

Discourse markers by Stephanie Valerio

Age:	Teenagers/ Adults
Level:	Advanced
Time:	60+ minutes
Objectives:	For students to expand their knowledge and use of discourse markers, and to enable students to practise them through a speaking game and additional writing activities.
Key Skills:	Speaking, reading, writing
Materials:	One copy of worksheet 1 per student, one die per pair or group (either physical or on screen), one copy of worksheet 2 with additional activities per student

Key:

- 1 – d (example given on the worksheet),
- 2 – f
- 3 – b
- 4 – c
- 5 – h
- 6 – i
- 7 – j
- 8 – e
- 9 – a
- 10 – g

Categorising

1. Ask students to put the discourse markers in the correct category according to their function. Have students do this activity individually, but then allow them to check their answers before reviewing together as a group. Provide any support or clarification they may need.

Note: *on the contrary* is often misused by students. Remind them that it must follow a negative sentence and give a positive clarification to reinforce the point being made.

Incidentally and *as it (so) happens* are used to add information that is not directly relevant to the previous sentence, but is related in some way and may interest the reader/listener.

Point out/ elicit the structures used after *in addition to* and *on account of* (+noun / gerund).

Key:

Adding information: *in addition to; likewise; what's more; moreover; besides; incidentally; as it (so) happens*

Contrasting: *even so; on the contrary; having said that; conversely; nevertheless*

Cause and result: *accordingly; therefore; on account of*

Generalising: *on the whole; by and large*

Warmer

1. Put students in pairs and direct their attention to the pictures on worksheet 1. Have them discuss the similarities and differences between the two objects. If they struggle, you can give them an example: *I watch TV series on my laptop. Having said that, I watch them on my smartphone when I travel.*

Then, discuss the other questions about technology together.

Matching

1. Have students do this activity in pairs and allow them time to check their answers with one another. Then, go through the answers as a class and clarify any doubts students may have. Explore the alternative answers that students may have come up with (e.g. *Technology has many uses in business. Having said that, I do think it has to be used with caution.*) and look at which pairs of sentences make the best match.

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Speaking game

- Put students in small groups and tell them they are going to play a speaking game using discourse markers. If you are teaching in person, use an actual die. If you are teaching online, you can pull one up on screen. Have students take turns in rolling the die twice: the first throw corresponds to a choice of two sentences (the illustrations) and the second corresponds to a choice of two discourse markers (the final page). In both cases, students choose which of the two options they'd prefer to use. The aim is to be the first person in the group to tick off all of the discourse markers. If you are working with a large class, students compete in groups, where the aim is to be the first group to get all the discourse markers ticked off.

Before they get started, give them an example: if you roll a 3 and a 5, you could say "*Many parents feel they can ensure high-quality education for their children by paying for it. **Conversely**, I'd say it has little to do with money, and more to do with each teacher's skill and dedication.*"

Monitor and encourage students to challenge each other's use of the discourse markers, or to check with you if they are not sure whether they are using it well. Provide feedback and clarify any doubts students may have about any of the discourse markers.

Additional writing activities (Worksheet 2)

The following activities are meant to be extra practice which can be carried out during the lesson, if you have time, or can be assigned as homework. If you assign them as homework, have students bring their writings back to class/share via an online tool for peer review assessment. This will increase their awareness of their own writing, encourage them to check their writing more thoroughly, and reinforce their knowledge and awareness of discourse markers

- Tell students to read the text once quickly, without worrying about the discourse markers. Then, ask them to read it again but this time they also need to choose the correct discourse markers. If you do this activity in class, make sure they work individually and then check the answers together as a group.

Key:

- By and large
- on account of
- Having said that
- on the contrary
- Consequently
- Nevertheless
- As it so happens
- on the whole
- Likewise
- Even so

- Direct students to the pairs of sentences and ask them to complete them according to the given discourse markers. If you do this activity in class, make sure students work individually. Tell students there can be more than one way to complete each sentence, but that it needs to fit well with the discourse markers provided.

Key:

Students' own answers

- Tell students they are going to write an essay on how young people use technology. They have been provided with some notes on the topic and some related opinions. Remind them that they can use the suggested ideas, but should try and write about what they think about the topic. Also, explain that they have to use the discourse markers they have practised previously when writing their essays.

Key:

Students' own answers