



**Female Voice:** You are now listening to the IELTS podcast. Learn from tutors and ex-examiners who are masters of IELTS preparation. Your host, Ben Worthington.

**Ben:** Hello there, IELTS students. In this tutorial, we are going to focus on fluency and cohesion. We're going to look and to specifically develop our score and to improve our score in fluency and cohesion. We're going to look at connectives and discourse markers.

Now, discourse markers and connectives come straight from the criteria. If we look at the criteria for band 7 speaking, under fluency and cohesion it says that the candidate should use a range of connectives and discourse markers with some flexibility. So, in this tutorial, I'm going to give you a list of connectives and discourse markers and we're going to look at how to use these effectively and what their purpose is.

Before we jump into this, I want you to listen to a sample answer that uses these band 7 connectives and discourse markers. Then afterwards, we're going to break them down and hopefully, you'll be able to hear them again when I'm talking through it and then at the end of the tutorial, we're going to have another listen.

By the way, if you can guess the accent of the speaker, bonus to you. Actually, you know what if you can guess the accent, email to us at [ieltpodcast@gmail.com](mailto:ieltpodcast@gmail.com). Email in to us, tell us the accent and we've got a surprise for you. So, listen really attentively.



**Female Speaker:** Well, that's because it's very useful in modern society, I guess. Language learning stopped being a hobby and turned into a trend. That is due to many real advantages in employment, relationships, and health.

First, speaking more than one language can open up a great number of employment opportunities for job seekers especially if that language is widely used in business. So, if you speak a language like English or Mandarin, you will be able to work for not only local but global businesses too with the additional advantage of a very decent salary.

Second, if you speak two or more languages, this will help you to extend your connections worldwide, so you will be able to build lasting friendships with foreign co-workers or local people when you travel around the world.

Finally, your brain will benefit a lot from such a learning activity as discovering a new language. Research showed that starting another language helps prevent brain illness and keeps you more mentally fit as well as improving your memory.

In short, what I'm getting at is that learning a foreign language is more than beneficial.

**Ben:** There we go. I hope you got that and I hope you understood it all. Now, in order to sound convincing and confident, your speech needs to be connected and logical. Very similar to our



paragraphs where we show a logical progression of ideas and as I said before, the connectives and discourse markers will help you achieve that.

First, we are going to look at the connectives and then we are going to look at discourse markers. Let's jump into it. Really, the best way to think about this is as we are writing a paragraph because when we are talking with the examiner, we want to show this progression of ideas. We also want to use some of the higher level grammatical structures such as showing a comparison or an order of sequence of events. These connectives will help you get there.

There's just one thing before we jump into the list that I-- it's an important point that I would like to mention. Just a few weeks ago, I was online with a student and we were talking and he was building-- his main issue when he was talking was that he didn't have the fluency. He kept on stopping and then uuh and mmm and stretching out the words at the beginning just to buy himself some more time.

He said, "Ben, I think I need a list of fillers so I can avoid these pauses and all these mms and ahs," and I was like Aziz, no. The fillers are going to be a short term solution to a long term problem. The fillers are worth looking at maybe if you've only got three or four days to prepare and you just need a quick glance, have a look at them and they'll probably help you a little bit.

The best solution, the optimum solution for this, especially in his case, this is why I gave him the optimum solution because he had like about six weeks, eight weeks to prepare and he still



hadn't put in to do the exam. So, I said Aziz, what your best doing is eliminating the need for these fillers because if you develop your speaking now with these fillers, it's quite difficult to get rid of them later.

In fact, my specific advice for him was to start recording himself. Also, to start reading from texts in front of him so he can get used to and more comfortable speaking at length without the pauses. Also, to get more speaking, of course, and really just sort of take a long term solution to this because it's more an issue of confidence and competence.

I think if he got more into of a relaxed mindset then this would help him really develop his speaking abilities rather than looking for that list of fillers and then going for that whenever you run out of words or whenever he was uncomfortable with the silence.

By the way, the silence isn't too bad. It's probably not as severe or as serious as you think. So, don't be worried about sitting there in silence with the examiner. Of course, if it's gone like 10 seconds or something and you're both looking at each other... but otherwise don't be afraid of it. A few pauses in and amongst your speaking is fine just while you collect your thoughts.

Anyway, sorry. Let's jump into this. We're going to look at the list of connectives now. I'll tell you the list and then possibly you can guess what the function is. So, I'll give you the first list: and, also, besides, furthermore, to, moreover, then, equally, equally important, and another. The function of these ones was to basically addition; add further information.



Now, it's important to mention that using something like 'furthermore' is probably too formal for the speaking. Writing has its own language. Academic writing has its own language especially formal-- well, it's always formal when it's academic writing. So, some of these phrases are not useful for the speaking, but they are useful for your writing.

I'll just say the list again: and, also, besides, to, moreover-- Moreover is also too formal for your speaking. It's not really the correct language we want to be using. Then we have then, equally important, and another.

[00:09:05.23]

Repetition

[00:14:39.05]

Also very useful, in fact insanely useful and I often tell students that if they are struggling to fill the time allotted to them when they are speaking or they are running out of ideas to use these simple phrases to develop the idea. These phrases are: for example, to illustrate, for instance, to be specific, another good collocation, such as, and especially. The function of these connectives is to signal an example or to emphasize.

Once you get-- we were just talking about Australia. "I'd love to live in Australia. For instance, I think there are a lot of positives from living there. To be specific, you can get beautiful sunny



days every single day and it's one of my favorite countries since childhood." It's just an example off the top of my head.

By using those phrases; for example, to illustrate, for instance, we can really jump into the details and we can maybe even start an anecdote. For example, when I was younger I always used to draw maps about Australia. I was obsessed by this country. As I said before, it's much better to be aware of these and start using them not necessarily memorizing the list.

Let's carry on. The final ones we can-- these are very useful for the end of part 2 the speaking where we've got the cue card. All these connectives serve the function of summarizing or concluding. Let's go: in summary, to sum up, to repeat, briefly, in short, finally, on the whole, therefore, as I said, in conclusion, as you can see.

My favorites from these, the more straightforward ones are in summary and-- "To sum up, my childhood friend, my best childhood friend is called Simon and he's the guy I have the most fondest memories of," or "In conclusion, I'd really like to live in Australia at one point in my life. It's probably my favorite country."

Quite straight forward and it just makes the whole experience a little bit easier for yourself and for the examiner. We avoid those uncomfortable silences that come about when you just stop talking. I've had students that we do a part 2 together and they talk and talk and talk and they just stop. And then there is this silence and I'm like okay, have you finished now? I'm pretty



certain this would happen in exam conditions as well. So, just to avoid that, just signal to the examiner. Look, I've finished talking now. Let's move on to part 3. Give me this band 7.

All right, before we finish we're going to look at discourse markers; another vital point if we want to score band 7 or higher. These ones are quite easy I think. They are quite straightforward to use. Also, they usually come in the form of two words or more. So, we've got these collocations there that are really useful.

First one: actually or I have to say. I think these ones are really useful for part 3 because in part 3 we're going to get these abstract questions. So, we might want to preface what we really think and that means just prepare the listener, prepare the examiner to what we really think.

So, imagine we get the part 3 question like "Why do you think friendship is important nowadays?" This is quite a tough question especially if it comes out of the blue like a lot of the exam questions do. Why do I think friendship is important nowadays?

We can start with, "Well, I think friendship is important nowadays because it provides that bond of security and safety. I mean if you've got a good network of friends, then it just makes your life easier. I have to say that nowadays, my network of friends isn't considerably large as it was compared to in the past, even though I have to say I know friends that do have a large network of friends and life for them does seem considerably easier. Their friends help them,



they help them move house, help them organize parties and events and it just seems a lot easier.”

The two discourse markers there are “actually” and “I have to say.” Also, there's a really useful one here which is to confess that something is true. This one is very versatile and it's almost like a collocation as well. So, if we want to confess something and it's true, we can just use “I must admit.”

So, if we go back to that question about why do you think friendship is important nowadays, you could say, "Well, I must admit that I don't have any friends." That might be true, but we can use it in quite a lot of factors like "I must admit I never really thought about it before" or "I must admit I think friendship is really important. In fact, I was thinking about it the other day. Without friends, life is much more difficult because friends can help you look after your house while you are away. They can help you move house. They can, obviously, make social engagements much more enjoyable. Also, you can confide in your friends. So, that's why I think friendship is really important nowadays."

I just did my mini conclusion there and I gave a few examples. I didn't go into an anecdote. I didn't think it was necessary, but the important thing there is "I must admit"; very useful phrase. We can even just-- "I must admit I've never thought about that before," and you've just



given yourself a whole lot of time to think of the answer and it's true. Obviously, we can't start every question with "I must admit I've never thought about that before."

Next one: if you want to give yourself time to think, you can use "well". I'm not going to go into that. It's quite straight forward. To start or to change a topic-- you probably hear me use these a lot when I'm moving between topics in the podcasts. In fact, one student actually wrote in and said, "Ben, why do you keep saying so, anyway?"

Anyway, here are the points. Here are the discourse markers. You can say right, so, and anyway. This is probably useful if you've gone off topic and you want to get back on topic. The next one: if you want to talk about knowledge that we share with the listener. I know that Spanish people do this a lot and it's quite good. It's quite useful because you're checking with your listener that they are following your conversation.

We don't really need to be doing it intentionally with the examiner, but it is useful just once or twice. It is a natural way of communicating. So, what you say is you're talking and in the middle you say "you know?" and you get the confirmation from the listener. So, you are involving them in your talk.

You use that sparingly. Perhaps get into the habit of using it maybe when you are speaking with your English speaking colleagues or with your teacher or if you're just doing an exercise you can



just check halfway through your work when you're talking and just get some more time if you say you know, you see. I won't give you an example, you know?

The final one is also very useful for the speaking and it's to introduce your personal opinion. We can say my point is... or what I'm getting at is... That could be quite useful actually. What I'm getting at is... because in part 3 I could imagine it's quite easy to get off topic. So, if you want to pull your answer back, we can say what I'm getting at is... and then also I mean and I guess.

Now, just a final piece of advice before we analyse the audio that was recorded by the woman at the beginning. One word of advice is to use a variety of both the connectives and discourse markers. Avoid repeating them. Avoid repeating the same one over and over and over again. It's easier said than done and this is why it's important-- this is why I recommend using them naturally first so you're probably not even consciously aware that you're using them. This will avoid repetition.

The next one's don't just use the basic ones like like, or, but, however. Use some of the other ones especially those collocations I mentioned: I must admit, for this purpose, with this in mind, equally important. All of these ones are very, very useful. This is what it means.

When I'm saying don't just use the basic ones, what we are referring to is the exam criteria because it says using the connectives and discourse markers with flexibility. You're showing



flexibility if you can show a range. You are showing zero flexibility if you're using the same ones over and over and over again.

Now, let's just jump in to the recording. At the beginning, the woman said well. Why did she do this? She wanted to give herself some time to think. Now, to expand on her answer-- the question was why do people want to learn a foreign language? She expands on the answer and she gives the reason. So, she says, "Well, that's because it's very useful in modern society."

To give a personal opinion she says, "I guess..." Now, I guess is good because this is more like spoken English and it's something that we wouldn't use in the writing. In the writing we'd probably say "in my opinion" and that's not the normal way to express in spoken English. Let's carry on. "I guess language learning stopped being a hobby and turned to a trend. That is due to many real advantages in employment relationships and health." She says "that is due to" and she's referencing a point that she made earlier "that is due to."

Next one: first. We're going to order our speaking here. So, she says "First, speaking more than one language can open up a great number of opportunities especially opportunities for job seekers especially if that language is widely used in business."

So, there's two points there. We used "especially" which is emphasis and "if". We've used a condition there. We're using this grammatical range, upper level grammatical range and accuracy.



Next one: so, if, and then we've got another condition. "So, if you're speaking a language like English or Mandarin, you'll be able to work for not only local but global businesses too." We've got a contrast there. We've said "not only local ones but global ones too." We also used "too" there to add ideas. "...with the additional advantage of a very decent salary."

Also, I hope you have noticed that there is a lot of topic-specific vocabulary here: global business, job seekers, employment opportunities, and relationships. All of these help you to score a band 7 or higher.

Next one: second. This is going back to the order. "Second, if you speak two or more languages, this will help you to extend your connections worldwide." So, we've got quite a few elements going on there. We've got second, which is the order; if, the condition and then we say "this will help you to extend your connections." It might seem innocuous. It might just fly by, but what we did then by using "this" is we've just referenced what we spoke about before.

Let's carry on. "So, you will be able to build lasting relationships with foreign co-workers and local people when you travel around the world." Two things there; we have so, which is a result of what we were just saying before. As a result of this... We don't even have to say as a result. It's just implied.

So, we say "So, you will be able to build lasting relationships with foreign co-workers or local people when..." nice reference to the time there. "...when you travel around the world." Once



again, you've got that good vocabulary: lasting friendships, building lasting friendships, with co-workers, local people.

Come to the end, we've got "and finally". We're going back to the order. Each of these paragraphs or statements have been structured first, second, and finally. That's excellent. "And finally, your brain will benefit from such a learning activity as discovering a new language."

We've got an example from such a learning activity as discovering a new language. "Research showed that studying another language helps prevent brain illness and keeps you more mentally fit as well." Sorry, "...and keeps you more mentally fit as well as improving your memory." With "as well as" what we did there was add additional ideas.

Now, finishing we have this mini conclusion, "In short, what I'm getting at is that learning a language is more than beneficial." I hope you picked up on those two elements there. We have "in short" which is to conclude and to express a personal opinion the speaker said "what I'm getting at is that." Sorry, "what I'm getting at is that learning a foreign language is more than beneficial."

Listen to the recording again now. I'll put it at the end. As you can see in that little speech, we've got a wide variety and a flexible use of connectives and discourse markers. There's one which is repeated which is if, but that's entirely justified because it's used appropriately and we didn't go over the top.



Also, you'll see that the ideas are clearly linked, they are organized and there are some connections there between each point. I'm not going off random tangential topic. I'm just following quite a straightforward structure.

That's everything. What I'll do before we finish is-- when we finish I'll put the recording on again so you can have a good listen and hopefully identify those connectives and discourse markers again.

Also, you'll be interested to know that there is a new app that has come out. That's our app and with this app you can get the transcripts sent to your phone. So, if you just put in to the Google Play Store IELTS podcast app or if you go to the app store on iOS, you can put IELTS audio tutorials and you'll find a podcast. It's our own app and through there we're going to be doing more promotions. We're going to be sending the transcripts. You'll get everything that you need.

My name is Ben Worthington. Thank you very much and remember if you're struggling with your IELTS exam you can easily get in contact with us at the email I said before, [ieltpodcast@gmail.com](mailto:ieltpodcast@gmail.com). Don't hesitate to send us an email with whatever you are struggling with. We'd love to help you.

If you are in a bit of a rush and need to pass the exam or you just want to pass it first time, have a look at the [Jump to a Band 7 or It's Free](#) online IELTS course. We're getting some fantastic



results and we've got two essay correctors now because it keeps on growing. The other essay corrector is almost getting burnt out by doing everyone's corrections so we hired another one. It's quite exciting actually. Thank you very much for listening and good luck with your IELTS exam.

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