



## Vocabulary Building > Discourse Markers

Discourse markers are expressions that are used to show how discourse is constructed. They can show the connection between what a speaker is saying and what has already been said or what is going to be said; they can help to make clear the structure of what is being said; they can indicate what speakers think about what they are saying or what others have said.

There are a very large number of these □discourse markers□, and it is impossible to give a complete list. Here are a few of the most common. Some of these words and expressions have more than one use; for more information, look in a good dictionary. Some discourse markers are used mostly in informal speech or writing; others are more common in a formal style.

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### ➔ Focusing and linking

These expressions focus attention on what is going to be said, by announcing the subject in advance. Some of them also make a link with previous discourse. by referring back to what

was said before.

with reference to  
talking/speaking of/about  
regarding  
as regards  
as far as □ is concerned  
as for

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### **➔ Balancing contrasting points**

These expressions are used to balance two facts or ideas that contrast, but do not contradict each other.

on the other hand  
while  
whereas

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### **➔ Emphasizing a contrast**

however  
nevertheless  
mind you  
still  
yet  
in spite of this

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### **➔ Similarity**

similarly  
in the same way

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### **➔ Concession and counter-argument**

These expressions are used in a three-part structure:

1. the speaker/writer mentions facts that point in a certain direction,
2. it is agreed (the concession) that a particular contradictory fact points the other way,
3. but the speaker/writer dismisses this and returns to the original direction of

argument.

**concession:**

it is true  
of course  
certainly  
if  
may

**counter-argument:**

however  
even so  
but  
nevertheless  
nonetheless  
all the same  
stil

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**→ Contradicting**

on the contrary

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**→ Dismissal of previous discourse**

anyway  
anyhow  
at any rate  
at least

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**→ Change of subject**

by the way  
incidentally  
right  
all right  
now  
OK

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**→ Return to previous subject**

as I was saying

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**→ Structuring**

first(ly)  
first of all  
second(ly)  
third(ly)  
lastly  
finally  
to begin with  
to start with  
in the first/second/third place  
for one thing  
for another thing

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### [→ Adding](#)

moreover (very formal)  
furthermore (formal)  
in addition  
as well as that  
on top of that (informal)  
another thing is  
what is more  
besides  
in any case

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### [→ Generalizing](#)

on the whole  
in general  
in all/most/many/some cases  
broadly speaking  
by and large  
to a great extent  
to some extent  
apart from □  
except for □

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### [→ Giving examples](#)

for instance  
for example  
in particular

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### [→ Logical consequences](#)

These expressions show that what is said

follows logically from what was said before.

therefore (formal)  
as a result (formal)  
consequently (formal)  
so  
then

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### **➔ Making things clear; giving details**

I mean  
actually  
that is to say  
in other words

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### **➔ Softening and correcting**

I think  
I feel  
I reckon (informal)  
I guess (American)  
in my view/opinion (formal)  
apparently  
so to speak  
more or less  
sort of (informal)  
kind of (informal)  
well  
really  
that is to say  
at least  
I'm afraid  
I suppose  
or rather  
actually  
I mean

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### **➔ Gaining time**

let me see  
let's see  
well  
you know  
I don't know  
I mean  
kind of

sort of

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### **➔ Showing one's attitude to what one is saying**

honestly  
frankly  
no doubt

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### **➔ Persuading**

after all  
look  
look here  
no doubt

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### **➔ Referring to the other person's expectations**

These expressions are used when we show whether somebody's expectations have been fulfilled or not.

actually  
in fact  
as a matter of fact  
to tell the truth  
well

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### **➔ Summing up**

in conclusion  
to sum up  
briefly  
in short

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