

# Lesson 8 — Connecting ideas and punctuation

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Today is about **connectors** (transitions, linking words) and the **punctuation marks** that join clauses — semicolons, colons, dashes and the rest. We then turn to the LLM **review prompt** for Assignment 4 and a short peer-review exercise.

Section 1 is a quick punctuation reference. Sections 2 and 3 cover connectors at two levels: some of you may find section 2 a little basic and are welcome to move straight on to section 3.

## 1 · The punctuation marks — a quick reference

Adapted from [“Semicolons, Colons, Hyphens, Dashes, Parentheses, Ellipses, and Slashes”](#), *College Reading & Writing: A Handbook for ENGL-021 Students* (Howard Community College).

*Kane, O’Brien & Wood. Licensed CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.*

None of the marks below is used very often — you could get through most writing with end punctuation, commas, apostrophes and quotation marks alone. But they have their uses.

Mark	What it does	Example
<b>Semicolon ;</b>	Joins two independent clauses not joined by a FANBOYS conjunction (the coordinating conjunctions <i>for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so</i> ) — a pause longer than a comma, shorter than a full stop. Also a “super comma” in a list that already contains commas.	<i>My brother is an insurance salesman; we have great coverage.</i>
<b>Colon :</b>	Follows a complete (independent) clause to point the reader at what follows: a list, a quote, an example or an explanation. Don’t use one after a dependent clause.	<i>The Prius comes in four colours: red, orange, blue, or black.</i>
<b>Hyphen -</b>	Joins compound words ( <i>water-repellent</i> ), links words working	<i>a four-year-old child</i>

Mark	What it does	Example
	together as an adjective ( <i>well-known candidate</i> ), and writes out fractions and compound numbers ( <i>twenty-one</i> ).	
<b>Dash —</b>	Sets off a phrase for emphasis (one dash) or as an interruption (a pair). Use sparingly — it can make writing feel choppy, and commas often work as well.	<i>The new students — Oliver, Diego, and Natasha — still need textbooks.</i>
<b>Parentheses ( )</b>	Enclose secondary or supplemental information; the sentence should still make sense if the contents are deleted. Also enclose an abbreviation after its full form, and in-text citations.	<i>Nurses record a patient’s vital signs (temperature, pulse, blood pressure) every few hours.</i>
<b>Ellipsis ...</b>	Three dots showing that words have been deleted from the <i>middle</i> of a quotation. Not usually needed at the start or end of a quote.	<i>“an important contribution to gender studies ... in the 21st century.”</i>
<b>Slash /</b>	Too casual for most academic writing. The main legitimate use is to separate lines of poetry run together as one line. Avoid <i>and/or</i> and <i>he/she</i> .	<i>“Once I looked inside / the darkness / of a shell...”</i>

## 2 • Connectors B1/B2

**Zemach, D. E., et al.** · *Writing Research Papers: From Essay to Research Paper* (Macmillan) · pp. 58–60

Connectors (sometimes called *transitions*) are words or phrases that let you move smoothly from one point or idea to the next. You probably already use several connectors when you write, especially in compound or complex sentences, and to link one sentence to another.

## Exercise 9 — Classify the connectors

Classify the connectors in the box by writing them into the correct place in the chart.

*although · finally · furthermore · however · in addition · in conclusion · in summary · likewise · moreover · nevertheless · next · on the other hand · similarly · therefore · thus*

Function of the connectors	examples
To show a sequence of events	
To add more information	
To show a comparison	
To show a contrast	
To signal a conclusion	

## Exercise 10 — Which do you use?

Look at the connectors in the box above. Put a ✓ by the ones you use regularly and a ✗ by the ones you never use. Challenge yourself to use some new ones in your research paper.

**Note:** these are certainly not all of even the most common connectors. As you read in English, make a note of new connectors and their function as you come across them.

## Exercise 11 — Complete the passages

Complete these extracts from student research papers with an appropriate transition.

1. Record companies believe sales have gone down because file sharing provides free music. \_\_\_\_\_, users insist that file sharing is not the main reason for the decline.
2. Royalties from record sales pay the musicians for their hard work. \_\_\_\_\_, production costs must be paid for, as well as marketing and other expenses.
3. Some musicians feel that file sharing helps them get publicity and make a name. \_\_\_\_\_, the majority of artists still feel they lose money from file sharing.

4. At first, I copied my friends' music. Then I went online and used file-sharing sites to download music. \_\_\_\_\_, I read more about the issue and felt what I was doing was a kind of stealing. \_\_\_\_\_, I decided to buy songs and albums through iTunes® and similar services.
5. In the past, before music was available online, consumers had to buy a whole album even if they only wanted one song. \_\_\_\_\_, the cost of one song or a few songs seemed very high.

### Punctuating sentences with connectors

Because there are different types of connector, there are several patterns for punctuating them.

**Coordinating conjunctions** (FANBOYS: *for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so*):

*Illegal music file sharing has been a problem for both musicians and record companies, **and** the problem is only increasing.*

**Subordinating conjunctions** (*although, because, since, when, as, etc.*):

*File sharing grows every year **because** it is easy to do and relatively risk-free for the sharers.*

***Because** it is easy to do and relatively risk-free for the sharers, file sharing increases every year.*

**Adverbial conjunctions** (*however, moreover, furthermore, etc.*):

*People may believe that sharing songs doesn't hurt anyone. **However**, when musicians don't earn enough money, they stop making music.*

*People may believe that sharing songs doesn't hurt anyone; **however**, when musicians don't earn enough money, they stop making music.*

### Exercise 12 — Join the sentences

Add the connector in parentheses to join the two sentences. Be careful with punctuation. (Remember there is often more than one correct way.)

1. (*moreover*) Millions of songs are illegally downloaded each year. Movies are also being pirated.
2. (*although*) Most countries consider pirating music to be a crime. It is very difficult to catch the criminals.
3. (*yet*) Services such as iTunes offer single songs very cheaply. Many people would still rather get their music for free.
4. (*likewise*) Some people say that teens who download music should pay the fines. Teens who shoplift face legal consequences.

5. (*furthermore*) It's difficult for record companies to monitor individual computers. Some people hide their IP addresses through complicated routers.
6. (*or*) You should pay for your music. You should listen to it on the radio.

### 3 • Cohesion and linking C1/C2

**Swales, J. M., & Feak, C. B.** · *Academic Writing for Graduate Students*, 3rd ed. (University of Michigan Press, 2012) · pp. 37–42

As repetition and linking words help a writer maintain flow and establish clear relationships between ideas, Table 1 lists some of the more common linking words and phrases, arranged according to their function and grammatical use.

**Table 1. Linking words and phrases**

<b>Function</b>	<b>Subordinators</b> (introduce a dependent clause joined to a complete sentence)	<b>Sentence connectors</b> (introduce an independent clause)	<b>Phrase linkers</b> (introduce a noun phrase)
<b>Addition</b>		<i>furthermore; in addition; moreover</i>	<i>in addition to</i>
<b>Adversativity</b>	<i>although; even though; despite the fact</i>	<i>however; nevertheless</i>	<i>despite; in spite of</i>
<b>Cause and effect</b>	<i>because; since</i>	<i>therefore; as a result; consequently; hence; thus<sup>1</sup></i>	<i>because of; due to; as a result of</i>
<b>Clarification</b>		<i>in other words; that is; i.e.</i>	
<b>Contrast</b>	<i>while; whereas</i>	<i>in contrast; however; on the other hand; conversely</i>	<i>unlike</i>
<b>Illustration</b>		<i>for example; for instance</i>	

Function	Subordinators (introduce a dependent clause joined to a complete sentence)	Sentence connectors (introduce an independent clause)	Phrase linkers (introduce a noun phrase)
<b>Intensification</b>		<i>on the contrary; as a matter of fact; in fact</i>	

<sup>1</sup> Thus may also be used in non-finite clauses of result: *A fungus infected the fruit, thus causing a significant economic loss to the farmers.*

## Sentence connectors and punctuation

Sentence connectors raise a small but important issue — namely, punctuation. The key marks are the semicolon (;), colon (:), dash (—) and comma (,).

1. **Semicolons** join two completely independent clauses and work much like a full stop:

*Air-traffic delays due to high traffic volume have increased considerably over the last decade; these delays have become a major public-policy issue.*

2. **Semicolons with sentence connectors** — note the comma after the connector:

*Increasing the size of airports is one solution to traffic congestion; **however**, this is a long-term solution whose benefits may not be seen for many years.*

3. **Semicolons to break sequences into parts**, because they mark a stronger break than commas:

*In recent years GNP growth rates have varied considerably for the countries in this study (China, 6%; U.S., 3%; Japan, 1%).*

4. **Semicolons to separate long items in a list:**

*Some solutions include increasing the size of airports that routinely experience major delays; overhauling the air-traffic-control system so more flights can be safely handled; and increasing landing fees during peak periods.*

**Colons** introduce a list when the introducing clause is complete:

*There are four main causes of airport congestion: bad weather, excessive volume, runway closures, and equipment outages.*

**Commas** are used with many of the subordinators:

***Although** weather is a major cause of airport delays, excess traffic volume is also a major factor.*

### Task Eighteen — Add the punctuation

Edit this passage by adding periods, semicolons, or commas where necessary.

*Although most major companies provide their employees with email accounts as well as internet access many of these companies are concerned about potential abuse and monitor their employees' use of these media In fact more than 75% of all major corporations report that they monitor their employees' use of email and internet access either by spot-checking or constant surveillance Businesses have many reasons for monitoring email and internet use for example they may be concerned about protecting sensitive company information in addition they may be worried about lawsuits arising from sexual harassment because of mass mailing of offensive jokes they may also want to identify employees who are surfing the internet rather than working In other words they are concerned about cyberslacking*

### **Task Nineteen — Supply the linking words**

Supply linking words or phrases to enhance the flow of **one** of these passages. Look carefully at the punctuation to help you choose. Afterwards, consider why the linking words matter and why an old-to-new pattern of information alone might not be enough.

**A.** It has long been documented that individuals in an organisation may voluntarily carry out tasks that are not part of their regular job duties. \_\_\_\_\_, individuals may go above and beyond the call of duty to help coworkers, prevent problems, or volunteer to stay late when not expected to do so. This behaviour is intended to help others in the organisation or the organisation itself and is often referred to as organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB). \_\_\_\_\_ it is recognised that OCB is important for an organisation to function effectively, there is debate among researchers as to how OCB can be encouraged and rewarded. Most OCB research has focused on Western cultures; \_\_\_\_\_, whether these findings can be extended to other cultures is not clear.

**B.** Shape Memory Alloys (SMA) are metallic materials that can return to a previously defined shape or size when subjected to the appropriate temperature. When some SMA are cold they can be deformed at a low temperature; \_\_\_\_\_, when the material is heated above this temperature it undergoes a change in crystal structure, \_\_\_\_\_ causing it to return to its original shape. \_\_\_\_\_ many alloys are known to “remember” their shape, only some may find widespread commercial use. \_\_\_\_\_, one common nickel-and-titanium SMA, Nitinol, has this ability and is used in surgical implants, clamps, miniature valves and switches, and other devices.

## 4 · Assignment 4 — draft + review prompt

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For Assignment 4 you submit a **working draft** of your paper (600–1200 words) and the **review prompt** you would give an LLM to review it. Today we draft and peer-review the *review prompt* — the instructions you write to get a useful review of your own work.

### What you submit

1. Your **draft** (600–1200 words; some sections may still be incomplete).
2. The **review prompt** you would use to review it. (*weighted 25%*)
3. *Optional*: the **LLM you would prefer** to run the prompt on, and why.

**Due:** Monday 29 June 2026, 16:15 (the start of the lesson).

### A sample review prompt

A good review prompt asks for feedback but forbids rewriting, so the work stays in your voice. For example:

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The following text is an early draft of an essay. Some sections are incomplete. Provide feedback on the flow and structure of the essay and the construction of the argument. Do not rewrite anything or propose rewrites. Highlight problematic vocabulary and grammar, especially awkward translations from Strine. Evaluate the clarity of the thesis and the development of the argument. The overall structure is the focus. A fact-check is not required. Do not rewrite.
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*Note: this prompt asks for feedback on flow — treat the LLM's judgement on flow with caution.*

### A sample draft (work in progress)

This is the kind of draft you would attach: a real piece of thinking, not a polished essay. It is shown below **exactly as written**, in Markdown. Notice the rough edges — notes to self in {braces} and (parentheses), unfinished sentences, a controlling idea, and separate exploration and planning notes. These are exactly the features a genuine draft has.

SAMPLE DRAFT — RAW MARKDOWN

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# The SpaceX IPO
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**\*\*Controlling idea:\*\*** The initial public offering of SpaceX marks the transition into a new age of capitalism.

## Draft

On Friday June 12th 2026 SpaceX listed on the NASDAQ, in the largest initial public offering in history, dwarfing Alibaba and Saudi Aramco. The event made Elon Musk 350 billion dollars richer in a day, and the value of the company was set 1 trillion dollars higher, twice what mainstream analysts estimated, and surpassing the value of the entire Canadian stock exchange {check this}. I will show that 'bubble' no longer applies, and argue that a new age of capitalism began with the IPO.

SpaceX is not a normal company. With Twitter and Starlink they control a media empire and have more assets outside the jurisdiction of any country than has ever existed. A communications network that has proved instrumental in the Ukrain war (cite here)

Price-to-sales (p/s) is a useful metric to define here: it shows the amount of business a company does compared to the price of the shares. A more common metric is price-to-earnings, but since SpaceX is not profitable, so we have to use p/s. For the second half of the 20th century p/s of top US companies (S&P500) was less than 1.0, it averaged 0.5 between 1974-1985. Now the p/s is 3.5 - unprecedented. But SpaceX has mind-boggling p/s of 112 after its first day of trading. To help put this into perspective, when Apple launched the iphone their p/s was 3.6. This means Apple was making \$200 of sales for every \$1000 of value the company had. SpaceX's p/s of 112 means they're making about \$9 for every \$1000 of company value.

The NASDAQ changed its rules for including SpaceX in the index, effectively forcing the public to invest an additional 6 billion dollars.

Historically the term bubble has been used to describe a stock market which was overvalued. The analogy says healthy companies grow like organisms. Bubbles, on the other hand, are full of air. They grow, the soap gets spread thinner and thinner, and then they burst and splash to the ground. SpaceX is so over-priced at birth that the realities of investment are being brought into question. The bubble analogy doesn't hold; there is no soap from the start. The company is a fiction - it's not even a space company, but it filed as a programming and data processing company (7370).

## Exploration notes

- How do you define, limit and narrow your thesis to a single issue? – concentration of power through the perpetuation of the fiction of money
- What can we assume the reader knows? – Who is Elon Musk

## ## Planning notes

- Introduction – missing background
- inequality – 350 billion is enough to eradicate all poverty in the world for one year
- military influence of spaceX – Find a citation saying starlink was key to ukraine's military success this year (I know I read it a few times - who says this most reputably?)

The argument is that they have enough military leverage to tip the field in global conflicts.

- The ridiculous numbers, the fiction of money – p/s over 100, where 1-1.5 was typical for most of the last 100 years

<https://www.multip.com/s-p-500-price-to-sales>

- oligarch changing the rules: index funds being forced to buy-in
- fascist
- Bubble doesn't capture it
- spaceX up-side – Some good points:
  - profitable rocket company (2024)
  - starship (although overdue) is nearly flying and will 5x the orbital launch business
  - reusable rockets done ten years ago, still no competitors
  - starlink could defacto become the internet backbone and upset the entire telecommunications market
- Conclusion – I haven't claimed that there is no value in spaceX, but shown how it breaks the rules

## 5 • References

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Kane, Y., O'Brien, K., & Wood, A. "Semicolons, Colons, Hyphens, Dashes, Parentheses, Ellipses, and Slashes." *College Reading & Writing: A Handbook for ENGL-021 Students*.