

Discourse Markers

One of the most important aspects of writing good English is the ability to link clauses, sentences and paragraphs to each other by means of so-called "discourse markers". There exists a wide variety of words and phrases with precisely this function, a few of which are assembled below:

Suggested Exercises (39):

Here are discourse markers organised into groups. Choose the most appropriate one to fill in the gaps in the sentences below (sometimes several alternatives are possible):

1. Discourse Markers that Emphasise and/or Enumerate:

- above all
 - and no one more (so) than
 - exactly
 - for one thing..., for another...
 - in particular
 - let alone
 - more importantly
 - more to the point
 - not least
 - not to mention
 - on the one hand..., on the other...
 - precisely
 - to say nothing of
 - what is more
1. I do not trust them. _____, they are lazy; _____, they are unreliable.
 2. There is not one good road there, _____ a cycle path.

3. She is stupid, lazy and vain; _____, she is extremely malicious.
4. The country lacks a basic infrastructure, _____ a functioning economy.
5. He was a great thinker and scientist; _____ he was a true philanthropist.
6. Certain textbooks are in short supply; _____ French dictionaries are urgently needed.
7. Everyone was happy, _____ the bride and groom.
8. They may feel that they do not need to learn the grammar. But that is _____ what they are expected to do.
9. That factory should be closed down: _____, it is uneconomical; _____, it is polluting everything around.
10. These accusations are being taken very seriously, _____ by Signior Andreotti himself.
11. I don't want to see him again: he's got no manners and doesn't know how to dress properly. _____, my mother doesn't like him!
12. Your bicycle has got no brakes, no lights, _____ properly functioning gears.
13. The whole British political establishment has roundly condemned Serbia, _____ Mrs Thatcher.
14. He said he would not work against our interests, but that is _____ what he has done.

2. Discourse Markers that Express Certainty:

- absolutely
 - altogether
 - beyond all/any doubt
 - beyond question
 - definitely
 - downright (*informal*)
 - indeed
 - nothing short of
 - unquestionably
1. _____ we have all benefited enormously from industrialisation.
 2. Such behaviour is _____ dishonest.
 3. John is a(n) _____ nicer person than his brother.
 4. The standard of service has _____ improved since last year. (*Find an alternative to certainly.*)
 5. The Serbs show no shame or compunction whatsoever: _____, they are proud of their actions.