

IELTS linking words: 98 linkers for Writing and Speaking

Grouped by what they do, each with the pattern it takes and an example.

Adding

moreover (Writing) Moreover, + clause

Moreover, cycling to work gives office employees a cheap way to build regular exercise into a busy day.

furthermore (Writing) Furthermore, + clause

Furthermore, online courses allow students in rural areas to study subjects that their local schools cannot offer.

in addition (Both) In addition, + clause

In addition, many hospitals now send text-message reminders, which has reduced the number of missed appointments.

in addition to (Both) In addition to + noun / -ing, + clause

In addition to teaching academic subjects, schools should help pupils develop practical skills such as cooking.

also (Both) subject + also + main verb (after 'be')

Working from home saves time, and it also lowers the cost of running a large office for employers.

as well as (Both) clause + as well as + noun / -ing

Regular exercise improves mental health as well as reducing the risk of heart disease and diabetes.

what is more (Writing) What is more, + clause

What is more, teenagers who have part-time jobs often learn to manage money earlier than their classmates.

additionally (Writing) Additionally, + clause

Additionally, green roofs help to keep buildings cool in summer, which reduces the need for air conditioning.

not only ... but also (Both) subject + not only + verb ... but also + verb

Cycling not only keeps people fit but also reduces noise and air pollution in city centres.

besides (Speaking) Besides, + clause

Besides, the rent in the city centre is far too high for most students, so living there isn't realistic.

plus (Speaking) clause + , plus + clause

My office is only ten minutes from home, plus my manager lets me work flexible hours, so it suits me.

Contrasting

however (Both) ...; however, ...

Many people want to live closer to nature; however, most of the well-paid jobs are still in large cities.

on the other hand (Both) On the other hand, + clause

On the other hand, living in the countryside often means fewer job opportunities and longer journeys to hospitals.

whereas (Writing) clause + , whereas + clause

Older employees often prefer face-to-face meetings, whereas younger staff are usually comfortable with video calls.

while (Both) While + clause, + clause

While some people enjoy the energy of big cities, others find the noise and crowds exhausting.

but (Both) clause + , but + clause

Online shopping is convenient, but it has forced many small shops on the high street to close.

in contrast (Writing) In contrast, + clause

In contrast, sales of electric cars rose steadily throughout the period shown on the graph.

unlike (Both) Unlike + noun, + clause

Unlike coal and gas, wind power produces no carbon emissions while it is generating electricity.

yet (Both) clause + , yet + clause

The city has plenty of parks, yet many children rarely play outdoors after school.

conversely (Writing) ...; conversely, ...

Strict parenting can produce disciplined children; conversely, very relaxed parenting may leave children without a clear routine.

instead of (Both) clause + instead of + noun / -ing

More companies are holding video interviews instead of asking candidates to travel long distances.

on the contrary (Writing) ...; on the contrary, ...

Learning a second language does not confuse young children; on the contrary, it can improve their problem-solving skills.

Conceding

although (Both) Although + clause, + clause

Although the new metro line was expensive to build, it has greatly reduced journey times across the city.

even though (Both) clause + even though + clause

Many students take part-time jobs even though working long hours can affect their grades.

though (Speaking) clause + , though. (at the end)

I really enjoyed studying abroad; it was quite expensive for my family, though.

despite (Both) Despite + noun / -ing, + clause

Despite strict laws, many drivers still use their phones while driving through busy city streets.

in spite of (Both) In spite of + noun / -ing, + clause

In spite of working long hours, many nurses earn less than the national average salary.

despite the fact that (Writing) clause + despite the fact that + clause

Many people continue to smoke despite the fact that the health risks are printed on every packet.

nevertheless (Writing) ...; nevertheless, ...

Building new roads is expensive; nevertheless, it is often the only way to connect remote villages to hospitals and schools.

admittedly (Writing) Admittedly, + clause, but + clause

Admittedly, working from home can feel isolating, but video calls make it easier to stay in touch with colleagues.

even so (Both) ...; even so, ...

The new bus lanes have reduced journey times; even so, many commuters still prefer to drive to work.

that said (Both) That said, + clause

That said, fast food is not always unhealthy, as many chains now offer salads and grilled options.

it is true that (Writing) It is true that + clause, but + clause

It is true that robots will replace some factory jobs, but they will also create new roles in maintenance and design.

regardless of (Both) clause + , regardless of + noun

Every child should have access to a good education, regardless of their family's income or background.

Cause and effect

because (Both) clause + because + clause

Many people prefer to shop online because it saves time and offers a wider choice of products.

because of (Both) Because of + noun, + clause

Because of the rise in childhood obesity, some schools have removed sugary drinks from their vending machines.

due to (Writing) clause + due to + noun

Many outdoor events were cancelled last summer due to extreme heat and the risk of wildfires.

owing to (Writing) Owing to + noun, + clause

Owing to a shortage of qualified teachers, some rural schools have classes of more than forty pupils.

as a result (Both) ...; as a result, ...

Many factories have moved overseas; as a result, unemployment in some industrial towns has risen sharply.

therefore (Writing) ...; therefore, ...

Public transport in the area is unreliable; therefore, most families feel they have no choice but to own a car.

consequently (Writing) Consequently, + clause

Consequently, many graduates are leaving the region to look for better-paid work in the capital.

thus (Writing) clause + , thus + -ing

Many offices now allow flexible hours, thus reducing the number of cars on the road at peak times.

so (Both) clause + , so + clause

Housing in the capital is extremely expensive, so many young workers share flats with three or four other people.

since (Both) Since + clause, + clause

Since most students now own laptops, many universities have reduced the number of computer rooms on campus.

this leads to (Writing) ..., and this leads to + noun / -ing

Long working hours leave people little time to cook, and this leads to a greater reliance on fast food.

for this reason (Writing) For this reason, + clause

For this reason, many doctors now recommend a daily walk rather than intensive gym sessions for older patients.

result in (Writing) cause + result in + noun / -ing

Cutting school sports programmes may result in higher rates of obesity among children and teenagers.

Giving examples

for example (Both) For example, + clause

For example, Copenhagen has invested heavily in cycle lanes, and cycling is now one of the most common ways to get to work there.

for instance (Both) ...; for instance, ...

Small changes can save energy at home; for instance, switching off lights in empty rooms lowers electricity bills.

such as (Both) noun + such as + noun(s)

Many children now spend their free time on activities such as gaming and watching online videos.

like (Speaking) noun + like + noun(s)

I really enjoy outdoor sports like hiking and swimming, especially when the weather's warm.

a good example of this is (Both) A good example of this is + noun

A good example of this is Singapore, where strict rules on littering have helped to keep the streets clean.

namely (Writing) noun + , namely + noun(s) / -ing

The council has two main priorities, namely improving public transport and building more affordable housing.

to illustrate (Writing) To illustrate, + clause

To illustrate, a family that replaces short car journeys with cycling can save a significant amount on fuel each month.

Sequencing and listing

firstly (Writing) Firstly, + clause

Firstly, a four-day working week would give employees more time to rest and spend with their families.

secondly (Writing) Secondly, + clause

Secondly, governments could offer tax breaks to companies that allow their staff to work flexible hours.

to begin with (Both) To begin with, + clause

To begin with, the raw cocoa beans are dried in the sun for about a week before being sorted.

then (Both) ... and then + verb

The raw materials are mixed with water and then heated in a large oven for several hours.

after that (Both) After that, + clause

After that, the flakes are washed, melted and turned into small pellets that can be used to make new bottles.

subsequently (Writing) subject + was / were + subsequently + past participle

The factory closed in 2008, and the site was subsequently turned into a park and new housing.

finally (Both) Finally, + clause

Finally, the finished bricks are loaded onto lorries and delivered to building sites across the region.

meanwhile (Both) ...; meanwhile, ...

The population of the city grew rapidly; meanwhile, the number of hospital beds stayed almost the same.

once (Both) Once + clause, + clause

Once students have finished their final exams, many of them take a gap year to travel or work.

prior to (Writing) Prior to + noun / -ing, + clause

Prior to 2005, most households in the region relied on wood for cooking and heating their homes.

following (Writing) Following + noun, + clause

Following the introduction of a sugar tax, sales of fizzy drinks in the country fell noticeably.

Comparing

similarly (Writing) Similarly, + clause

Similarly, the proportion of people who owned a smartphone rose from under 20% to over 80% across the period.

likewise (Writing) Likewise, + clause

Likewise, older employees can learn a great deal about new technology from their younger colleagues.

in the same way (Both) In the same way that + clause, + clause

In the same way that children copy their parents' habits, pupils often copy the attitudes of their teachers.

compared with (Both) Compared with + noun, + clause

Compared with ten years ago, far more people now pay for goods and services using their mobile phones.

in comparison (Writing) ...; in comparison, ...

Spending on healthcare doubled over the period; in comparison, spending on education rose by only ten per cent.

Emphasising

indeed (Writing) ...; indeed, ...

Exercise benefits mental health; indeed, even a short daily walk can noticeably improve a person's mood.

in fact (Both) ...; in fact, ...

Working from home is not always relaxing; in fact, many employees say they work longer hours at home.

clearly (Both) Clearly, + clause

Clearly, more needs to be done to make healthy food affordable for families on low incomes.

especially (Both) clause + , especially + phrase

Cycle lanes are badly needed in large cities, especially where traffic is heavy during the morning rush hour.

above all (Both) Above all, + clause

Above all, a good teacher needs patience and the ability to explain an idea in more than one way.

undoubtedly (Writing) Undoubtedly, + clause

Undoubtedly, the internet has changed the way people search and apply for jobs over the past twenty years.

it is worth noting that (Writing) It is worth noting that + clause

It is worth noting that the figures for 2020 were affected by lockdowns, which closed many shops for months.

Concluding and summarising

in conclusion (Writing) In conclusion, + clause

In conclusion, although working from home has some drawbacks, its benefits for most employees are greater.

to sum up (Both) To sum up, + clause

To sum up, the chart shows that renewable energy grew steadily while the use of coal declined.

overall (Both) Overall, + clause

Overall, the proportion of households with internet access rose sharply, while landline use fell over the period.

all in all (Speaking) All in all, + clause

All in all, I'd say my hometown is a pleasant place to grow up, even if it's a bit quiet.

on the whole (Both) On the whole, + clause

On the whole, I think social media has done more good than harm for small businesses in my country.

in short (Both) In short, + clause

In short, investing in public transport benefits the environment, the economy and people's health at the same time.

for these reasons (Writing) For these reasons, + clause

For these reasons, I believe that university education should remain free for students from low-income families.

Linking in speaking

actually (Speaking) Actually, + clause

Actually, I've never lived anywhere else, so it's hard for me to compare my hometown with other places.

anyway (Speaking) Anyway, + clause

Anyway, that's the main reason I chose engineering instead of medicine, and I don't regret it at all.

I mean (Speaking) I mean, + clause (clarifying what you just said)

I mean, my hometown is nice, but there isn't much for young people to do in the evenings.

the thing is (Speaking) The thing is, + clause

The thing is, I'd love to learn the piano, but I just don't have enough free time at the moment.

to be honest (Speaking) To be honest, + clause

To be honest, I don't read as many books as I used to because I spend most evenings on my phone.

as far as I know (Speaking) As far as I know, + clause

As far as I know, my school was one of the first in the area to teach coding to young children.

well (Speaking) Well, + answer

Well, it's not an easy question, but I'd probably say my grandmother has influenced me the most.

let me think (Speaking) Let me think... + answer

Let me think... I suppose the last time I ate out was about two weeks ago with my cousins.

what I mean is (Speaking) What I mean is (that) + clause

What I mean is that online friends can be real friends, even if you've never met them in person.

on top of that (Speaking) On top of that, + clause

On top of that, the rent in my area has gone up a lot this year, so I'm thinking about moving.

apart from that (Speaking) Apart from that, + clause

Apart from that, I also enjoy cooking at the weekends, especially dishes from my grandmother's old recipes.

another thing is (Speaking) Another thing is (that) + clause

Another thing is that public parks give children a safe place to play outside after school.

as I said (Speaking) As I said, + clause

As I said, I really like my job, but the long commute does get tiring by the end of the week.

basically (Speaking) Basically, + clause

Basically, I chose this university because it has a strong engineering department and it's close to home.