

# English for Thesis and Academic Writings

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## LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS AND EXPRESSIONS USED IN INTRODUCTION

Section	Language Function	Expression
<b>Background of the Study</b>	<p><i>Showing knowledge gap in research and theories</i></p> <p><i>Showing historical development</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There have been insufficient discussions about...</li> <li>• Previous studies have yet to provide evidence...</li> <li>• To date, no research has been done on...</li> <li>• There is a growing need to determine whether...</li> <li>• The 90's have been viewed as the most significant era for the development of...</li> <li>• The past five years have seen increasing technological advances in....</li> <li>• During the 1990s, it was shown that....</li> </ul>
<b>Statement of Problem</b>	<i>Stating key information or problems</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This rapid development may have a serious impact on...</li> <li>• The biggest issue that we are dealing now is...</li> <li>• Many complaints have been made about the issue on...</li> <li>• The impact of this problem may lead to...</li> </ul>
<b>Purpose and Objective of the Study</b>	<i>Stating the main purpose / objective of the research</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This study attempts to address the following matters...</li> <li>• The aim of the study is to determine...</li> <li>• This study will investigate...</li> <li>• This study intends to ascertain the methods used...</li> <li>• This study discusses the following matters...</li> <li>• This study will examine the research conducted on...</li> </ul>

<b>Significance of the Study</b>	<i>Stating main reason for conducting the study</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The findings obtained from this study will help to uncover....</li><li>• This research needs to be conducted because...</li><li>• The results obtained from this research will help to determine...</li><li>• The data gathered from this study will be useful to...</li></ul>
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## LANGUAGE EXPRESSIONS USED IN LITERATURE REVIEW

Language Function	Expression
<i>Reference to previous researches or scholarly articles</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From the research conducted by Allen (1993), it <i>shows</i> that...</li> <li>Recent evidence <i>suggests</i> that.... (Hardy, 2000; Woods 2003)</li> <li>Several attempts <i>have been made</i> to.... (Carrington, 1998)</li> <li>Previous studies <i>have reported</i>.... (Gunner, 1999)</li> </ul>
<i>Reference to a single investigation in the research</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fray (1995) <i>analyzed</i> the data obtained from 42 states and concluded that</li> <li>Boyle et al. (2003) <i>reviewed</i> the literature and found little evidence for the claims made by other researchers.</li> <li>The pilot study was <i>undertaken</i> by the researcher to investigate...</li> <li>The study of human behaviour <i>was first carried out</i> by Theodore (1985)...</li> </ul>
<i>Reference to other writers' opinions in their text</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Holmes (2002) lists two reasons why the English language has become so dominant. These are...</li> <li>Smith (2000) <i>draws</i> a conclusion that....</li> <li>Maine (1989) suggests that the best way to trigger motivation among students is to....</li> </ul>
<i>Reference to other writers' ideas</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Smith (2003) <i>maintains</i> that the use of concrete is more cost effective....</li> <li>Abagnale (1997) <i>claims</i> that...</li> <li>Fitzgerald (1999) <i>concurs</i> that the best method of...</li> </ul>

## LANGUAGE EXPRESSIONS USED WHEN PRESENTING FINDINGS

Language Function	Expression
<b>Introduction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A survey was carried out to...</li> <li>• The purpose of the research is to...</li> <li>• In order to investigate the problems faced by the workers, a survey was conducted...</li> <li>• This section discusses about...</li> <li>• This section will present the findings on...</li> <li>• The main objective of this research is to</li> </ul>
<b>Leading statements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Figure 6 shows the percentage of...</li> <li>• As can be seen in Table 8, it shows that...</li> <li>• The bar chart reveals that...</li> <li>• The graph in Figure 11 shows that...</li> <li>• Table 4 indicates that...</li> <li>• From the data obtained from Graph 3.6, we can see that...</li> <li>• The results from the analysis are shown/ presented in Table 5.</li> <li>• The line chart above (Figure 10) shows some of the...</li> <li>• As can be seen from...</li> </ul>
<b>Describing significant findings (Referring to table/chart)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The most significant reason that leads to the increase in....</li> <li>• The different reasons that affects the to the increase amount of variance are...</li> <li>• The data obtained from this table can be connected with the data in Figure 3 which shows...</li> <li>• Strong evidence on.... was (also) found when...</li> <li>• It is obvious from the figure that only a number of respondents answered the questions correctly...</li> <li>• The data obtained from Figure 9 shows significant findings...</li> <li>• The most important findings that we can see from Figure 7 is that...</li> <li>• On average, the respondents seemed to agree that...</li> <li>• Interestingly, the respondents who answered...</li> <li>• Figure 7 shows a clear upward movement in...</li> <li>• As shown in Table 9, there is an obvious similarity between the two respondents...</li> <li>• The most important findings to appear from the data collected is...</li> <li>• The relationship between the two characters is significant because...</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was a positive connection between the two...</li> <li>• Further analysis of the data showed/revealed that...</li> </ul>
<b>Presenting Findings from Questionnaire and Interviews</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Figure 1/Table 1 shows the percentage of...</li> <li>• From the pie chart, the main reason for...</li> <li>• From the figure, we can see that the factors determining...</li> <li>• Out of the 70 questionnaires distributed, 50 respondents completed and returned the questionnaire.</li> <li>• From Figure 3, the most significant factor that seems to have dominated the causes of...is...</li> <li>• The majority of the respondents implied that...</li> <li>• 90percent of the respondents agreed that...</li> <li>• Only two respondents indicated that...</li> <li>• In response to Question 10, a majority of the respondents revealed that...</li> <li>• Figure 4.7 illustrates the findings for...</li> <li>• Based on Figure 4.10, we can see that...</li> </ul>
<b>Transition Statements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will move on to look at another findings obtained from...</li> <li>• Focusing now to the next point on the questionnaire</li> <li>• Based on the two findings obtained from the questionnaire, we can see that...</li> <li>• Evaluating the two findings, it can be understood that...</li> <li>• A comparison of the two results reveals that...</li> </ul>

**Other Appropriate Words****1. Appropriate adjectives:**

*Rapid, dramatic, moderate, gradual increase/decrease, rise, fall, sharp, decline, fair, steady*

**2. Appropriate signal words:****Additional idea:**

In addition, besides, apart from that, furthermore, moreover, also, likewise, additionally, too.

**Opposite idea:**

On the other hand, however, instead, nonetheless, but, yet, in contrast, conversely, on the contrary.

**Emphasis:**

In fact, indeed, definitely, that is, specifically, in particular, namely.

**Giving examples:**

For example, for instance, such as, an example of, as

**Conclude:**

As a conclusion, in brief, in short, in conclusion, in a nutshell, to sum up.

**Show results:**

As a result, consequently, thus, accordingly, therefore, hence, so, for this reason.



## REPORT WRITING FORMAT: USE OF TENSES IN REPORT AND THESIS WRITING

Having trouble determining whether you should use past tense to describe your report? Do you often find yourself get stuck with questions like, "How do I describe my findings and analysis?", "When do I use present tense and when do I use past tense or any other tenses?", "Which word is appropriate to be used that will best illustrate my research?". Do not worry. Many people are asking the same questions and at the same time finding it difficult to differentiate the tenses that they need to use in their attempt to describe their research.

Some people chose the wrong tenses that at times the readers can get confused as to what facts are already known and what was newly discovered in the studies. In order for you to have a clearer understanding on how you can go about presenting your findings, here are some useful notes that can help you in determining which tenses that you should use when writing your report or your research. The notes given below are more specific in nature in the sense that the notes illustrate specific instances where you should use specific tenses when describing specific things.

**Focus on Information : Present Tense**

<b>Example</b>	<p>Communication <u>is</u> the process of sending and receiving messages.</p> <p>Buildings as a whole and all their components and contents <u>are</u> badly shaken during severe earthquakes by the ground motion.</p>
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**Focus on Author/Findings From Specific Studies: Past Tense**

<b>Example</b>	<p>Allen and Smith (1999) <u>described</u> graphically the differences between the various vibration scales.</p> <p>Allington (1987) <u>reported</u> that teachers allocated equal time to all groups.</p> <p>Whitford (1976) <u>listed</u> the foods, but gave no quantitative data.</p>
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**Focus on Research Area : Present Perfect**

<b>Example</b>	<p>Although a lot of researchers <u>have been devoted</u> to investigating the nature of written communication and how it is being used by business organizations, there is still little known about how they go about using it.</p> <p>Several studies <u>have examined</u> the relationship between language and culture.</p>
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<b>Statement of Purpose: Focus On Report: Present Tense</b>	
<b>Example</b>	<p>The purpose of this thesis <u>is</u> to determine....</p> <p>The aim of this report <u>is</u> to investigate...</p>
<b>Statement of Purpose : Focus on Research: Past Tense</b>	
<b>Example</b>	<p>The purpose of this study <u>was</u> to determine...</p> <p>The aim of the research <u>was</u> to highlight...</p>
<b>Describing Procedure Used in Research: Past Tense</b>	
<b>Example</b>	<p>The study <u>involved</u> eighteen members of the Sales and Marketing department of the organization.</p> <p>Two members of the organization <u>were interviewed</u> to gain better insights on the use of Business Communication principles by the organization.</p> <p>Questionnaires <u>were sent</u> to 50 private sectors around the Klang Valley area.</p> <p>The data obtained <u>were subjected</u> to an analysis of variance.</p> <p>The research <u>was conducted</u> on a marine laboratory research vessel.</p>
<b>Results: Locating the Figure/Table: Present Tense</b>	
<b>Example</b>	<p>Results of the t-tests <u>are presented</u> in Table 4.6.</p> <p>Figure 4.7 <u>summarizes</u> the results on the survey with social workers.</p> <p>Findings for Question 5 that tests the respondents on the use of complex words <u>are shown</u> in Figure 4.8.</p>
<b>Presenting the Findings: Past Tense</b>	
<b>Example</b>	<p>The results obtained from dry sieving <u>showed</u> that laterite contained 59% of gravel, 40% of sand and 1% of silt and clay.</p> <p>The peak density of the 80/100 PEN with SEBS specimen <u>was found</u> to be 2.320 g/cm<sup>3</sup>.</p> <p>The coefficient of correlation <u>was found</u> to be significant at 0.001 level.</p>

<b>Commenting on Results: Present Tense and Modal Auxiliaries</b>	
<b>Example</b>	<p>This is consistent with earlier findings suggesting that literacy <u>is</u> related to family background and social surroundings.</p> <p>The documents obtained from the organization for purposes of this paper <u>are</u> mainly documents that deal with loan and sales agreement, request and reply to request letters, company's updates, payment notification, and notices on progress payment and stamping notice.</p> <p>Further advances in theory <u>can be made</u> as research is successful at decomposing the remaining variance.</p> <p>These results may be explained by considering the voltage distribution on 230 kV insulators during freezing conditions.</p>
<b>Discussion: Referring to the Purpose/Hypothesis: Past Tense</b>	
<b>Example</b>	<p>This study <u>attempted</u> to seek the level of awareness on Business Communication principles and the application of the principles by the organization when writing business documents.</p> <p>This research <u>attempted</u> to assess two construction management frameworks used in the Malaysian construction industry.</p> <p>It <u>was</u> originally <u>assumed</u> that every child has an innate ability to learn a language.</p>
<b>Explaining the Findings: Past, Present and Modal Auxiliaries</b>	
<b>Example</b>	<p>This result <u>is</u> similar to that <u>observed</u> by Ujang and Anderson (1996), Ozaki et al. (2002), and Koyuncu et al. (2001).</p> <p>Different operating condition <u>can be tested</u> to determine the effect of the condition on the rejection of dissociated and undissociated organic substance.</p> <p>It is possible that microbial activity <u>caused</u> some immobilization of labial soil phosphorous (restricted to a particular study)</p> <p>It is possible that microbial activity <u>causes</u> some immobilization of labial soil phosphorous (general conditions)</p>

<b>Restating hypothesis, explaining findings and suggesting implications: Past, Modal, Present</b>	
<b>Example</b>	<p>Further research <u>can also be carried out</u> upon cantilever structures or continuous structures.</p> <p>It <u>can be concluded</u> that different section type is less likely to control design output because truss members are purely compressed.</p> <p>These findings provide evidence that the lack of awareness on business communication principles <u>causes</u> the subjects to defy the rules when writing business communication.</p> <p>This study <u>is</u> useful for determining the replacement of the dilemma zone protectors where the installation of the detectors <u>could reduce</u> the numbers of red light running vehicles.</p>

## PROPER SEQUENCE AND LOGICAL CONNECTORS IN THESIS WRITING

Cause and Effect		Comparison and Contrast	
Due to	As a result As a consequence Hence To affect	Similarly  Besides	However  On the other hand
As a result of	Consequently Therefore	Likewise  While	On the contrary  While
Because of / Because	Thus It follows that	Correspondingly	Although
The cause/ effect of	Will result in So	Identical	Even though
The reason for	Admittedly	Since	In contrast
For	In that case Therefore	As.... As	Otherwise
Since	Thereby In doing so	Similar to  Likewise  Both...and  Not only...but also	Instead of  Yet  Whereas  Nonetheless Even tough

Addition	Reason	Sequence	Condition
In addition	Since	First (ly)	If
Similarly	As	Second (ly)	Provided that
As well as	Due to	Next	Unless
And	Because (of)	Later	Whether
Besides / Besides that	The reason why	Earlier	So that
Moreover	Leads to	Later	Depending on
Furthermore	Cause	To begin with	For
Even	So	Then	Except
Likewise	In other words	After that / this	(Not) including
		Following that / this	Apart from
		Afterwards	With the exception of
		Subsequently	Without
Example	Time	Summary	Importance
For / One example	Before	To summarize	Most importantly
For instance	Since	In conclusion	Most significantly
Just as	Meanwhile	To sum up	Another significant
In particular	At the moment	Lastly	Primarily
To illustrate	Whenever	Finally	The most vital
Namely	As soon as	To conclude	The primary
Such as	Just as	In short	Above all
As	Until	In brief	The most prominent
	When	All in all	The most salient

## LANGUAGE EXPRESSIONS USED WHEN PRESENTING DISCUSSION SECTION

Language Function	Expression
<b>Background information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As mentioned in the previous chapter...</li> <li>• Previous studies show that...</li> <li>• Other research in.... agreed that...</li> <li>• This study aims to uncover...</li> <li>• Little is known from previous studies on the question of...</li> </ul>
<b>Explanation of Results</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The result may be explained by looking at...</li> <li>• There is a possibility that the respondents might be affected by...</li> <li>• There may be several possibilities that lead to this result.</li> <li>• These variations can be explained by...</li> <li>• A possible explanation for this result might be because of...</li> <li>• The possible interference of...cannot be denied.</li> <li>• The result may have been affected by...</li> <li>• There is a possibility that the result is due to...</li> <li>• This inconsistency/discrepancy may be affected by...</li> <li>• There are, however, other possible explanations...</li> </ul>
<b>Reference to previous research (Agreeing/Supporting)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The results of this study seemed to reaffirm the findings of a study conducted by Davies (2000)...</li> <li>• These findings are consistent with those of Reiner (2003) who discovered that...</li> <li>• These findings support previous research into...</li> <li>• The research gained similar findings with those obtained from Wales (1995) where...</li> <li>• The study obtained similar findings as those found in Low (2002)...</li> <li>• There are similarities between the behaviour expressed by.... in this particular study and those described by Gardner (1998).</li> <li>• These findings support the notion raised in other research that...</li> <li>• This study confirms the claims made in previous researches where...</li> <li>• These results are consistent with those of the other studies which found that...</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based on the findings, it seemed that the results gathered from the study seem to be consistent with other research...</li> </ul>
<b>Reference to previous research (Disagreeing/ Contradicting)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>These findings did not support the findings from previous research...</li> <li>There seemed to be a discrepancy between the findings found in this research and those obtained from previous research.</li> <li>The findings did not seem to be consistent with other research...</li> <li>In contrast to earlier findings, no evidence of... was discovered.</li> <li>This study has been unable to provide evidence that...</li> <li>This study has not been able to demonstrate that...</li> <li>On the contrary, the findings from this study do not support the study conducted by Holmes (2000).</li> <li>However, this result has not been previously described in other research.</li> <li>Apart from the results obtained to answer the first and second research questions, this research has failed to verify the claims made by George (1990)....</li> </ul>
<b>Suggesting hypotheses and implications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is possible/probable/likely that...</li> <li>These findings suggest that...</li> <li>The findings show that there is a weak link between...</li> <li>Based on the findings, it seems that...</li> <li>There is a possibility that...</li> <li>In general, it is likely that...</li> <li>Therefore, it is likely that there is a connection between...</li> <li>Hence, it can be suggested that...</li> <li>It is possible to hypothesize that these conditions are likely to occur in...</li> <li>From the results, we can conclude that...</li> <li>From the discussion made earlier, it can be concluded that...</li> <li>It can therefore be assumed that the...</li> <li>The findings of the study suggest that...</li> <li>This thus provides a new perspective about...</li> <li>As a conclusion, the results indicated that...</li> <li>The findings revealed that...</li> </ul>



Sentence fragments are not considered sentences because they do not express a complete thought. For example, when we use a time clause without a main clause, then we have created a sentence fragment because it is not a complete thought. Thus, we must connect a time clause to a main clause to complete the meaning of sentence.

The following are some examples of sentence fragments and some suggested clauses to complete the thought.

Fragment: When I am given a task to complete.

Sentence: When I am given a task to complete, I am usually nervous.

Fragment: As soon as I start working on the task.

Sentence: As soon as I start working on the task, I feel more comfortable.

Fragment: After I am midway through the task.

Sentence: After I am midway through the task, I am usually happy with the result.