence or show contrasting statements, use discourse markers such as:

TYPE OF LINK	HOW IT IS USED	EXAMPLES
CONDITION	to provide a condition to what has been stated:	*if …, in that case …, provided that …, unless …*
CONTRAST	to show how things are different:	*alternatively …, conversely …, even so …, on the other hand …, unlike…, differing from …, contrary to …, rather …, whereas …, instead …, by contrast*
CONCESSION	to accept a point or idea with reservations:	*admittedly …, although …, however …, all the same …, up to a point …, even so …, in spite of …, even though …, while …*

For example:

- One the one hand, the Government's proposal is cost-effective. *On the other hand*, experts agree it could disadvantage the aged care sector.
- *Although* the Government's proposal is cost-effective, it could disadvantage the aged care sector.

CONCLUSIVE STATEMENTS

For synthesis or conclusive statements, use words like:

TYPE OF LINK	HOW IT IS USED	EXAMPLES
RESTATEMENT	to differently express what has been previously stated:	*in other words …, simply put …, to put it differently …, that is …*
SUMMARY	to sum up what has been previously stated:	*altogether …, therefore …, in conclusion …, in short …, to sum up …, in summary …, to conclude …,*
SYNTHESIS	To bring together points in an argument:	*Thus …, therefore …, it follows that …, consequently …, so …,*

For example:

- Given that wearing a seatbelt reduces the risk of injury, *then . . .*
- Wearing a seatbelt reduces the risk of injury. *Therefore . . .*

NEUTRAL CONNECTIONS

To provide examples or logically link the order of points together, use discourse markers such as:

TYPE OF LINK	HOW IT IS USED	EXAMPLES
ILLUSTRATION	to provide examples:	*for example …, for instance …, to illustrate …, to demonstrate…*
ORDER	to indicate the order of what is being said:	*first …, second …, third …, next …, before …, earlier …, finally …, subsequently …, previously …, and then …, meanwhile …, first and foremost …, first and most importantly …, above all …, lastly and most importantly …, last but not least …*

For example:

- *First and most importantly*, the Government needs to reduce the cost of aged care provision.
- *Above all*, reducing the cost of aged care provision is most important.

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USING AND AVOIDING THE FIRST PERSON

THE USE OF 'I'

In some disciplines, the use of the first-person voice 'I' is acceptable. However, it is important to maintain an academic tone when doing so and avoid expressions such as 'in my opinion', or 'I think' (unless it is reflective writing). Here are some examples of how to appropriately use 'I' to introduce an argument:

> In this paper: I discuss/will discuss …,   I argue/will argue that …,   I will show …, I will present …, I will put forward the claim that …,   I refer to the work of/theory by…

→ SEE THE GUIDE ON FORMAL AND INFORMAL WRITING

AVOIDING 'I'

In most academic writing, the use of the first-person voice should be avoided. There are two ways that we can avoid using 'I': changing the subject of the sentence and using the passive voice.

Changing subject of the sentence:

> This paper discusses …,   This essay puts forward the claim that …,   This paper argues that …, The findings indicated …,   The aim was to …,   The intention of the research was to …,

Using the passive voice:

> It will be argued that . . ., Four articles will be analysed . . ., Eight nurses were interviewed . . ., It was found that . . .

→ SEE THE GUIDE ON ACTIVE AND PASSIVE VOICE

REPORTING VERBS

Reporting verbs are the words we use to refer to another author's work. They allow us not only to introduce evidence but provide context as to how it connects to other ideas. Does it show agreement, disagreement, or is it neutral?

Citing neutral evidence:

> Smith (2020) states that …,   Smith (2020) claims that …,   Smith (2020) expresses that …, It is thought that … (Smith, 2020),   This is supported by… (Smith, 2020),   Research findings indicate/show that … (Smith, 2020), This indicates that … (Smith, 2020),   There is evidence to show that … (Smith, 2020)

Showing agreement:

> Smith (2020) affirms that …,   Smith (2020) emphasises that …,   Smith (2020) argues that …,   Smith (2020) illustrates that …,   Smith (2020) approves of Watson's theory, suggesting …,   It is argued that … (Smith, 2020),   The study indicates that … (Smith, 2020),   As shown by Smith (2020) …

Showing disagreement:

> Smith (2020) warns that …,   Smith (2020) challenges this, suggesting …,   Smith (2020) disagrees …, Smith (2020) alleges that …, Smith (2020) speculates that …,   This is disputed by Smith (2020) …