



## Linking Words and Sentence Structures in IELTS Writing

### What's This About?

One of the key skills IELTS examiners look for is the ability to connect ideas clearly. This is done through both linking words and sentence structure. While many students memorise common linking phrases like 'on the other hand' or 'because', fewer understand how these expressions work within full sentence types. This pack covers the most essential sentence structures and clause types that help convey time, cause, contrast, and more. You'll learn how to express complex relationships naturally and accurately—without overusing simple connectors like 'and' or 'but'.

Each section focuses on one core function (such as expressing contrast or result), providing grammar examples, common IELTS uses, and opportunities to rewrite and upgrade your own writing. Mastering these structures will not only improve Coherence and Cohesion (CC), but also demonstrate flexible grammar under Grammatical Range and Accuracy (GRA).

### 1. Time Clauses

Time clauses show when something happens in relation to something else. These are essential in IELTS Writing Task 1 for describing trends and comparisons, and also appear in Task 2 for discussing processes or sequences.

Common time linkers include: when, while, after, before, since, as soon as, until. These often begin subordinate clauses.

Example:

- When people earn more money, they tend to spend more on luxury items.
- After completing their education, many graduates seek employment abroad.

Remember that time clauses use different tenses depending on the sequence of events. Don't overuse 'when'—try 'while' or 'as soon as' to show variety.

## 2. Place Clauses

Place clauses describe where an action takes place. These are less common in IELTS Writing, but still useful when discussing location-based topics such as housing, transport, or development.

Common place linkers include: where, wherever, in the place that, in which.

Example:

- Cities where public transport is reliable tend to have lower traffic congestion.
- The area in which the factory was built has experienced significant growth.

These clauses help group details logically and keep your writing organised. Try to use them to give context or expand noun phrases about location.

## 3. People Clauses

People clauses allow you to give additional information about individuals or groups. These are usually formed using relative clauses starting with 'who', 'that', or 'whom'. They help make writing more specific and connected, which is essential for both Task 1 and Task 2.

Examples:

- Students who attend extra classes often perform better in exams.
- The individuals that support this policy believe it will reduce crime.

Avoid using 'which' to refer to people. These clauses are a great way to embed supporting detail without starting a new sentence.

## 4. Expressing Contrast

Expressing contrast is a key part of IELTS Writing Task 2, especially when you're discussing opposing opinions or unexpected results. These clauses often start with linkers such as: although, even though, while, whereas, however, in contrast, on the other hand.

Examples:

- Although public transport is widely available, many people still prefer to drive.
- While some people believe money brings happiness, others disagree.

Don't overuse 'but'—it lowers the tone and limits variety. Try subordinators like 'although' and contrast adverbials like 'however' to show range and academic control.

## 5. Expressing Reason

Reason clauses explain why something happens or why someone believes something. These are among the most overused structures in IELTS, especially through 'because'. To score well, you need to vary how you express reasons.

Common linkers include: because, since, as, due to, owing to.

Examples:

- Since education is free in many countries, all children have access.
- Many people commute long distances due to high housing costs in urban areas.

Vary between subordinating conjunctions ('since', 'as') and prepositional phrases ('due to') to sound more flexible. Don't begin every paragraph with 'because'.

## 6. Expressing Result

Result clauses show the effect or outcome of something. These help to link cause and effect clearly, especially when discussing consequences of actions or policies.

Useful linkers: so, therefore, as a result, consequently, thus.

Examples:

- The number of vehicles on the road has increased, so air pollution has worsened.
- There were delays in the system. As a result, the service was suspended for a week.

Don't rely solely on 'so'. Phrases like 'as a result' and 'therefore' make your writing sound more academic and structured.

## 7. Expressing Purpose

Purpose clauses show the goal or intention behind an action. These are common when discussing government policies, education, or health-related decisions.

Useful linkers: to, in order to, so that, for the purpose of.

Examples:

- The government introduced stricter laws in order to reduce pollution.
- People recycle more so that they can protect the environment.

Make sure to differentiate between cause and purpose. 'Because' gives the reason, while 'so that' explains the goal or intended outcome.

## 8. Conditional Statements

Conditional statements are used to express possibilities, results, or hypothetical scenarios. These structures are common in IELTS when discussing future outcomes, policy effects, or personal decisions.

Common structures include: if, unless, provided that, as long as.

Examples:

- If governments invest in renewable energy, emissions will decrease.
- People will continue to face unemployment unless new jobs are created.

Vary between zero, first, and second conditionals depending on the topic. Overusing 'if' without variety can make your grammar feel basic.

## 9. Adding Information

When adding extra points or expanding on an idea, use clear and varied structures. Avoid simply repeating 'and'—this lowers coherence and limits sentence range.

Useful linkers: in addition, moreover, furthermore, not only... but also.

Examples:

- In addition to low wages, many workers face poor working conditions.
- Not only is exercise important for health, but it also improves mental wellbeing.

These structures help elevate your writing and make it more academic. Use linking phrases between sentences or within compound structures for variety.

## 10. Showing Similarities & Differences

IELTS Task 2 often requires you to compare or contrast different ideas. Using appropriate sentence patterns shows clarity and organisation.

Useful linkers: similarly, likewise, on the other hand, whereas, while.

Examples:

- While some people enjoy city life, others prefer the peace of the countryside.
- Public transport in Tokyo is efficient. Similarly, Seoul's metro system is fast and reliable.

Be careful not to overuse 'but'. Use a mix of subordinating contrast (while, whereas) and cohesive phrases (similarly, on the other hand).

## 11. Adding Emphasis

Emphasis clauses and structures help highlight your key ideas and strengthen your arguments. These are particularly useful in body and conclusion paragraphs.

Useful structures: it is... that, what is clear is that, indeed, undeniably, in fact.

Examples:

- It is economic inequality that drives many social problems.
- What is clear is that stricter regulations are needed.

Use emphasis sparingly—too much makes writing sound exaggerated. When used well, these structures signal control and confidence.

## 12. Complex Prepositions

Complex prepositions are multi-word phrases that function like prepositions. They show relationships like cause, contrast, or addition in a more formal way.

Useful expressions: in spite of, due to, according to, in terms of, with regard to.

Examples:

- In spite of high taxes, many people support government programs.
- According to recent studies, childhood obesity is increasing.

These structures add range to your grammar and vocabulary. They're especially effective for academic tone in introductions and topic sentences.

## 13. Giving Examples

Giving examples is crucial for supporting your arguments in IELTS essays. Instead of using only 'for example' or 'such as', vary your structure for better cohesion.

Useful linkers: for example, for instance, to illustrate, such as, namely.

Examples:

- Some cities, such as Singapore and Tokyo, have excellent public transport systems.
- To illustrate this point, consider the rise in electric vehicle use in Europe.

Mix phrases that start new sentences ('For example...') with those that flow inside them ('such as...'). This shows flexible use and improves cohesion.