

COHERENCE: LINKING WORDS AND PHRASES

To make your work more readable and meaningful, ideas and paragraphs must be **linked**. Linking words are essential in developing coherent logical arguments and discussion in your assignments. They show the relationships between the ideas and are the glue that holds your assignment together. The table below provides an overview of commonly-used linking words.

List/Sequence words: orders the information in a sequence	Effect /Results: something brought about by a cause	Emphasis: special importance or significance
first, firstly, the first ... second, secondly, the second third, etc next, last the next, the last finally in addition moreover furthermore also one ... (reason / problem / factor)	so as a result as a consequence therefore thus consequently hence due to as a result of as a consequence of result in	undoubtedly indeed obviously generally admittedly in theory in fact particularly especially clearly
Addition: adds to what was previously stated	Cause / Reason: responsible for an action or result	Elaboration / Qualification
in addition furthermore also and as well as	for because since as because of to cause the cause of the reason for	frequently occasionally usually especially in fact in particular actually specifically
Conclusion / Summary: generalising or summing up	Restatement / Explanation: referring back	Alternative:
in conclusion to summarise in brief in conclusion in short in general	in fact indeed that is in other words	otherwise ... or if unless
Concede a point: indicates a surprising statement in view of previous comments	Build towards climax:	Narrow the focus:
it is true that of course no doubt	more / most importantly more / most significantly above all primarily essentially	specifically more to the point looking more closely at

Comparison: indicates the similar relationship between things	Contrast: indicates the different relationship between things	Example: illustrating the point
similarly likewise also too as and just like similar to the same as not only...but also compared to/with	however nevertheless although (even) though but yet in contrast in comparison whereas on the other hand on the contrary despite	for example for instance that is such as including to illustrate namely
Time – moving forward:	Time – moving backward:	Time – simultaneous
then later next after that finally at long last in time eventually subsequently	previously earlier before that prior to that formerly initially ... but now	meanwhile in the meantime simultaneously at the same time at that moment

Other ways of ensuring clarity in your writing

1. **Use internal referent words (or pronouns):** These words refer back to something that has been mentioned already. They are used to link ideas, to repeat the reference, to avoid an unclear reference, to avoid unnecessary repetition of subject/object

this / that
these / those

the ... (noun phrase)
her / his / its

it / they / them
its / their

N.B. Be careful that the reader can clearly understand what or who these words refer to.

2. **Repeat phrases and key words:** Repeating an idea will help you develop coherent writing and also help your reader stay focussed by reminding them of your main ideas. Using synonyms or other terms also adds variety to your writing.
3. **Use parallel structures:** Using similar grammatical structures in sentences to group similar types of ideas or elements can help readers to see the connections between them. Similarly in reports, lists of dot points should consistent in the word forms used, that is, each point should begin with the same part of speech (e.g. noun, verb) or same verb tense (e.g. past or present).
4. **Plan and organise your ideas:** Well organised paragraphs are the most effective way to maintain coherence. Plan what you are going to write so that information is clear and logical. Group related ideas together. Make sure each paragraph has a topic sentence and that all information in that paragraph relates to it so the reader isn't distracted by irrelevant details. Good structure is the key to making an assignment flow and easy to understand.