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 ...

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 ...

For information please contact us on 028 9097 3618 or email lds@qub.ac.uk
http://www.qub.ac.uk/lds