

Text structure

I. Paragraphs, sentences, clauses, linkers

II. Sentence and clause linkers, their meaning

III. Selection of other sentence and clause linkers

IV. Notes

I. Paragraphs, sentences, clauses, linkers

A **text** usually consists of more than one **paragraph**; however, one-paragraph texts also exist, e.g. the abstract. Each well-structured paragraph deals with one main point, or **topic**, introduced by the **topic sentence**. The topic sentence is usually placed at the beginning, although some writers prefer to place it at the end of the paragraph, thus summarizing the thought.

A **paragraph** usually consists of several **sentences** – some of them longer, some of them shorter. They are mostly combinations of **independent and dependent clauses**. Sentences in a paragraph and clauses forming a sentence are connected by **linkers (linking words and phrases)**. The linkers are **clues** that help you understand the text. They also make your own writing coherent.

Examples :

Sentence linkers: *This is a cheap and simple process. **However**, there are dangers.*

Clause linkers linking independent clauses (IC), i.e. clauses that can stand alone:

She didn't speak to anyone. Nobody spoke to her.

*She didn't speak to anyone **and** nobody spoke to her.*

Clause linkers linking a dependent clause (DC) and an independent clause (IC) or vice versa:

***Before** the students sit for the oral examination, they will take the written part.*

*The students will take the written examination **before** they sit for the oral part.*

II. Sentence and clause linkers, their meaning

Meaning	Sentence linkers	Clause linkers	Clause linkers
	linking	IC + IC	DC + IC/IC + DC
Addition	in addition, besides, apart from, furthermore, moreover, also, too	and, not only ... but also	
Contrast	on the other hand, on the contrary, in/by contrast, however, nevertheless, nonetheless, instead, yet, still, despite that, in spite of that	but, yet	although, though, even though, while, whereas
Alternative or condition	otherwise, or else	or	if, supposing, provided
Explanation	that is, i.e., namely, in fact		

Example	for example, for instance, e.g.		
Conclusion or summary	in conclusion, in summary, to sum up, in brief, in short		
Chronology or time	first, second, next, now, then, first of all, after that, finally, eventually, at last, soon, gradually, meanwhile		when, while, after, before, since, until/till, as soon as
Importance	above all, primarily, more significantly/importantly		
Similarity/dissimilarity	similarly, like, likewise; unlike	both ... and; (just) as	
Proof	evidently, obviously, clearly		
Result	as a result, accordingly, therefore, thus, hence, consequently, as a consequence		so (that), such ... that
Cause			as, because, since
Purpose			so that, in order that
Comparison	by/in comparison		as ... as, not as/so ... as; than

For more information on clause linkers see A Remedial Course in English Grammar: Clauses.

III. Selection of other sentence and clause linkers

definite article: the

*He works for a British company. **The** company produces mobile phones.*

personal pronouns: he, she, it ...

*John is a PhD student. **He** does research into turbogenerators.*

demonstrative pronouns: this, that

*In January, we can expect temperatures below 10°C. **That/This** may considerably increase power consumption.*

that (že):

*I know **that** the outcome is uncertain.*

wh-words: who, what, which, when, where, why, how

*We do not know yet **when** the conference will be held.*

relative pronouns: who, which, that (který)

*The students **who** have not handed in their reports yet, have to do so by next week at the latest.*

IV. Notes

- **Sentence linkers** are usually followed by a **comma (,)**. When they introduce the second sentence, they come **after a full stop (.) or a semicolon (;)**.

In summary, these plans are not realistic.

The cost of fuel went up. As a result, food prices also rose considerably.

The cost of fuel went up; as a result, food prices also rose considerably.

- **Between clauses**, there is usually **no comma (,)** if the linker introduces the second clause. If it introduces the first clause, there is usually **a comma (,)** after that clause.

We will buy some new equipment if we receive the grant.

If we receive the grant, we will buy some new equipment.

For more information see A Remedial Course in English Grammar: Clauses and Guidelines for Academic Writing: Punctuation.

- **Which, this and that** can refer to a whole **clause**.

*He spoke very quickly, **which** made it difficult for us to understand.*

(= the fact that he spoke quickly); which = což

*Power consumption in the winter months was high. **This/That** was due to long periods of frosty weather in both January and February.*

(= the fact that power consumption was high)

EXERCISES

I. Read the sentences below carefully and give Czech equivalents for the linkers.

1. The company provides cheap Internet access. **In addition/besides**, it makes shareware easily available. =
2. The project did not bring the expected results. **Furthermore/Moreover/What's more**, it was very costly. =
3. **On the one hand** I'd like a job which pays more, **on the other hand** I enjoy my work here. =
4. It was not a good idea to take this approach; **on the contrary**, it was a huge mistake. =
5. The company made a loss of 500,000 dollars last year. **In contrast**, it made a big profit this year. =
6. We knew a lot about the subject; **nevertheless/nonetheless** we found the lecture very interesting. =
7. This is a cheap method. **However**, there are dangers. =
8. We did not use the grant for salaries. **Instead**, we purchased new equipment for our laboratory. =
9. Charles University is a very old university. In comparison, our University is relatively new. =
10. We'll have to go now; **otherwise/or else** we'll miss the lecture. =
11. I know Professor Smith quite well. **In fact**, I met him several times at international conferences. =
12. Three conference venues were mentioned; **namely**, Prague, Stockholm, and London. =
13. **In conclusion**, I'd like to thank all the speakers for their contribution to the success of the conference. =
14. **To sum up/ In summary**, these plans are not realistic. =

15. **In brief/In short**, we should invest more money in modern equipment.
=
16. He was out of work for two years. **Finally/Eventually**, he got a job with a foreign company. =
17. When the project started, we encountered major difficulties. **Gradually**, we were able to overcome them. =
18. If people drove more carefully, there wouldn't be so many accidents. **More importantly**, there would be fewer deaths. =
19. The cost of food has gone up in recent years; **similarly/likewise**, fuel prices have risen considerably. =
20. We didn't listen to his advice. **Obviously**, that was a mistake. =
21. The pilots went on strike. **As a result**, all flights had to be cancelled. =
22. Some of their staff did not receive any formal training in the use of computers. **Consequently/As a consequence**, their computer skills are poor.
=
23. The cost of transport was very high. **Hence/therefore** company location became an important factor. =
24. They reduced staff and **thus** cut costs. =

II. Identify the sentence linkers. Give their Czech equivalent.

The eventual goal of science is to provide a single theory that describes the whole universe. However, the approach most scientists usually follow is to separate the problem into two parts. First, there are the laws that tell us how the universe changes with time. Second, there is the question of the initial state of the universe. Some people feel that science should be concerned with only the first part; they regard the question of the initial situation as a matter for religion. Thus, they say that God could have started the universe off any way he wanted. That may be so, but in that case he also could have made it develop in a completely arbitrary way. Yet, it appears that he chose to make it evolve in a very regular way according to certain laws. Therefore, it seems equally reasonable to suppose that there are also laws governing the initial state.

Adapted from: S.W.Hawking, A Brief History of Time

III. The following sentences have been scrambled. Put them in the right order to make the paragraph coherent. Underline the linkers and explain their role.

Electric car charging stations

- a) Coulomb Technologies is working to break that deadlock.
- b) It's the chicken-and-egg problem of electric vehicles.
- c) The company is building a system of automated charging stations in public places that are connected to utilities.
- d) So the charge for your charge can be added to your home electricity bill.
- e) Until there's a network of road-embedded rechargers, that is a series of stations where drivers can charge their batteries, an electric car is inherently limited.
- f) And if your utility hasn't partnered with Coulomb, you can call a toll-free number and pay with your credit card.

Adapted from: Time, Nov. 22, 2010, p. 55

IV. Fill the blanks with the linkers below. Use each of them just once.

obviously
i.e.

for example
similarly

finally
in brief

on the contrary
in conclusion

1. Did you find the lecture interesting?, I almost fell asleep.
2., there is no point in continuing; we have exhausted all the options.
3. I didn't want to go into details., I told them we had no other option.
4., let me summarize the main points again.
5. In our library we have quite a lot of journals. IEEE Sensor Journal,, and IEEE Transactions on Energy Conversion.
6. The film was only for adults, for people over 18.
7., after trying again and again to start the car, he gave up.
8. You can't learn to swim by watching others., you can't learn English without speaking it.

V. Fill the blanks with English equivalents of the Czech linkers in brackets. Then reformulate the sentences, using the English linkers in capitals. We have done the first example for you.

1. The report will describe the results of our research; moreover/in addition/apart from that/besides, it will provide information on what we are going to do next. (kromě toho, navíc)

NOT ONLY.... BUT ALSO

The report will not only describe our results, but it will also provide information on what we are going to do next.

2. Study hard., you will not pass the examination. (jinak)

IF, UNLESS

.....
3. Light industries, such as electronics, are expanding rapidly., heavy industries, such as steel production, are in decline. (na rozdíl)

WHILE, WHEREAS

.....
4. carefully read the instructions, start the machine. (nejprve pak)

BEFORE, AFTER

.....
5. I wanted to solve that problem quickly., it was much more complicated than I had thought. (avšak)

BUT

.....
6. Many roads were flooded., there were long delays. (v důsledku toho)

AS, BECAUSE, SINCE; THEREFORE, HENCE

.....
.....

7. His report was rather short., it provided a lot of useful information. (nicméně; přesto)
ALTHOUGH, THOUGH

8. We have good reason to feel satisfied with what we have achieved., we must not forget that a lot remains to be done. (na druhé straně)
BUT

9. This procedure is very efficient., the one we used before was much less efficient.. (ve srovnání s tím)
NOT AS AS, THAN

VI. Choose the best linking expression to fill in the gap. Punctuation may sometimes be the clue.

first	eventually	while	by the time	therefore
otherwise	moreover	on the contrary	however	even though

1. Glass is a very useful material., it breaks easily.
2. Glass is fragile;, it should be handled carefully.
3. glass is fragile, it has many useful properties.
4. To make glass, heat the sand and soda ash to about 1,500° C.
5. There are two main reasons for the widespread use of glass bottles: they are cheap and,, they have no effect on the flavour, smell, or chemistry of the contents.
6. Many consumers think that recycling glass containers is a waste of time and energy;, it produces significant savings.
7. some recycling programmes require consumers to separate brown, green, and clear glass, many others do not.
8. Many such programmes start with children in elementary school. these children are in secondary school, they are very much aware of the value of recycling.
9. It is important that parents should set a good example as well by recycling their own used containers;, the children may not believe that recycling really matters.
10., maybe we won't have to create special programmes to remind consumers to recycle what they can.

VII. Combine each set of facts into one sentence so as to get a paragraph of eight sentences. Underline the topic sentence. Use linkers such as which, and, but, or ... and linkers suggested in the brackets. In making the necessary changes in the structure and wording (see the Example), try

- to keep as close as possible to the original meaning of the sentences,
- to produce a text that reads well and is not clumsy.

Example

Some students are able to study effectively. (no matter)
They are able to study anywhere.

They are able to study at any time.

Possible answer.

Some students are able study effectively, no matter where and when.

1. Some students find it hard to study effectively. (because)
They are easily distracted.
They are not able to concentrate on subjects that are difficult for them.
They are not able to concentrate on subjects uninteresting to them.
2. A good start is to have a study area. (obviously)
The study area should be quiet.
The study area should have enough light.
The study area should have a chair, desk and computer.
3. The time of the day may also be important. (while)
Some students study best in a quiet place early in the morning.
Some students study best in the evening or even late at night.
4. Students who want to improve their study habits and results have to make some decisions. (if; namely)
They concern the time.
They concern the place.
They concern the length of study sessions.
They concern the revision intervals.
5. There are a number of time-tested methods for improving study efficiency: (of course; for example)
Study the most difficult subjects first.
Study as soon as possible after a lecture.
Take a break every 60 minutes.
6. Most students do also know activities that help them remember facts. (naturally; i.e.)
Many students use memory aids.
Many students revise regularly.
Many students revise frequently.
Many students recommend learning in groups.
7. There is no one right or best way to study. (to sum up; but; as a result)
Following these suggestions can help students organize their time and be more successful.

VIII. Reformulate the sentences from Exercise I, using clause linkers.

Example:

We knew a lot about the subject; nevertheless, we found the lecture very interesting.

Although we knew a lot about the subject, we found the lecture very interesting.

1. The company provides cheap Internet access. In addition, it makes shareware easily available.
.....

2. This is a cheap method. However, there are dangers.

.....
3. Charles University is a very old university. In comparison, our University is relatively new.
.....

4. We'll have to go now; otherwise we'll miss the lecture.
.....

5. He was out of work for two years. Eventually, he got a job with a foreign company.
.....

6. The cost of food has gone up in recent years; similarly, fuel prices have risen considerably.
.....

7. The pilots went on strike; consequently, all flights had to be cancelled.
.....

8. The cost of transport was very high. Hence company location became an important factor.
.....

IX. Add a topic sentence to the following paragraph.

.....
The university culture in which you are training or which you have recently left is quite different from the engineering, business or government culture you will likely enter. Understanding this difference is important because you will need to make an adjustment in your mind as you enter an engineering job. It is particularly relevant for Ph.D. graduates and some master degree graduates who have been trained to do research in an academic, scientific environment rather than an engineering environment.

Adapted from a paper by David C. Wisler presented at ASME/IGTI Turbo Expo 2003.

X. The following paragraph contains one sentence which does not support the topic sentence (underlined) and breaks the unity of the paragraph. Can you find it?

Coal is a vital ingredient in the manufacture of steel. Over 60 percent of the 100 million tons of coal used in making steel is converted into coke. The loss of iron and steel through rusting is a great waste each year. For every ton of iron ore dumped into a blast furnace, a ton of coke must be added. The coke, burning with intense heat, melts the iron. In addition, the coke supplies the carbon which, next to the iron, is the most important element in steel.

XI. Find the order of the paragraphs and number them. The topic sentences are underlined. Explain why you chose this order. Can you find any clues?

Engineering – What you do not necessarily learn in school

..... In my particular job, I have the pleasure of interacting with a large number of young engineers just beginning their careers at GE as well as with students who are working towards their engineering degree. These are exciting times for them. I try to assure them that they have chosen a career that can lead to great satisfaction.

..... These insights are not just "one manager's opinion". I had this paper critiqued by many of my colleagues in industry, universities, and government, including chief technologists and senior engineers at the three major American aeroengine companies. There was overwhelming support from industry for the validity of these twelve insights.

..... Therefore, this paper focuses on twelve vital aspects in engineering that are usually learned after graduation but can make the difference between success and failure in one's

engineering career. To succeed, engineers must: learn to be business oriented; expect tough, multidisciplinary problems; learn to work and network in the new multi-cultural and multi-national environment; understand the difference between university and industry; learn to differentiate all over again; understand the values and culture of their particular company or organization; be open to ideas from everywhere; have personal integrity; make their manager a success; support their university and technical society; have fun; and most importantly, manage their careers. Each of these aspects will later be discussed in detail.

..... Quite naturally, this interaction often raises the question, “How can I succeed in engineering?” I wish I could give these young people a mathematical equation whose solution would guarantee their success. But I know of no such equation. I have, however, gained some insights about succeeding in engineering that my fellow engineers and I have learned over the years. I offer the above twelve insights, later explained in detail in this paper, and hope they will be beneficial in helping young engineers focus and manage their careers.

..... As young engineers progress in their careers, they begin to understand that there is far more to being an outstanding engineer than they might have thought during their days as undergraduates. In fact, some of the things they need to know were not necessarily learned in school. And this is understandable due to the relatively short time spent in school and the significant differences between the missions of universities and industry/government.

Adapted from a paper by David C. Wisler presented at the ASME/IGTI Turbo Expo 2003

XII. Write a ten-sentence paragraph on one of the following topics.

How to write a well structured paragraph.

How to improve your English.

Your motivation for the PhD course.

History of the university you graduated from.

Follow these steps:

1. First, write all ideas related to the topic that occur to you.
2. Then organize all ideas supporting the topic.
3. Formulate the supporting ideas in a logical order, using also linking words.
4. Finally, proofread what you have written

