

IELTS Speaking Exercise: Connecting Sentences

Discourse markers are words and phrases that help you connect your ideas. Using discourse markers makes your spoken English sound more fluent and natural – and it may help fill in some of the “pauses” in your speaking!

There are dozens of discourse markers in the English language, but here are 10 of the most common, with definitions and examples.

actually

Use **actually** to make a correction, or to state a fact or reality:

“Do you need to learn Spanish for your trip to Brazil?”

“**Actually**, they speak Portuguese in Brazil.”

“Oh, I didn’t know that.”

apparently

Apparently is used to say something **seems true** or **is true**.

“How come Maria left work early?”

“**Apparently** her son is sick. I heard her calling the pharmacy to ask if his medicine is ready.”

as for

As for is the same as **regarding**. It is used to focus attention on the topic you are going to talk about.

“Before you leave the office, please make 5 copies of the sales report and leave them on my desk for the meeting tomorrow morning.”

“Sure, no problem.”

“**As for** the new advertising campaign, we need to get approval from the finance department – so that’ll have to wait until the end of the month.”

as I was saying

We use **as I was saying** to get back to the main topic of conversation.

“I heard you’re going away this weekend – where to?”

“Well, after English class on Thursday night, we’re going to catch a late flight to California.”

“We have English class on Thursday?!”

“Yes, remember the teacher changed it from Friday to Thursday?”

“Oh, right.”

“**As I was saying**, we’re going to spend a few days in San Francisco...”

basically

You can say **basically** when you are going to say something simple about (or a summary of) a complex situation.

“Are you still going out with Melissa?”

“No – we broke up a few months ago.”

“Oh, sorry to hear that. What happened?”

“Well, it’s a long story, but **basically**, our personalities were just too different.”

by the way

Say **by the way** to introduce new information or a related topic of conversation.

“So how do you like living in New York City?”

“I love it! There are a lot of interesting things to do. It’s a little hard to make friends, though – there are just so many people.”

“Don’t worry, I’m sure you’ll settle in and form friendships with time. **By the way**, my sister and I are going to meet some friends at the free concert in the park tonight – want to go with us?”

let’s see

You can say **let’s see** when you need a moment to think about something (especially after the other person asks you a question).

“I’m making the reservation at the restaurant. How many people are joining us for dinner?”

“**Let’s see...** there’s you and me... John, his wife, and their three kids... Barbara and her husband... and Peter with his girlfriend. That makes eleven.”

I mean

I mean is a very common expression in spoken English. You can use it to **clarify** your meaning, to state your ideas in different words.

“What did you think of the movie?”

“Eh, I thought it was so-so. **I mean**, the story line was interesting, but the acting wasn’t that great.”

on the other hand

Say **on the other hand** to introduce an alternate opinion, or a different side of the situation.

“Do you think I should buy a desktop or a laptop?”

“Well, a desktop would be cheaper, and I know you’re on a budget.”

“True.”

“**On the other hand**, a laptop would be more convenient because you could take it to class.”

speaking of

We use **speaking of** to link something previously mentioned in the conversation to a new topic.

“Did you do anything special for your birthday?”

“Oh, I just went out for dinner with some friends at a Japanese restaurant – that new one on Main Street.”

“Really? How was the food?”

“It’s the best sushi in town, in my opinion!”

“**Speaking of** Japan, my brother’s planning on studying abroad there next semester.”

“Really? Does he speak Japanese?”

“Not yet, but he’s going to learn...”

with regard to; regarding; as regards; as far as is concerned, as for

These expressions focus attention on what follows in the sentence. This is done by announcing the subject in advance. As regards and as far as is concerned usually indicate a change of subject

Examples:

His grades in science subjects are excellent. As regards humanities ...
With regard to the latest market figures we can see that ...
Regarding our efforts to improve the local economy, we have made ...
As far as I am concerned, we should continue to develop our resources.
As for John's thoughts, let's take a look at this report he sent me.

on the other hand; while; whereas

These expressions give expression to two ideas which contrast but do not contradict each other.

Examples:

Football is popular in England, while in Australia they prefer cricket.
We've been steadily improving our customer service center. On the other hand our shipping department needs to be redesigned.
Jack thinks we're ready to begin whereas Tom thinks we still need to wait.

however, nonetheless, nevertheless

All these words are used to present two contrasting ideas.

Examples:

Smoking is proved to be dangerous to the health. Nonetheless, 40% of the population smokes.
Our teacher promised to take us on a field trip. However, he changed his mind last week.
Peter was warned not to invest all of his savings in the stock market. Nevertheless, he invested and lost everything.

moreover, furthermore, in addition

We use these expressions to add information to what has been said. The usage of these words is much more elegant than just making a list or using the conjunction 'and'.

Examples:

His problems with his parents are extremely frustrating. Moreover, there seems to be no easy solution to them.

I assured him that I would come to his presentation. Furthermore, I also invited a number of important representatives from the local chamber of commerce.

Our energy bills have been increasing steadily. In addition to these costs, our telephone costs have doubled over the past six months.

therefore, as a result, consequently

These expressions show that the second statement follows logically from the first statement.

Examples:

He reduced the amount of time studying for his final exams. As a result, his marks were rather low.

We've lost over 3,000 customers over the past six months. Consequently, we have been forced to cut back our [advertising](#) budget.

The government has drastically reduced its spending. Therefore, a number of programs have been canceled.

