



SIGNAL WORDS IN READING

Continuation Signals (Warning—there are more ideas to come.)

and	also	another
again	and	finally
first of all	a final reason	furthermore
in addition	last of all	likewise
more	moreover	next
one reason	other	secondly
similarly	too	with

Change-of-Direction Signals (Watch out—we're doubling back.)

although	but	conversely
despite	different from	even though
however	in contrast	instead of
in spite of	nevertheless	otherwise
the opposite	on the contrary	on the other hand
rather	still	yet
while	though	

Time and Sequence Signals (There is an order to these ideas.)

first, second, third	A, B, C	last
in the first place	for one thing	finally
then	next	when
before	now	immediately
after	while	now
into	until	lately
last	during	already
since	always	little by little
o'clock	on time	at the same time
later	earlier	after a while

Illustration Signals (Here's an example of what I'm saying.)

for example	specifically
for instance	to illustrate
such as	much like
in the same way as	similar to

Pay attention to these words when you read like you would pay attention to traffic signals when driving a car.

Emphasis Signals (This is important.)

a major development	it all boils down to
a significant factor	most of all
a primary concern	most noteworthy
a key feature	more than anything else
a major event	of course
a vital force	pay particular attention to
a central issue	remember that
a distinctive quality	should be noted
above all	the most substantial issue
by the way	the main value
especially important	the basic concept
especially relevant	the crux of the matter
especially valuable	the chief outcome
important to note	the principle item

Cause, Condition, or Result Signals (Condition or modification is coming up.)

because	if	of
for	from	so
while	then	but
that	until	since
as	whether	in order that
so that	therefore	unless
yet	thus	due to
resulting from	consequently	without

Spatial Signals (This answers the “where” question.)

between	below	about	left	alongside
here	outside	around	close to	far
right over	away side	near	south	west
beside	middle	next to	beyond	north
east	on	opposite	over	by
there	inside	in front of	toward	upon
under	behind	across this	adjacent	above

Comparison-Contrast Signals **(We will now compare idea A with idea B.)**

and	or	also
too	best	most
either	less	less than
more than	same	better
even then	half	yet*
much as	like	but *
different from	still	however*
although	opposite	rather
while	though	

Conclusion Signals **(This ends the discussion and may have special importance.)**

as a result	consequently	finally
from this we see	in conclusion	in summary
hence	last of all	therefore

Fuzz Signals (Idea is not exact, or author is not positive and wishes to qualify a statement.)

almost	if	looks like
maybe	could	some
except	should	alleged
nearly	might	reputed
seems like	was reported	purported
sort of	probably	

Nonword Emphasis Signals (These are used for a reason.)

exclamation point (!)
underline
italics
bold type
subheads, like The Conclusion
indentation of paragraph
graphic illustrations
numbered points (1, 2, 3)
very short sentence: Stop war.
“quotation marks”

*Always read after these words very carefully.