

Signposting



Signposting means using phrases and words to guide the reader through the content of your essay/dissertation.

There are two main types of signposting:

Major Signposts: introductions, conclusions and outlining main arguments/ the direction of the argument in paragraphs/opening phrases.

Linking words and short phrases: connecting words help guide the reader through the argument by linking ideas, sentences and paragraphs.

Linking words and short phrases

- *To add more ideas:* again, furthermore, in addition, moreover
- *To compare or contrast ideas:* alternatively, contrastingly, conversely, whereas
- *To prove something:* evidently, for this reason, because, inevitably
- *To show exceptions:* however, nevertheless, yet, in spite of
- *To repeat or refer back to something:* as has been mentioned/noted.../As previously discussed
- *To show that you will include something later:* this will be discussed in detail later
- *To emphasise something:* definitely, obviously, inevitably, undeniably
- *To give an example:* for instance, in this case, in particular, notably
- *To show the order of things:* previously, following this, initially, subsequently, finally

For further examples, see our "Connecting Your Writing" help-sheet

Major Signposts

In introductions

- This essay will [first] outline/examine/address/argue/demonstrate/focus on ... and will [then] ascertain/establish/clarify/show/judge/prove ... Next, it closely examines ... in relation to ... Finally, it focuses on ... and how this affects ...
- To understand the role of ..., this essay provides a discussion of ...
- This essay seeks to investigate/evaluate/illustrate/discuss the impact of ... in relation to ...
- The aim of this study is to ... / The purpose of this essay is to ... /This essay argues that ...
- The major issue that needs to be addressed is ... /The main questions addressed in this paper are ...
- This essay critically examines ...
- This essay is organised in the following way: ...
- The essay is divided into...main parts: part one will ... part two ...

It is often helpful to quantify what the essay will do. For example, **'this essay will address three aspects ...'**. Then use connecting words like **'firstly', 'secondly', 'thirdly/finally'**, through the essay in order to signpost the different points. You may also signpost how the essay will do these things. For example: **'By describing/reviewing/evaluating [a source or sources such as a literary text, current literature on your topic, historical evidence, statistical data etc.], this essay will argue/attempt to demonstrate that ...'**.

In the main body of an essay

Introducing a new idea

- One aspect which illustrates ... can be identified as ...
- The current debate about ... identifies an interesting viewpoint on ...
- First(ly), ... / second(ly), ... / finally, ...
- The first/next/final section provides a general discussion of ...

Linking or developing a new idea

- Having established ..., this essay will now/next consider ...
- Building on from the idea that ..., this section illustrates that ...
- To further understand the role of ... this section explores the idea that ...
- Another line of thought on ... demonstrates that ...
- In addition to/As well as x, y must be/should be/needs to be established ...
- x is one/an important/the key issue that has to be considered. Another/A second/ of equal importance is ...
- This idea/theory had been extended/developed by....

Introducing a contrasting view

- However, another angle on this debate suggests that ...
- In contrast to evidence which presents the view that... an alternative perspective illustrates that ...
- However, not all research shows that... Some evidence agrees that ...
- This conflicts/contrasts with/is contrary to the view held by ..., who argues that ...

Summing up a paragraph/section

- The evidence highlights that ...
- It is clear that ...
- The strength of such an approach is that ...
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In conclusions

- In conclusion, ... / To summarise, ... / As has been shown ...
- Clearly, this essay has shown that the main factors which impact upon ... are ...
- From the above, it is clear that ...
- Several conclusions emerge from this analysis ...
- The evidence presented has shown that ...
- This essay has focussed on three factors affecting ...
- It has been established that ...

