

B1 ENGLISH

CHAPTER 4 Lesson 2

Vocabulary:

Connecting and linking words

(Unit 66-69)

A

Text-referring words

Text-referring words take their meaning from the surrounding text. For example, this sentence in isolation does not mean much: 'We decided to look at the problem again and try to find a solution.' What problem? The words **problem** and **solution** help organise the argument of the text, but they do not tell us the topic of the text. They refer to something somewhere else.

Here are some examples. The word in bold refers to the underlined words.

Pollution is increasing. The **problem** is getting worse each day.

Should taxes be raised or lowered? This was the biggest **issue** in the election. [topic causing great argument and controversy]

Whether the war could have been avoided is a **question** that interests historians.

Let's discuss crime. That's always an interesting **topic**. [subject to argue about or discuss, e.g. in a debate or in an essay]

Punishment is only one **aspect** of crime. [part of the topic]

B

Problem-solution words

Text-referring words are often used with 'problem-solution' types of text, where a problem is presented and ways of solving it are discussed. In the following example, the words in bold concern a problem or a solution. Try to learn these words as a family.

The **situation** in our cities with regard to traffic is going from bad to worse. Congestion is a daily feature of urban life. The **problem** is now beginning to **affect** our national

economies. Unless a new **approach** is found to control traffic, we will never find a **solution** to the **dilemma**.

In the dialogue below, two politicians are arguing. Note how the words in bold refer to parts of the argument.

A: **Your claim** that we're doing nothing to invest in industry is false. We invested £10 billion last year. You've ignored **this fact**.

A: **That argument** is out-of-date in a modern technological society. **Our position** has always been that we should encourage technology.



B: But the investment has all gone to service industries. **The real point** is that we need to invest in our manufacturing industries.

B: But **that view** won't help to reduce unemployment.

The following problem-solution words are grouped in families associated with the underlined key words. The prepositions normally used with them are given in brackets.

situation: state of affairs, **position** (*with regard to*)

problem: difficulty (more formal), **crisis**, **matter**

response (*to*): **reaction** (*to*), **attitude** (*to*), **approach** (*to*)

solution: answer (*to*), **resolution** (*to*), **key** (*to*), **way out** (*of*)

evaluation (*of the solution*): **assessment**, **judgment**

Economically, the government is in a critical **position**. This **state of affairs** is partly a result of the financial **difficulties** currently being experienced globally. Our government's initial **response** to the

situation was to impose higher taxes. This **approach** has not proved to be the **solution** to the problem. Economists' current **assessment** is that this may in fact be making **matters** worse.

Exercises

66.1 Match the sentences on the left with a suitable label on the right.

- 1 The earth is in orbit around the sun.

2 It has proved to be most efficient.

3 People are essentially good.

4 I've run out of cash.

5 World poverty and overpopulation.

6 They should get married, to my mind.
- c

a problem

b evaluation

c fact

d belief

e view

f issue

66.2 Fill the gaps with an appropriate word to refer to the underlined parts of the sentences.

- 1 So you were talking about animal rights? That's quite a big issue nowadays.

2 We are running out of funds. How do you propose we should deal with the?

3 Is there life on other planets? This is a nobody has yet been able to answer.

4 (*teacher to the class*) You can write your essay on 'My best holiday ever'. If you don't like that , I'll give you another one.

5 She thinks we should all fly around in tiny little helicopters. This to the traffic problem in cities is rather new and unusual. I wonder if it is viable?

66.3 These newspaper headlines have been separated from their texts. Put each one with a suitable text extract.

a **NEW APPROACH TO
CANCER TREATMENT**

d **PRIME MINISTER SETS OUT
VIEWS ON NATO**

b **NEW ARGUMENT OVER
ECONOMIC RECESSION**

e **SOLUTION TO AGE-OLD
MYSTERY IN KENYA**

c **SCIENTIST REJECTS
CLAIMS OVER FAST FOOD**

f **SITUATION IN SAHEL
WORSENING DAILY**

1 she said if the world
community failed to
respond, thousands of
children could die

2 tests were being carried
out to see if the new drug
really did work

3 there was no proof at
all that such things
were harmful, and in

4 the bones proved beyond
doubt that human beings
had inhabited the region
during

5 also said that he believed
that most people had a
similar vision of

6 the Minister denied that
this was true and said
instead that the evidence
pointed to

f

66.4 Over to you

- 1 What aspect of your work/studies do you find most interesting?

2 Have you ever faced a dilemma? What was it? What was your response to the situation?

3 Can you think of an argument in favour of single-sex schools and an argument against? What are your own views on this issue?

4 What would you say is the main problem facing your country at the moment? Can you suggest a solution to this problem?

A

What are discourse markers?

Discourse markers are expressions which organise, comment on or in some way frame what we are saying. An example is **well**.

A: So you live in Boston? B: **Well**, near Boston.

Well here shows that the speaker is aware he/she is changing the direction of the conversation in some way (not giving the expected 'yes' answer). Another example is how teachers use words like

Right and **OK** to organise what is happening in a classroom:

Right/OK, let's have a look at exercise 3.

B

Organising a conversation

Here are some common expressions which organise the different stages of a conversation.

Now, what shall we do next? **So**, would you like to come to the table now, please?

Good, I'll ring you on Thursday, then. **Well then**, what was it you want to talk about?

Now then, I want you to look at this picture. (said by someone in control of the conversation, e.g. a teacher)

Fine/Great, let's meet again next week, then, shall we? (often used to close conversations)

So, where was I? I was telling you about my aunt ... (often used after an interruption or to come back to the main topic or story)

C

Modifying and commenting on what you say

In these mini-dialogues, the expressions in bold *modify* or *comment on* what is being said.

A: It's cold, isn't it?

B: Yeah.

A: **Mind you**, it's November, so it's not surprising.
(an afterthought, used like *however*)

A: What's her number?

B: **Let me see**, I have it here
somewhere ... (a hesitation -
gaining time)

A: It's quite a problem ...

B: **Listen/Look**, why don't you let me sort it
out? (introducing a suggestion / an important
point)

A: Would you? Thanks a lot.

A: And he said he was go-

B: Well, that's typical!

A: Hang on / Hold on! Let
me tell you what he said!
(preventing an interruption)

D

Other useful discourse markers

I can't do that. **You see**, I'm not the boss here. (explaining)

He was, **you know, sort of** ... just standing there. (hesitation)

He was wearing this, **kind of / like**, cowboy hat. (not sure of the best way to say something)

So that's what we have to do. **Anyway**, I'll ring you tomorrow. (the speaker thinks the topic can change or the conversation can now close)

It rained all day yesterday. **Still / On the other hand**, we can't complain, it was fine all last week.
(contrasts two ideas or points)

We shouldn't be too hard on him. **I mean**, he's only a child. (making clear what you mean)

In informal spoken language, people often use the letters of the alphabet (usually no more than a, b and c), to list points they want to make.

STELLA: Why aren't you going this evening?

ADAM: Well, **a)** I haven't got any money, and **b)** it's too far anyway.

It is often difficult to hear these expressions when they are used in rapid speech, but when you are in a position to listen in a relaxed way to someone speaking English (for example, if you are not the person being spoken to, or you are listening to informal speech on radio or TV or in a film), it is easier to concentrate on listening for discourse markers.

Exercises

67.1 Underline all the discourse markers in this monologue.

'Well, where shall I start? It was last summer and we were just sitting in the garden, sort of doing nothing much. Anyway, I looked up and ... you see, we have this, kind of, long wall at the end of the garden, and it's ... like ... a motorway for cats. That big fat black one you saw, well, that one considers it has a right of way over our vegetable patch, so ... where was I? I was looking at that wall, you know, daydreaming as usual, and all of a sudden there was this new cat I'd never seen before. It wasn't an ordinary cat at all ... I mean, you'll never believe what it was ...'



67.2 Here are some short dialogues where there are no discourse markers, which would be unusual in real informal conversation. Use markers from the box to fill the gaps. You can use the markers more than once, and more than one answer may be possible.

good I mean hang on well let me see right still listen anyway you know

- 1 A: Are you a football fan?
B: Well, I like it but I wouldn't say I was a fan.
- 2 A: I'll take care of these.
B: That's everything.
A: , see you next week.
B: That was a very useful meeting.
- 3 A: It was last Monday. I was coming home from work. I saw this funny old man approaching me. I stopped him ...
B: I bet it was Jim Dibble!
A: ! Let me tell you what happened first.
- 4 A: Which number is yours?
B: it's that one there, yes, that one.
- 5 A: He's looking exhausted.
B: Really?
A: , look at his eyes - he looks so tired.
- 6 A: What do you mean, 'cold'?
B: , she's not friendly, very distant. Last week I gave her a nice smile and she scowled at me.
A: , what do you expect? I've seen the way you smile at people; it puts them off.
- 7 A: Money isn't the most important thing in life.
B: , you can't live without it!
A: I suppose that's true.
- 8 A: What are we going to do?
B: , I've got an idea. Why don't we ask James to help? He's a lawyer.

67.3 Which discourse marker fits best into the sentences? Rewrite the sentences with the markers included.

on the other hand great a, b, c, etc. anyway look now

- Anyway,
- Yes, there is a lot of work to do. ^ I must rush now, I'll call you tomorrow.
 - There are two reasons why I think he's wrong. People don't act like that, and Paul would certainly never act like that.
 - I want you to pay attention, everyone.
 - He loses his temper very quickly. He's got a great sense of humour.
 - You seem a bit sad today. Let me buy lunch for you to cheer you up.
 - A: So I'll pick you up at 6.30. B: See you then.

67.4 Over to you

Choose three expressions that appeal to you from this unit and try to use them in your spoken English. Be careful not to overuse them!

A

Organising a formal text

First / Firstly / First of all, we must consider ...

Next, it is important to remember that ...

Secondly and **thirdly** are also used with first/firstly for lists.

Finally/Lastly, we should recall that ... (coming to the final point on a list)

Turning to the question of foreign policy, ... (changing to a new topic)

Leaving aside the question of pollution, there are also other reasons ... (the writer will not deal with that question here)

In parenthesis, let us not forget that ... (making a point that is a side issue, not part of the main argument)

In summary / To sum up, we may state that ... (listing / summing up the main points)

In sum, the economic issues are at the centre of this debate ... (listing / summing up the main points: much more formal)

In conclusion / To conclude, I should like to point out that ... (finishing the text)

Common mistakes

Lastly is used when making a final point, e.g. *Lastly, let us consider what the future holds.* (NOT *At last let us consider ...*) **At last** means finally after a long time, e.g. *At last I've finished my essay - what a relief!*

B

Linking words for explaining, exemplifying, rephrasing, etc.

To learn new words properly a lot of recycling is needed; **in other words / that is to say**, you have to study the same words over and over again. (**that is to say** is much more formal)

Some English words are hard to pronounce, **for example / for instance**, 'eighth'.

It might be possible, **say**, to include the parents in the discussion. (similar to **for example**; note the commas before and after; **say** is also common in spoken English)

The Parliament has different committees. **Briefly**, these consist of two main types. [the explanation will be short and not comprehensive]

She is, **so to speak / as it were**, living in a world of her own. (makes what you are saying sound less definite/precise; **as it were** is more formal)

C

Referring backwards and forwards in the text

The following points will be covered in this essay: ... (used to introduce a list)

It was stated **above/earlier** that the history of the USA is ... [earlier in the text]

See page 238 for more information. [go to page 238]

Many writers have claimed this (see **below**). [examples will be given later in the text]

A full list is given **overleaf**. [turn the page and you will find the list]

For **further** details/discussion, see Chapter 4. [more discussion/details]

May I **refer you to** page 3 of my last letter to you? [May I ask you to look at / read; *fml*]

With reference to your email of 12th March, ... (often used at the beginning of a letter or email to link it with an earlier text; *fml*)

Exercises

68.1 Match the linking words on the left with the appropriate function on the right.

- | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 Leaving aside ... | ☒ | a change the topic |
| 2 In parenthesis, ... | ☐ | b read something earlier in the text |
| 3 Turning to ... | ☐ | c this will not be discussed |
| 4 In conclusion, ... | ☐ | d this document is about another one |
| 5 With reference to ... | ☐ | e to finish off |
| 6 See above ... | ☐ | f as an aside / as a secondary issue |

68.2 Fill the gaps with typical linking words or phrases used in writing. The first letter of each phrase/word is given.

1 *Firstly* _____, it is important to understand why people commit crimes; 2 _____, what are the motives which make people do things they would never normally do? 3 F _____, a young man steals clothes from a shop - does he do it because it is an exciting risk? 4 N _____, it is essential to consider whether punishment makes any difference, or is it just, 5 a _____, a kind of revenge? 6 L _____, how can we help victims of crime? 7 I _____, how can we get to the roots of the problem, rather than just attacking the symptoms?

68.3 Which linking word or phrase(s) ...

- 1 is based on the verb 'to say'? *say (meaning 'for example')*
- 2 is based on the verb 'to follow'?
- 3 contain the word/syllable 'sum'? *(three answers)*
- 4 is a form of the word 'far'?
- 5 contains something you find on trees?

68.4 Write a short formal email to the Editor of a newspaper about a report in the paper the previous week that a local hospital is going to close. You think the hospital should not close because:

- The nearest other hospital is 50 kilometres away.
- 200 people work at the hospital; they will lose their jobs.
- The hospital makes an important contribution to the local economy.
- It is the only hospital in the region with a special cancer unit.
- It is being closed for political reasons, not genuine economic ones.

Try to include as many as possible of these linking words and phrases:

with reference to firstly, secondly, thirdly, etc.
leaving aside the following to sum up
that is to say finally



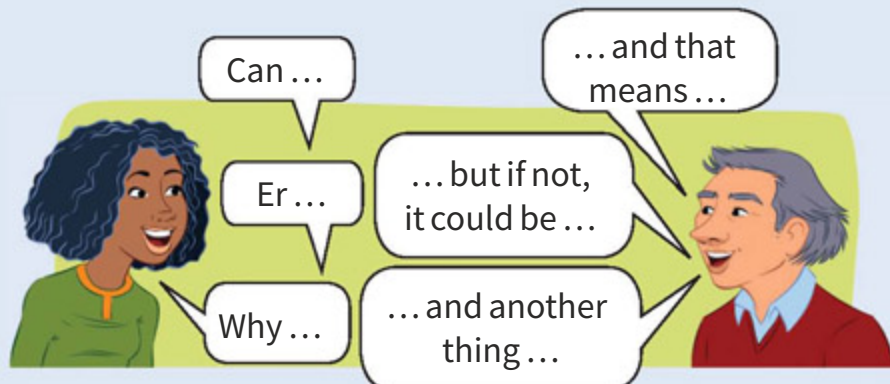
A Idioms connected with communication problems



They're **talking at cross-purposes**. [talking about different things without realising it]



He's got **the wrong end of the stick**. [not understood something in the correct way]



She **can't get a word in edgeways** /edʒweɪz/. [doesn't get a chance to speak because others are talking so much]



He **can't make head or tail of** what she's saying. [cannot understand at all]

B Good talk, bad talk

The boss always **talks down** to us. [talks as if we were inferior]

My workmates are always **talking behind my back**. [saying negative things about me when I'm not there]

It was just **small talk**, nothing more, I promise. [purely social talk, nothing serious]

Let's sit somewhere else; they always **talk shop** over lunch, and it bores me rigid. [talk about work]

Hey! Your new friend's become a real **talking point** among the staff! Did you know? [subject that everyone wants to talk about]

It's gone too far this time. I shall have to **give him a talking to**. [reproach/scold him / tell him off]

C Talk in discussions, meetings, etc.



¹ start the discussion ² say it in few words ³ come to the important part of the matter

⁴ say exactly what I think ⁵ finish the discussion ⁶ says intelligent, reasonable things

⁷ says stupid things ⁸ says things in a long, indirect way

Exercises

69.1 Look at these dialogues and comment on them.

- 1

PAUL:

EMMA:

£98 for a meal! That's outrageous!
Not the meal, you idiot! The room!
Emma and Paul seem to be *talking at cross-purposes*.
- 2

JO:

MEENA:

JO:

MEENA:

JO:

So that's what I'm going to do, take it all away.
What about -
And if they don't like it they can just go and do what they like.
If she -
Not that I have to consult them, anyway; I'm in charge round here.
It seems that Meena can't get
- 3

VOLODYA:

GINA:

VOLODYA:

I got very upset when you said I was childish.
I didn't! I just said you seemed to get on very well with the children. Honestly.
Oh, I see. Oh, sorry.
It seems that Volodya got the
- 4

DAN:

KIM:

So, area-wise the down-matching sales profile commitment would seem to be high-staked on double-par.
Eh? Could you say that again? You've got me there.
It seems that Kim can't what Dan is saying.
- 5

ALI:

JUAN:

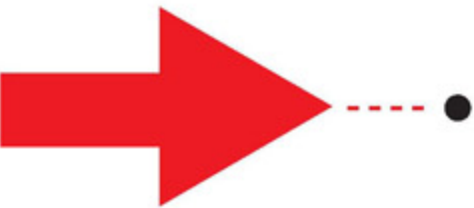
I don't expect someone with your intelligence to understand this document.
Oh.
Ali seems to be talking to Juan.

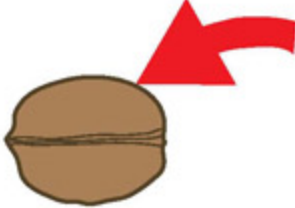
69.2 What idioms opposite do these drawings represent?

- 

1 *wrap up the* discussion
- 

2 talk
- 

3 start
- 

4 get to / come to
- 

5 to put
- 

6 get hold of

69.3 Fill the gaps to complete the sentences.

- 1

She is very direct and always *speaks* her mind.
- 2

He gets bored quickly with small and always wants to get down to serious matters.
- 3

The boss gave me a real to after that stupid mistake I made.
- 4

You're behind the times! George's girlfriend was *last week's* point.
- 5

Paula's uncle is so long- - it takes him ten minutes to make a point that anyone else could make in 30 seconds.
- 6

It was such a relief when James got up to speak - at last someone was talking
- 7

I hate going out with my boyfriend and his work colleagues - they spend all evening talking
- 8

You should tell him what you think to his face rather than talking behind his