

Basics

If you have already completed **Write sentences** and **Write paragraphs**, you may already have an idea of how you might 'link' sentences together. 'Link' here doesn't always mean that you combine the sentences – although you can do that. But more importantly, it means that you add words or phrases to the sentences to show how the ideas are connected. You do this when you are writing a paragraph, in order to create a 'flow' of text. Can you think of any examples of words or phrases you might use to link sentences together? Read the other sections on this Factsheet to see if you are right.

The academic context

Linking your sentences together is very important in essays and presentations, as it allows your audience to easily follow your ideas. It helps you to organize your ideas and to guide the reader through them in a logical sequence, showing the connections between them. Link words and phrases give your writing a 'flow', creating a good impression on the reader; they help you to avoid writing lots of short, abrupt sentences which don't obviously belong together.

Key features

In order to link sentences together in a paragraph, you use link words or phrases. There are different ways and reasons to link sentences. Here are the main reasons for using link words or phrases with examples you can use:

Reason	Examples
Giving examples	for example, for instance, including, that is, like, such as
Making a contrast	although, however, nevertheless, on the one hand ... on the other, yet, in contrast, in spite of, despite, but
Adding a point	in addition, moreover, also, furthermore
Giving a consequence	as a result, despite (this), so, therefore, since, consequently, for this reason
Giving a cause	because of, if, unless, since, while, so that, due to
Listing	firstly, to begin with, secondly, next, before (that), after (that), then, finally

Challenges / difficulties

Probably the biggest challenge with linking sentences is choosing the right link word or phrase for your meaning and then using it correctly within the syntax of your sentences. Practice will help you overcome this difficulty. Some examples of how you use the phrases can be seen below.

How can I develop this skill?

This is a writing skill which really repays your reading. The more academic English you read, the more you will absorb the words/phrases which academic writers use to link and structure their thoughts. If you want to take quite an intentional approach, you could create a spreadsheet of different types of link words/phrases in use – perhaps using the table in the Key features section as a starting point.

Learning outcome

By successfully linking sentences, you will produce good writing with paragraphs that flow so they can be read easily. Link words and phrases will help you organize your thoughts/arguments and signpost them clearly.



Theory to practice

Read the sentences in a paragraph from a presentation on air pollution and answer the questions below.

Firstly, it cannot be denied that air pollution is a huge problem in many towns and cities around the world. For example, some schools in London are reporting dangerously toxic air in their classrooms. Furthermore, breathing illnesses related to pollution are becoming more common. Therefore, it is necessary for us to look for ways to deal with the polluting of our air.

- 1 What link words/phrases are used in each sentence?
- 2 Where in each sentence are the link words – at the beginning, in the middle or at the end?
- 3 What do the link words/phrases link back to?
- 4 Which words from the list in the Key features section could be used to replace those words?

Ways to get more practice

- 1  With your partner, try to think of one way to deal with air pollution. Use your idea to write a sentence for the second paragraph of the presentation in Theory to practice. Remember to link your sentence back to the first paragraph.
- 2  Working on your own, write another sentence for the second paragraph. Remember to link back to the first sentence you wrote. Then compare your sentences.