

Signposting words and phrases

Having researched your topic in preparation for writing an essay, you will probably have accumulated a wide range of facts, published research, and other information relevant to the topic. Many people simply throw these facts together in body paragraphs, without properly applying them to the topic or signalling to the reader the connections between them.

Simply adding a few connecting words – known as “signposts” – make it much more readable:

Incorporation offers several advantages to businesses and their owners. **For one thing**, ownership is easy to transfer. The business is able to maintain a continuous existence even when the original owners are no longer involved (Brown, 1999). **In addition**, the stockholders of a corporation are not held responsible for the business's debts (Henry, 2009). If the XYZ Corporation defaults on a \$1 million loan, **for instance**, its investors will not be held responsible for paying that liability. Incorporation **also** enables a business to obtain professional managers with centralised authority and responsibility; **therefore**, the business can be run more efficiently (Schwartz, 2010). **Finally**, incorporation gives a business certain legal rights. **For example**, it can enter into contracts, own property, and borrow money (Brown, 1999).

Transitions show the reader the “movement” between ideas/points. They show that the ideas follow a logical order and build on each other, creating “flow.” If a paragraph flows well from point to point, it should be obvious to the reader when you move from one point to another.

They tell the reader:

- how the main ideas support the thesis statement\
- how each group of ideas follow from the ones before, and whether information is:
 - an additional point
 - in contrast to what has been said
 - an example

For example, if you are analysing one study and then comparing it to another in a later paragraph, a transition word or phrase could highlight the change in direction or the creation of a comparison:

In contrast to the conclusion drawn by Smith (2004), Nguyen (2006) showed that the connection between the factors was not causal in most circumstances.

A paragraph that provides a similar point to a previous one could start as follows:

Similarly, Bell (2006) highlights that...

Common signposting phrases according to function

Highlighting or emphasising a point:

- Importantly, ...
- Indeed, ...
- In fact, ...
- More importantly, ...
- Furthermore, ...
- Moreover, ...
- It is also important to highlight ...

Acknowledging something and moving to a different point:

- Although ...
- Even though ...
- Despite ...
- Notwithstanding ...

Changing direction or creating a comparison:

- However, ...
- Rather, ...
- In contrast, ...
- Conversely, ...
- In comparison,
- Compared to
- Another point to consider is

Following a line of reasoning:

- Therefore, ...
- Subsequently, ...
- Hence ...
- Consequently, ...
- Accordingly, ...
- As a result, ...
- As a consequence, ...
- To this end, ...

Adding a similar point:

- Similarly,
- Likewise, ...
- Again, ...
- Also, ...

Being more specific:

- In particular, ...
- In relation to
- More specifically, ...
- With respect to ...
- In terms of ...

Giving an example:

- For instance, ...
- For example, ...
- This can be illustrated by ...
- ..., namely, ...
- ..., such as,

Summarising:

- Finally, ...
- Lastly, ...
- In conclusion, ...
- To summarise, ...
- In summary, ...
- Overall, ...
- The three key points are ...

Academic writing and study skills support

1. Academic Q+A

If you have a quick question about study skills or academic writing, then they can ask it on the [Academic Q+A forum](#), which can be accessed via the [Academic Support Stream site](#).

2. Consultations

One-to-one consultations with learning advisors and writing consultants are [available online and on campus](#). Consultants can answer your questions about academic writing and study skills or give you feedback on your assignment's structure, focus, paragraph structure, flow, presentation, use of sources, and referencing.

3. Online Writing and Learning Link (OWLL)

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4. Pre-reading Service

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5. Workshops

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