



## The usage notes

### Thesaurus notes

- 1 The first exercise is designed to show how precise choice of vocabulary can subtly alter the meaning and stance of a text. Ask students if they can tell you the difference between **argue** and **assert**. They may be able to tell you that when you **argue** something, you give reasons for it, but when you **assert** it, you simply state it without reasons. The Thesaurus note at **argue** explains this and goes on to say that **assert** (or **claim**) may be used when you are reporting someone's opinion that you do not agree with.

Ask the students to read the two example sentences and consider the following questions:

- What do you think is the attitude of the writer of each sentence towards what Derrida/ Marx and Engels have said? (There's no definitive answer to this – you can't say definitely that the first writer agrees with Derrida and the second writer disagrees with Marx and Engels. However, you can probably say that the first writer indicates a desire to engage with Derrida's argument; whereas the second writer shows signs of wanting to distance himself/herself from Marx and Engels' assertion.)
  - What are the clues in each sentence to what the writer's attitude might be? (choice of verb – argue/assert; choice of tense – present tense suggests that Derrida's argument is still relevant today, whilst the past tense suggests historical rather than current relevance for Marx and Engels; Derrida's argument is summarized, which means the writer has understood and even interpreted it, whereas Marx and Engels have been quoted exactly – it's their words, not the writer's understanding of them. Quotations can be used to give authority to a statement, but they can also be a distancing technique.)
- 2 This exercise shows students how the Thesaurus notes can help them choose between close synonyms.
- a These results provide only tentative *evidence/proof/support* for the theory.  
**evidence**<sup>1</sup> 'Only tentative' cannot really apply to **proof** 'that no one can argue against' or **evidence** 'that makes you believe sth is true'; it could describe something that 'helps to show an argument or theory is true'.
  - b These soils have widely differing chemical and physical *features/properties/traits*.  
**feature** describes 'a place or thing'; **trait** 'people or animals'; **property** 'is used especially to talk about the features of a material or substance' and is the most appropriate to describe soils.
  - c These forest fires release *important/notable/significant* amounts of carbon into the air.  
The note at **important** says that **significant** 'is often used to describe sth that can be measured' and it is the best collocate for *amounts*.

- d** Ever freer trade can also have adverse environmental *consequences/outcomes/results*, by disrupting local ecologies.  
The note at **result**<sup>1</sup> says that '**consequences** is most frequently used to talk about possible negative results' – so the clue is the adjective *adverse*.
- e** Davison used two additional measures that *provided/supplied/yielded* similar results.  
The note at **supply**<sup>2</sup> says that '**yield** and **generate** are used to talk about producing sth such as a benefit or a profit'; this also applies to *results*, as the collocations at the top of the note – *yield/generate results/profits/returns* show. (So **generated** would also be an acceptable collocation in this sentence.)
- f** Derossi (1977) *conducted/performed/undertook* a survey of Mexican entrepreneurs.  
The note at **carry (out)** says '**conduct** is often used with words like *interview, survey* and *focus group* in which people are trying to get answers to questions'.

## Which word?

- 3** This exercise is also about vocabulary choice, but this time the options are easily confusable words but not necessarily synonyms; the Which word? notes can help.
- a** In a *classic/classical* study, Moller (1988) examined tail length in the barn swallow, *Hirundo rustica*.  
The note at **classical** says '**classic** describes sth that is accepted as being one of the best or most important of its kind: *a classic essay/experiment/paper/study/text/textbook*'
- b** The timing of snowmelt has a significant *affect/effect* on soil temperatures.  
**effect**<sup>1</sup> As a noun, this word should be spelled **effect**, unless it is the technical term in psychology.
- c** There are two *principal/principle* components to current economic change.  
**principal**<sup>1</sup> The adjective is **principal**; **principle** is a noun and not related to **principal**.
- d** Early diagnosis and *consequent/subsequent* lifestyle changes could significantly slow down the progression of the disease.  
**subsequent** The question is whether the lifestyle changes are a result of the early diagnosis, or simply happen after it; this sentence suggests they would be a result, and so **consequent** is the better choice.
- e** Patients may complain of *systematic/systemic* symptoms including fever and weight loss.  
**systematic** means 'according to a system'; **systemic** means 'affecting a whole system, and in particular the whole body'. The Which Word? note makes the typical medical context for **systemic** very clear.
- f** The *broad/wide* outlines of what happened are well known.  
**wide** This one is trickier because, in many contexts, **broad** and **wide** are interchangeable, but in this sense of 'not detailed', **broad** is the correct choice.

## Language Banks

- 4 Students can be encouraged to make use of the Language Bank notes when they are writing, to find different ways of expressing important language functions in academic writing. In many cases, there is more than one possible way of expressing a particular function – the most likely answers are highlighted below, but the lists are not always exhaustive.

Look at the Example with the students: ask if they can suggest any other words or phrases that could fill the gap, besides **nevertheless**. The best alternative answers are **however** (in the note) or **nonetheless** (a synonym of **nevertheless**).

- a While/Although it is true that *You could also use Of course/Admittedly if 'but' is inserted before 'it can still'.*
  - b can be defined as/consists of/involves
  - c There is some evidence to suggest that/It would appear that/It seems reasonable to suggest that
  - d Therefore/For this reason/This is why
  - e According to Aristotle,/For Aristotle,/Aristotle takes the view that/Aristotle's view is that/Aristotle is of the view that/In Aristotle's view,
- 5 This exercise requires students to write a paragraph based on notes using connectives and cause and effect language that can be found in several of the Language Banks. They first read the topic sentence from the source text to establish the overall topic and should summarize it in terms similar to this: 'Over the last 30-40 years, people and businesses have been moving out of the centre of large cities to smaller towns.'

Before students look at the reasons given in the table, you could ask them to suggest what they think some of the reasons might be – do they have any first-hand experience of this phenomenon which they can draw on? They then try to divide these into 'cause' and 'effect'. Then compare these answers with the reasons given in the table. Check any unknown vocabulary, such as **peripheral** and **urban capital stock**, the meaning of which may need to be worked out from **stock**<sup>1 2</sup> 'a supply of sth', **capital**<sup>1</sup> – 'wealth or property that is owned by a business' and **urban** > the total amount of property owned by a business in a city.

Ask the students to suggest a possible sentence explaining the first reason for this urban outward drift. Remind them of the need to structure the paragraph carefully, including signposts to guide the reader through the argument; and also of the need to use appropriate cause-effect language. See what the students can suggest before directing them to the Language Banks at **organize** and **cause**<sup>1</sup>. When the class has agreed on a good first sentence, students can work in pairs to write sentences for the next two reasons.

It is not to be expected that students will reconstruct the original text, which is more complex, in terms of vocabulary and structures, than the kinds of texts that students at this level will need to produce. However, with the help of the dictionary, they should be able to produce something clear and coherent, similar to the first text suggested below. Phrases from the Language Banks are highlighted in bold. The original text is given below that for comparison.

There are several reasons for this. **First, as a result of** improvements in production, communications and transport technology, a central urban location has become less important for many firm activities. **Secondly**, with rising incomes, households prefer more space and better-quality environments: **consequently**, people move to peripheral but still accessible locations. **Furthermore, since** urban capital stock tends to be fixed, firms cannot easily expand their land holdings in central urban areas.

Many large urban areas have faced a consistent outward drift of both people and activities over the last three or four decades as people and business have moved to smaller urban centres. The reasons for this so-called 'urban - rural shift' may be connected, firstly, with improvements in production, communications, and transport technology which reduce the importance of a central urban location for many firm activities. Secondly, as incomes rise, the increased preference by households for space and better-quality environments has encouraged an out-migration of many people to more peripheral, but still accessible locations. Thirdly, the fixity of the urban capital stock as discussed in Chapter 6, may limit the ability of firms to reconfigure or expand their landholdings in central urban areas relative to greenfield locations. Taken together, these various effects have tended to reduce the attractiveness of central urban areas for many people and businesses.

McCann, P. (2001). *Urban and Regional Economics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

### Practice

- 6 Students each choose a topic from their own discipline, or you could choose a topic that you have studied recently in class. It might help if they first set out their points/reasons/arguments in note form in a table, as in the previous exercise. A range of different Language Banks could offer help, depending on the exact nature of the topic chosen – whether it is explaining cause and effect or using evidence to support an argument. The Language Banks and their functions are all listed on page xii of the dictionary.

## The usage notes

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### Thesaurus notes

In academic English, choosing exactly the right word to express your intended meaning can be very important. A different choice of word can change the meaning in subtle ways. Thesaurus notes in the dictionary help you distinguish between words that are very close in meaning, but nonetheless have differences.

- 1 Read these two example sentences. Why do you think the writer of the first sentence chose the verb **argue** but the writer of the second sentence chose **assert**? Use the Thesaurus note at **argue** to help you.

*Derrida argues that the world is like a text: it cannot simply be understood, but has to be interpreted.*

*Marx and Engels asserted that all history had 'hitherto been the history of class struggles'.*

- 2 Choose the best word to complete each of these sentences. Use the Thesaurus note at the word in **bold** to help you in each case.
- a These results provide only tentative *evidence/proof/support* for the theory.  
**evidence**<sup>1</sup>
  - b These soils have widely differing chemical and physical *features/properties/traits*.  
**feature**<sup>1</sup>
  - c These forest fires release *important/notable/significant* amounts of carbon into the air.  
**important**
  - d Ever freer trade can also have adverse environmental *consequences/outcomes/results*, by disrupting local ecologies.  
**result**<sup>1</sup>
  - e Davison used two additional measures that *provided/supplied/yielded* similar results.  
**supply**<sup>2</sup>
  - f Derossi (1977) *conducted/performed/undertook* a survey of Mexican entrepreneurs.  
**carry**

### Which word?

Some words frequently get confused with each other because they are very similar in form or meaning, but in fact have different uses.

- 3 Choose the correct word in each of these sentences. Use the Which word? note at the word in **bold** to help you.
- a In a *classic/classical* study, Moller (1988) examined tail length in the barn swallow, *Hirundo rustica*.  
**classical**
  - b The timing of snowmelt has a significant *affect/effect* on soil temperatures.  
**effect**<sup>1</sup>

- c There are two *principal/principle* components to current economic change.  
**principal**<sup>1</sup>
- d Early diagnosis and *consequent/subsequent* lifestyle changes could significantly slow down the progression of the disease.  
**subsequent**
- e Patients may complain of *systematic/systemic* symptoms including fever and weight loss.  
**systematic**
- f The *broad/wide* outlines of what happened are well known.  
**wide**

## Language Banks

Language Bank notes show different ways of expressing important functions in academic writing, such as giving examples, discussing evidence or describing trends.

- 4 Find phrases to add to these example sentences to express the function or idea specified in each case. Use the Language Bank at the word in **bold** to help you in each case. In many cases, more than one answer is possible.

Example:

- Function: to make a contrasting point

Further research is needed in these areas. Nevertheless, some preliminary conclusions can be drawn: ...

**however**

- a Function: to acknowledge a possible criticism before making your point

\_\_\_\_\_ social science cannot predict with the confidence of natural science, it can still offer useful explanations of human behaviour.

**concede**

- b Function: to define a term

Brainstorming \_\_\_\_\_ a group of people using their collective imaginative power to create ideas and solutions.

**define**

- c Function: to express a tentative conclusion (i.e. one that you cannot be completely certain about)

\_\_\_\_\_ girls' achievement improves where more employment opportunities are available for women.

**hedge**

- d Function: to link a claim to the reason for it

Even a small loss in income may have disastrous consequences. \_\_\_\_\_ people in these circumstances are very cautious about taking risks.

**therefore**

- e Function: to report a view expressed by someone else (in this case, Aristotle)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ tragedy is superior to history.

**according to**

- 5 Read this topic sentence from an economics textbook. Summarize the topic in your own words.

Many large urban areas have faced a consistent outward drift of both people and activities over the last three or four decades as people and business have moved to smaller urban centres.

SOURCE: McCann, P. (2001). *Urban and Regional Economics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

The next section of the text describes the reasons for the change. These are summarized in the table below. Use the information in the table to write 3-4 sentences and link them together to form a paragraph. Begin with 'There are several reasons for this.' and use the Language Banks at **addition, because, cause**<sup>1</sup> and **organize** to help you structure your sentences and find connecting words and phrases.

cause	effect
improvements in production, communications and transport technology	central urban location less important for many firm activities
rising incomes – households prefer more space and better-quality environments	people move to peripheral, but still accessible locations
urban capital stock tends to be fixed	firms cannot easily expand their land holdings in central urban areas

**Practice**

- 6 Choose a topic from your own discipline, where 3-4 different reasons can be given for something: to explain a phenomenon or to set out an argument. Write a paragraph explaining the phenomenon or setting out the argument, using phrases from the Language Banks to help you structure your paragraph and connect your points. See page xii in the dictionary for a list of Language Banks.