

Formal links, also known as **cohesive devices**, are the grammatical and lexical ties that connect sentences and clauses within a text to create a unified and coherent whole. They are "formal" because they are explicit features of language itself, as opposed to contextual links, which rely on shared knowledge or situational cues. Formal links are crucial for making writing and speech flow smoothly and for helping the reader or listener understand the relationships between different ideas.

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## Key Types of Formal Links

There are five main types of formal links:

1. **Reference:** Words that refer to something else in the text. This is one of the most common types of formal links.
  - **Anaphora:** A word that refers *back* to a previously mentioned item.
    - Example: "The dog barked loudly. **It** wanted its dinner." ("It" refers back to "the dog.")
  - **Cataphora:** A word that refers *forward* to an item that will be mentioned later.
    - Example: "**When he** arrived, John was exhausted." ("He" refers forward to "John.")
2. **Substitution:** Replacing a word or phrase with a substitute word to avoid repetition.
  - **Nominal substitution:** Replacing a noun or noun phrase.
    - Example: "I have a new bike. I'm going to ride the old **one** tomorrow." ("One" substitutes for "bike.")
  - **Verbal substitution:** Replacing a verb or verb phrase.
    - Example: "Did you finish the assignment? I **did**." ("Did" substitutes for "finish the assignment.")
3. **Ellipsis:** The omission of a word or phrase because the meaning can be easily understood from the context.
  - Example: "Would you like a cup of tea?" "I would." (The phrase "like a cup of tea" is omitted, or ellipsed.)
4. **Conjunction:** Words or phrases that explicitly signal the relationship between sentences or clauses.
  - **Additive:** (e.g., *and, also, in addition*)
  - **Adversative:** (e.g., *but, however, yet*)
  - **Causal:** (e.g., *because, therefore, so*)
  - **Temporal:** (e.g., *then, finally, meanwhile*)

- Example: "It was cold outside, **but** we still went for a walk."
5. **Lexical Cohesion:** Linking ideas by using related vocabulary.
- **Repetition:** Repeating the exact same word or phrase.
  - **Synonyms/Antonyms:** Using words with similar or opposite meanings.
  - **Hyponyms:** Using a more specific word from a general category (e.g., "fruit" and "apple").
  - **Collocation:** Using words that frequently appear together (e.g., "heavy rain").

