

Connecting and reporting

Use of connecting and reporting words in academic writing

In academic writing, it is important to present an argument logically and cohesively. In addition, you may be required to report on, evaluate and discuss existing research or ideas. Often you will be assessed on your ability to do both.

Developing the language that you use to report on and connect ideas in academic writing will help you with both these tasks. The appropriate use of 'connectives' that is, words or phrases that signal a connection, can reveal and reinforce the direction that your argument is taking and the relations between sections of your writing.

Experienced writers use connectives to bridge gaps between ideas that may seem unrelated. Also, carefully chosen 'reporting words' will communicate your assessment of other authors' theories/research and the authority they carry. Using a range of reporting and connecting terms will add variety and interest to your writing. It will also give it an appraising and constructive tone, which will improve the quality and depth of your argument.

This pamphlet provides some suggestions for sentence openers, 'linking words' within sentences and between paragraphs, and alternative verb choices you might use when reporting on other writers' ideas.

Connectives used in and between sentences

Connectives allow us to be more precise about the relationships between statements in a sentence or between sentences. Particular phrases and words serve different functions in connecting ideas and arguments. For example, different clauses or words can signal or 'signpost' additional or similar information, opposition or contrast, concession, cause or effect, provide emphasis, clarification, or a relationship in time or sequence. Below are some useful examples of each.



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LINKING IDEA	CONNECTIVES
Addition	and, also, moreover, furthermore, additionally

E.g.: The Melbourne Cup is Australia's most famous race. **Furthermore**, it is a day when people all over Australia stop whatever they are doing to watch or listen to it.

Similarity	similarly, likewise, equally, in the same way
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E.g.: The Melbourne Cup is Australia's most famous race. **Equally** famous is the AFL Grand Final.

Opposition or contrast	but, alternatively, on the other hand, nevertheless, nonetheless, notwithstanding, even though, conversely, however, whereas
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E.g.: The Melbourne Cup is Australia's most famous race **whereas** local country races struggle for recognition.

Concession	admittedly, obviously, however, although, indeed, even though
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E.g.: The Melbourne Cup is Australia's most famous race. **Admittedly**, it has also received significant media coverage over many years.

Cause or effect	because, thus, since, accordingly, consequently, therefore, for this reason, as a result, in conclusion, otherwise,
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E.g.: The Melbourne Cup is Australia's most famous race. **Therefore**, many people stop what they are doing to watch or listen to it.

Emphasis	in fact, indeed, most importantly, to repeat, again, truly
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E.g.: The Melbourne Cup is Australia's most famous race. **In fact**, most of Australia will stop what they are doing to watch or listen to it.

Clarification	in particular, specifically, to put it another way, namely, for example, in other words, such as
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E.g.: The Melbourne Cup is Australia's most famous race. **In other words**, this is the one race that everyone in Australia knows about.

Time relation or sequence	first, second, third (etc), next, before, later, earlier, subsequently, while, then, meanwhile, finally, to conclude, given the above, following
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E.g.: Although the Melbourne Cup is Australia's most famous race, the AFL Grand Final is also very well known.

Connectives as sentence or paragraph openers

While paragraphs should each have a particular topic, they should also be connected so that there is a clearly defined line of argument throughout your writing. The opening phrase or word of a sentence or paragraph can be particularly effective in 'signposting' to the reader the direction your argument is taking and the links between ideas. Use of the following 'linking words' can help establish how a paragraph or sentences within a paragraph relate to the ones preceding it.

<p>TO ADD AN IDEA</p> <p>In addition Another reason/aspect/example Furthermore Moreover</p>	<p>TO MAKE A TENTATIVE STATEMENT</p> <p>Studies suggest that Perhaps It would seem that It tends to be the case that</p>
<p>TO INTRODUCE A CONTRAST</p> <p>Compare this with In contrast However In spite of Although Notwithstanding Even though</p>	<p>TO INTRODUCE A RESULT</p> <p>Accordingly As a consequence As a result In view of the above</p>
<p>TO GIVE AN EXAMPLE</p> <p>For example An example of this is A further instance of this is</p>	<p>TO INTRODUCE A LOGICAL CONCLUSION</p> <p>Thus Therefore It could be concluded that Consequently Finally</p>
<p>TO POINT TO EVIDENCE</p> <p>It can be seen that The evidence is that In support of this</p>	<p>TO CONCLUDE</p> <p>In conclusion To sum up To review</p>

Reporting words

The following list provides some useful expressions for presenting other writers' ideas. Note the differences in these verbs; your choice of a reporting term should be accurate in the context and communicate to your reader your assessment of the author's theories and/or research.

VERB	ALTERNATIVES
show	demonstrate, establish
persuade	assure, convince, satisfy
argue	reason, discuss, debate, consider
propose	advance, propound, suggest
advise	suggest, recommend, advocate, exhort, encourage, urge
believe	hold, profess (the view that ...)
emphasise	accentuate, stress, underscore
support	uphold, advocate
state	express, comment, remark, declare, articulate, describe, instruct, inform, report
examine	discuss, explore, investigate, scrutinise
evaluate	appraise, assess
hypothesise	speculate, postulate
claim	allege, assert, affirm, contend, maintain
disagree	dispute, refute, contradict, object, dissent
reject	refute, repudiate, remonstrate (against), discard, dismiss, disclaim

Further reading

Bate, D. and Sharpe, P. (1996) *Student writer's handbook: How to write better essays*. Sydney: Harcourt Brace.

Barrass, R. (1978). *Scientists must write: A guide to better writing for scientists, engineers and students*. London: Chapman and Hall.

Murray-Smith, S. (1987). *Right words: A guide to English usage in Australia*. Ringwood, Vic.: Viking.

Williams, J. (1994). *10 lessons in style and grace*. New York: Harper Collins.