



Go The Distance

Written assignments

Part 1: Linking words

Let's imagine that you've got a good idea of the structure of your written assignment, done your research and drafted all main points you want to make. Well done – you're ready to start writing. But you can't just list all your points one by one: you need some 'glue' to help stick them together. You need some linking words and phrases (also known as 'connectives', 'signposts' or 'discourse markers').

Activity 1

There are six linking words or phrases in **bold** in the paragraph in the box below. Match each one to one of the functions 1) - 6). You can find the answers to these activities at the end of this pdf.

- 1) Add a point
- 2) Contrast two points
- 3) Show cause and effect
- 4) Give examples
- 5) Show a sequence
- 6) Summarise

Assignment title: How are good essays organised?

In general, essays are divided into three parts: the introduction, the body and the conclusion. Every essay question is different, **but** learning general principles will help. **For example**, it's often a good idea to restate the essay question in your introduction to help focus the reader's mind. The body is where you make your main argument: **consequently** it makes up the longest of the three sections. **Furthermore**, the paragraphs within the body should be ordered in a logical way to present your argument in the strongest way. **After** the body comes the conclusion, where you draw the key elements together. **To sum up**, successful essays generally use a recognisable structure, which helps the reader to follow the argument logically.

More linking words and phrases

Now, let's take a look at a few more linking words and phrases, with examples of their use.

To add a point

- **and** (I have green socks **and** pink gloves)
- **also** (I have green socks. I **also** have pink gloves)
- **in addition** (I have green socks. **In addition**, I have a pair pink gloves and a blue belt)
- **similarly** (I only ever wear green socks. **Similarly**, my sister only wears green shoes)
- **not only... also** (**Not only** do I wear green socks; I **also** often wear green shoes)
- **moreover** (My green socks are smelly. **Moreover**, they're full of holes)
- **furthermore** (Green socks look great with blue jeans. **Furthermore**, they make me feel confident)

To contrast two points

- **but** (I love wearing green **but** I never wear orange)
- **however** (I love wearing green. I never wear orange, **however**)
- **although** (I love wearing green **although** I never wear orange)
- **on the one hand... on the other hand** (**On the one hand** I adore green clothes. **On the other hand** I think green cars look stupid)
- **yet** (I love green clothes, **yet** I occasionally wear pink)
- **nevertheless** (I love green clothes. **Nevertheless**, I wear black on formal occasions)
- **by contrast** (I'm always beautifully dressed. My sister, **by contrast**, wears appalling clothes)

To show results or consequences (cause and effect)

- **because** (**Because** you're coming on Sunday, I'll make paella)
- **as** (**As** you're coming, I'll make paella)
- **since** (**Since** you're coming, I'll make paella)
- **so** (You're coming, **so** I'll make paella)
- **therefore** (You're coming. **Therefore**, I'll make paella)
- **as a result** (I made the most exquisite paella for my guests. **As a result**, they all asked for my secret recipe)
- **consequently** (I made the most exquisite paella for my guests. **Consequently**, they all asked for my secret recipe)
- **thus** (Paella was first made on the east coast of Spain, and **thus** is considered to be a Valencian speciality)
- **hence** (Paella is a Spanish dish, **hence** the particular pronunciation of the 'll')

To give examples

- **for example** (Showing appropriate respect is important in Japanese. Verbs, **for example**, take different forms when you are being polite)
- **for instance** (Showing appropriate respect is important in Japanese. Verbs, **for instance**, take different forms when you are being polite)
- **as follows** (The polite forms of suru, shita and shinai are as **follows**: shimasu, shimashita, shimasen)
- **that is** (Learning Japanese can be challenging at first. **That is**, the grammar is very different to European languages)
- **namely** (There are three writing systems in Japanese, **namely** kanji, katakana and hiragana)

To show a sequence of events

- **then** (I woke up late **then** had to run to the train station)
- **after this** (I woke up really late. **After this** I had to run to the station)
- **subsequently** (I woke up really late and **subsequently** had to run to the station)
- **firstly / secondly / thirdly** (Today was bad. **Firstly**, I woke up late. **Secondly**, I hurt my foot while running to the station. **Thirdly**, I missed my train)

To summarise or conclude

- **in conclusion** (**In conclusion**, *Dunkirk* is one of Christopher Nolan's most innovative films)
- **to conclude** (**To conclude**, *Dunkirk* is one of Christopher Nolan's most innovative films)
- **to summarise** (**To summarise**, *Dunkirk* is one of Christopher Nolan's most innovative films)
- **in sum** (**In sum**, *Dunkirk* is one of Christopher Nolan's most innovative films)
- **to sum up** (**To sum up**, *Dunkirk* is one of Christopher Nolan's most innovative films)

Part 2: Linking words in use

Linking words are not only used in academic essays. They're widely used in many forms of written and spoken communication.

Activity 2

Take a look at these sentences from news stories. Fill each gap with the one linking word from the options. If you need help, take a look at the hint in each box.

1. Lee Ryan and other singers who became soap stars

Kylie Minogue and Adam Rickitt both went into the recording studio after leaving [soaps] Neighbours and Coronation Street respectively. 1) _____, soaps and pop like to share their stars.

Options

In summary

Moreover

Subsequently

Hint: This comes at the end of an article about soap actors who became musicians, and gives a lot of examples.

2. What's really the point of wasps?

They may not make honey, but 2) _____ wasps have just as fascinating social lives as the celebrated honeybee.

Options

nonetheless

finally

similarly

Hint: We're comparing wasps and bees.

3. Why you should manage your energy, not your time

The key to maintaining focus and energy in shorter bursts was to apply flexibility to those segments – she could use some for exercise, some for meditation, some for work. Getting rest within her workday helped lower stress levels and 3) _____ achieve better results within the allotted time for working, Congdon found.

Options

in other words

therefore

nonetheless

Hint: What is the relationship between having lower stress levels and getting better results?

4. Will Wikitribune help combat fake news?

It is undoubtedly the case that the deliberate, viral spreading of misinformation, either for commercial or political ends, has radically spiked around some of the big news events of the past year. 4) _____, efforts to tackle it have often been pathetic thus far, and less often successful.

Options

Moreover
Nevertheless
Subsequently

Hint: What is the relationship between these sentences? The second one is adding to the point of the first one.

5. How does a football transfer work?

Only a few top clubs – such as Manchester United, Real Madrid or Bayern Munich – can afford to buy elite players. They then dominate the leagues, 5) _____ poorer clubs don't.

Options

additionally
furthermore
whereas

Hint: We're making a contrast here.

6. How selling my trainers paid for a new kitchen

In 2015, he listed them on online auction site eBay and was offered £20,000 for all six pairs by someone who specialises in buying and selling trainers. It's an international trade. One pair was 6) _____ sold to a buyer in Saudi Arabia, for example.

Options

consequently
subsequently
nevertheless

Hint: This is describing a sequence of events.

Part 3: Checking and proofreading

Before you submit, try to take some time to read through your work.

As you check it, ask yourself questions like these:

1. Have I answered the question?
2. Have I written the right type of assignment (for example, an essay or report)?
3. Is my argument strong (if you've written an argument)?
4. Is my structure logical?
5. Have I supported my points with evidence and examples?
6. Have I acknowledged all sources and written references correctly?
7. Am I under the word limit?
8. Is my spelling and grammar correct?

Formatting is important too. It's usually a good idea to use page numbers and to include your name in the footer. Check the line spacing requirements – should lines be 'double spaced'?

Activity 3

And don't forget that spell check. But be careful, the spellchecker doesn't pick up all mistakes! Just for fun – can you spot the five mistakes in the text below?

Text

Even though I use a spellchecker, I make mistakes everyday. The problem with spellcheckers is that their good at fining mistakes in individual word's, but not great at identifying as correctly spelled word in the wrong place.

Answers

Activity 1

These linking words have been used to:

1. Add a point: **furthermore**
2. Contrast two points: **but**
3. Show cause and effect: **consequently**
4. Give examples: **for example**
5. Show a sequence: **after**
6. Summarise: **to sum up**

Activity 2

1. In summary
2. nonetheless
3. therefore
4. Moreover
5. whereas
6. subsequently

Activity 3

Even though I use a spellchecker, I make mistakes **1) everyday**. The problem with spellcheckers is that **2) their** good at **3) fining** mistakes in individual **4) word's**, but not great at identifying **5) as** correctly spelled word in the wrong place.

- 1) 'Everyday' should be 'every day'. If it's one word, it's an adjective describing something common, for example: "Using social media is part of everyday life."
- 2) 'Their' should be 'they're'. The first is a possessive pronoun from 'they', the second is short for 'they are'.
- 3) 'Fining' should be 'finding'. The 'd' has been missed out.
- 4) 'Word's' should be 'words'. Making plurals into possessives is a big problem even for many native speakers. Search online for the "greengrocers' apostrophe" to see some examples.
- 5) 'As' should be 'a'. This is just a typo (a typing mistake) – be careful of these.

More

Check our 'Academic writing' webpages for information and activities to practise:

- Recognising types of assignments and their typical structures
- Defining question words
- Answering academic questions properly

You can find these materials at

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/gothedistance/academicwriting>