

Organising your writing

A

Openings

Look at these openings from students' written work, and note the items in bold.

This assignment will address the problem of socio-economic data in health studies.

This dissertation is concerned with individual differences in the ability to connect thoughts and emotions.

The aim of this paper is to explore constant acceleration formulae, **with a focus** on motion along a slope.

The **purpose** of this essay is to investigate the use of focus group interviews.

This thesis consists of four parts. Each part describes a different set of experiments which contribute to the final results.

This assignment is **divided into** three sections, with each section devoted to a different aspect of world trade.

B

Organising the main points

useful when ...	items	examples
working through a list of different things	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • first(ly), secondly, thirdly • next • lastly/finally 	<p>First(ly), let us look at the history of the problem. [<i>firstly</i> is more formal than <i>first</i>]</p> <p>Next, there is the issue of air resistance.</p> <p>Finally, let us consider increased taxation as a possible solution.</p>
changing topics / bringing in new points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • we now / let us turn to • at this point 	<p>We now turn to the question of which model provides a better explanation of the phenomenon.</p> <p>At this point it is important to look again at the data.</p>
referring forward in the text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • below • in the next section • later • the following 	<p>We shall see below that depopulation has been a major factor. [lower on the page or later in the essay/article]</p> <p>Later, I shall look at other possible reasons for this.</p> <p>The following example comes from Hillson (1998).</p>
referring back to something	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • above • in the preceding section • earlier • (as) we saw / have seen that/in 	<p>The above figures indicate a significant decrease.</p> <p>Three hypotheses were listed in the preceding section. [the section immediately before this one]</p> <p>I noted earlier that lack of fresh water was a serious problem.</p> <p>As we saw in section 2, this is a complex topic.</p>
referring to examples, diagrams, pages, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • see • consider • take, for example, • as can be seen in 	<p>For the complete results, see Appendix A, page 94.</p> <p>Consider Figure 1, which shows changes from 1976–8.</p> <p>Take, for example, Sweden, where industrialisation was rapid, as can be seen in Figure 2.</p>
referring separately to different people or things	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • respectively • the former • the latter 	<p>Groups A and B consisted of 14-year-olds and 16-year-olds, respectively. [i.e. group A was 14-year-olds and group B was 16-year-olds]</p> <p>Rostov and Krow both studied the problem. The former wrote a book; the latter published two papers. [the first and then the second person or thing mentioned]</p>



Don't confuse *first(ly)* with *at first*. *At first* means 'at the beginning', and refers to situations which change: **At first** there was no increase in temperature, but later, the temperature rose by 0.5°C. See Unit 50 for the difference between *lastly* and *at last*. Say **as can be seen** in Figure 1, NOT *as it can be seen* in Figure 1.

See Units 16 and 50 for more useful expressions for organising your writing.

Exercises

39.1 Choose a word from A to fill in the missing words in this introduction to a paper.

The (1) of this paper is to consider the nature of moral education in Soviet children's literature. It is particularly (2) with the moral values presented in books published with the (3) of teaching reading at primary school. The thesis (4) of four parts. The first part attempts to (5) a number of general questions relating to children's literature from any historical period. Parts 2, 3 and 4 are (6) specifically to the Soviet example. Part 2 is (7) into three main sections, the first of which discusses the nature of the Soviet value system with a particular (8) on the work ethic.

39.2 Read the sentences and answer the questions about them.

- 1 Tolstoy's most famous novels are *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*, the former being first published between 1865 and 1869 and the latter between 1875 and 1877.
Which of Tolstoy's novels was published in the 1860s?
- 2 More precise data can be found in Table 3 below.
Does Table 3 appear before or after this sentence?
- 3 Let us now turn to the question of the country's economic situation.
Has the writer already begun discussing the country's economic situation or not?
- 4 The brothers, Olaf and Erik, would go on to become professors of archaeology and Greek, respectively.
Which brother taught archaeology?
- 5 The preceding example is taken from Atakano (1991).
Does the example come before or after this sentence?

39.3 Choose the correct word in italics to complete each sentence.

- 1 *Take / Put / Look*, for example, the case of Megginson which was described in Chapter 2.
- 2 *At first / Firstly* I would like to discuss the nature of 16th century English and then the impact that this had on the works of Shakespeare.
- 3 The article *concerns / devotes / addresses* the issue of the relationship between religion and politics in the modern world.
- 4 Look at Figure 3 *under / below / beneath* for more detailed information.
- 5 In the *following / preceding* section we shall deal with this issue in more detail.
- 6 For more detailed information *see / go / turn* Appendix B.
- 7 Let us now *deal / see / consider* Figure 2.1.
- 8 This aspect of the problem will be discussed *latter / later / lastly* in this article.

39.4 Rewrite the parts in bold using a phrase which includes the word in brackets.

- 1 As **Table V** shows there has been an increase in the numbers of students in higher education. (SEEN)
- 2 In Section 3 we take up again some of the arguments from **Section 2**. (PRECEDING)
- 3 **Now** let us turn our attention to developments in Constantinople. (POINT)
- 4 The country **consists of** six provinces. (DIVIDED)
- 5 Let us now consider the issue of the reunification of Germany. (TURN)