

Dictionary
— of —
Link Words
— in —
English Discourse

W J Ball

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MACMILLAN

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HOW TO USE

*Link word
(alphabetical order)*

*A and B express the concept of
corroboration (see p.139);
C expresses the concept of
contradiction (see p.137)*

actually

corroboration A, B contradiction C

In conversation this word is frequently used as a 'dummy' (see Preface), but people are more cautious in using it in formal speech and writing. It is found in all three positions: beginning, middle and end (as a trailer).

It has three uses:

A

It draws attention to a fact.

Main divisions of use

The Archbishop of Canterbury is interviewed

*'When I'm having a difficult time, when people don't like what I've said, I have to remember that many of my predecessors had a worse time. **Actually**, some of them, *you know, had their heads chopped off!'*

BBC TV

*Heading to
introduce
quotation*

*Quotation illustrating the
use of the link word
(shown in bold type)*

*Source of quotation,
here from a BBC TV programme*

*Another phrase that can be used
instead of the link word
under discussion*

all the same

also just the same

concession

These link-words are also concessive and are used to correct an imbalance of fact or truth. They are anaphoric, ie they refer back to a statement that requires correction.

*Cross reference
to another entry*

all well and good

all very well

PREFACE

The teaching of English as a Foreign Language has expanded world-wide into a multi-purpose activity. It has adapted itself to satisfy many different practical needs. Above all, it has directed its attention to the active skills needed to comprehend expository (formal) prose, the purpose of which is to compose an argument or pursue a topic. Amongst these skills, the ability to recognise and understand logical relationships between ideas and sentences is all important. On paper, sentences are separate units, but in fact they combine together in a number of ways: by common syntactical devices, for instance, or by the use of link words (connectors), which act as markers to indicate the relationships between ideas. These link words are as important in informal conversation as they are in the control of written English. It is the aim of this dictionary to enable the reader to identify, understand and use these link words in their spoken and written contexts.

Evidence for the use of link words is all around us in ordinary conversation and in the printed word. The examples of illustrative material that I have chosen are almost all from authentic contemporary sources. Some are from Radio and Television, (speakers' or writers' names have been disguised or omitted for reasons of courtesy, but the transcripts are accurate); others are from modern novels and plays, as well as from random observation of how English is used today in a wide variety of contexts. The importance of an adequate context cannot be overestimated. Isolated non-contextual examples can be worse than useless.

Amongst the considerable number of link words indispensable to the logical composition of ordinary conversation, and without which it would fall apart, is a small group, of amazing popularity, that seems to serve no purpose except, perhaps, to comfort the speaker and preserve his self-confidence. I have called them *dummies*. They add nothing to the meaning of what we say. Their use, one suspects, has become an addiction. They are readily identifiable: *you know; you see; I mean; sort of; well; anyway/anyhow; actually; of course; however; know what I mean?*

All the link words here explained and illustrated fall into a number of logical concepts. Each concept is briefly explained (in more detail under individual items), and a full list of them appears on pages 127–153. The list assembles under each concept those link words most appropriate to it.

The individual items in the dictionary are arranged alphabetically. Those that consist of more than one word are invariably idiomatic (hence the word order cannot be changed), and so, for the sake of simplicity, they are indexed under the initial word of the group; the indefinite article, *a/an*, and *to* of the infinitive are ignored in this arrangement.

WJB

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'He said some very nice things about you.'

'Indeed?' (Moderate rise: 'Did he really?')

or

'Indeed?' (High rise: genuine surprise)

or

'Indeed!' (Falling: with irony, 'He can't have meant it.')

In fact

corroboration A contradiction B

also **in actual fact**

in point of fact

A Facts are neither true nor false. It is statements about facts that are true or false. But when we assert that something is a fact ('The fact is that...') we are claiming that it is also true. Link words like **in fact**, **in point of fact**, **in actual fact** betray this confusion.

Compare these two statements:

- a) In the matter of computer technology we have made a profit.
- b) In the matter of computer technology we have, **in fact**, made a profit.

Both statements are true. But they are not quite the same. The second statement emphasises the claim to truth (probably because somebody has disputed the facts), but it does not alter the facts.

Why is Christmas in December?

We should have had to invent a feast at this time of the year, if Christmas did not fall so conveniently. **In fact**, primitive man did just that, and celebrated the winter solstice with a feast.

The Dean of Guildford, 'Sunday Telegraph Magazine' 19.12.82

In fact does no more than emphasise the fact that primitive man celebrated the winter solstice with a feast.

Supporting the elderly

Despite all the officialese about the growing burden of dependants, we are not **in fact** a nation bowed down by a parasitic older generation which the earning population have to slave ever harder to support.

'The Daily Telegraph'

In fact strengthens the denial.

A

accordingly

consequences

This is one of a very large number of adverbials called *conjuncts*. As their Latin origin (*coniungere* = join together) implies, they are genuine connectives.

- A** **Accordingly** belongs to the concept of *consequences* or *result*. (For a list of logical concepts, see Appendix.) It expresses the logical consequence of what has just been said or written. As such it can be used in beginning or middle position.

The principles of mechanics

On what grounds are we justified in believing that water runs downhill? That we do believe it is not questioned. The child's answer is: 'Because water always does run downhill'; a more advanced answer is, 'Because water seeks its own level'; another answer is, 'Because water is a very good example of a fluid.' Each of these answers does something to connect the behaviour of water with something else; even the child's answer asserts that *this* water running down *this* hill is not to be regarded as an isolated phenomenon. Perhaps the answer we should give today is: That water runs downhill follows from the principles of mechanics. **Accordingly**, either there is something wrong with the principles of mechanics or water runs downhill. To dispute the principles of mechanics is to upset a whole domain of ordered knowledge.

'A Modern Elementary Logic' L S Stebbing (Methuen)

Mind and matter

Descartes' philosophy regarded mind and matter as entirely independent 'substances', each existing in its own right apart from the other, and of such essentially different natures that they could not possibly interact — the one, for instance, existed in space, the other out of space. He **accordingly** thought of mind and matter as moving, **so to speak*, on parallel yet entirely different sets of rails, completely without interaction, and yet synchronised after the manner of cinematograph film and its 'talkie' accompaniment...

'The New Background of Science' J Jeans (C.U.P.)

- B** When used in end position, as a trailer, it means 'in conformity with the circumstances' (whatever they may be).

actually

The punishment fits the crime

'Prisoner at the bar, you have been found guilty of a most heinous attack on an innocent and defenceless girl, and for that you will be sentenced **accordingly**.'

Accordingly here means 'as befits the crime'.

actually

corroboration A, B contradiction C

In conversation this word is frequently used as a 'dummy' (see Preface), but people are more cautious in using it in formal speech and writing. It is found in all three positions: beginning, middle and end (as a trailer).

It has three uses:

- A** It draws attention to a fact.

The Archbishop of Canterbury is interviewed

'When I'm having a difficult time, when people don't like what I've said, I have to remember that many of my predecessors had a worse time. **Actually**, some of them, *you know, had their heads chopped off!'

BBC TV

From a company report

In the matter of computer technology we've **actually** made a profit.

ie 'We expected to make a loss, but, to our surprise, we have made a profit.'

- B** As an emphasising adjunct it stresses a fact or a word (an *adjunct* brings extra meaning to a clause or sentence of which it forms a part, while a *conjunct* marks a logical connection between ideas).

Problems of an editor

'One of the most salutary things for any newspaper editor or any journalist is **actually** to be interviewed himself, or to have his own newspaper *sort of in the news, and to see how it is **actually** reported by other media. It's **actually** terrifying. *I mean, one is suddenly presented with the most awful nightmare that, if this is the kind of accuracy with which we report other things, when it's something you **actually** know about, it suddenly becomes terrifying. But, *of course, you have to put that in perspective, because on the whole most people are **actually** trying not to tell you things. They're trying to keep things from you.'

BBC Radio

C It contradicts, or corrects, what has been said.

An author wanted to get experience with fishermen in order to study the background for his next book.

GM I very badly wanted to write a book about a fishing community. For me, because I cannot stand remote from things I want to write about, I had to go and become a fisherman.

RP But to do it for a year shows real application.

GM *Well, the lads on my boat thought I was pretty daft, actually.

BBC Radio

He contradicts the idea that there was anything especially remarkable about spending the whole year about this.

Tablet or pill?

TEACHER How does one overcome insomnia? Use 'If I were you' in your reply.

STUDENT If I were you I'd take a tablet.

TEACHER Actually, 'pill' is more usual in English.

The teacher, being in authority, uses the link word at the beginning of the sentence. If the student had been pointing out the mistake, he might have wanted to be tactful and use **actually** as a trailer, where it carries less weight.

admittedly

limitation

By using **admittedly** the speaker or writer acknowledges that there is truth in what he is saying. But there is also something to the contrary that is worth saying, and the *but* clause which follows expresses this conflict of ideas.

The British as Europeans

Are we in this country going the same way as France, and losing, by default, our position as a World Power? **Admittedly**, the British are a typically European people in many respects, and have a strong individualist tradition. **But* they have the advantage of being able to combine individualism with the requirements of working in a team. **After all*, it was this country which **started** the industrial revolution and set going all these recent developments.

The salaries of scientists

Another essential need is an improvement in the position of our scientists. Although working conditions at the universities are now **on the whole* satisfactory, **salaries** are still

inadequate. Admittedly, a step has been taken recently in the right direction, and the salaries of the younger scientists may not now seem too unsatisfactory in comparison with those of other people in this country, **but* they are still very much below what American industry – and even markedly below what American universities – can offer. The result is that many of the more ambitious young scientists and engineers leave this country for America.

'The Neglect of Science' F E Simon (Basil Blackwell)

after all

concession

A The key word here is *after*: after all (that has been said), you must admit that there is another and most important point for consideration. **After all** connects what has preceded with a new, and what is probably the most important consideration of all.

Pinter's play, 'The Hothouse', is set in a state psychiatric clinic. Roote is the officer in charge. Patients are given numbers, not names. Here Roote is talking about this to a member of staff.

It would make things so much simpler if we called them by their names. Then we'd know where we were. **After all**, they're not criminals. They're only people in need of help.

'The Hothouse' Harold Pinter (Methuen, London)

The important thing is that they are patients who need care and so they should not be treated as if they were convicted criminals.

Race-going as entertainment

'Teach-ins' before and after racing, conducted tours while it is going on, visits to training stables and studs — all have been tried and found popular by the Racegoers Club. If race course executives know what is good for them they will become the rule rather than the exception. We are, **after all**, in the entertainment business — high cost entertainment at that — and unless the product can be made more attractive the steady decline (four and a half million racegoers in 1967, only three and three-quarter million last year) will continue or even accelerate.

'The Sunday Telegraph' 20.2.83

A famous operatic singer is interviewed

She admits to liking the applause of the general public, while not wanting in any way to lose her operatic audience — **after**

all, as she eagerly affirms, it was Covent Garden's faith in her when she was completely unknown that set her on the road to her present eminence.

Her attitude towards appearing on video tape

'I'm very nervous about the cameras. **After all**, they are putting something into a can for posterity, and I want to know what they're up to. As long as you have time to look at a rehearsal of a performance first – as we did with the video of "Otello" – it's O.K.'

'The Daily Telegraph' 30.4.83

A fellow pupil has slipped and possibly hurt herself

'Cheer up! It's only a sprained ankle **after all**. That's better than being blind, isn't it?'

BBC TV

B As a trailer it often signifies 'contrary to expectation'.

In Iris Murdoch's novel 'The Sandcastle', Miss Carter is staying with Demoyte, whose picture she is painting. Mor, a teacher at St Bride's School, had been arguing with Demoyte and there had been some misunderstanding. Miss Carter had excused herself and gone off to bed, saying that she was very tired. Mor himself left to go home. (See synopsis, page 125.)

He moved out into the middle of the lawn and looked up at the house. The room at the end of the house to his right, which adjoined the library and had one window looking out at the back and one window looking on to the lawn, was the guest-room. There was a light on in this room. The curtains were tightly drawn. That must be Miss Carter's room, thought Mor. She hasn't gone to bed **after all**. It must have been a fiction, about being tired.

'The Sandcastle' Iris Murdoch (Chatto & Windus)

The scene is in George Bowling's native village, Lower Binfield, in 1939, before the outbreak of World War II. A bomb had fallen. (See synopsis, page 126.)

'Oh yes, you're right, of course. It wasn't a German plane **after all**. The war hadn't broken out. It was only an accident.'

'Coming up for Air' George Orwell (Secker & Warburg)

Some people naturally assumed that a German plane had dropped the bomb. But it couldn't have done so, since war had not yet been declared.

- C** It is often necessary to get the facts right after a misunderstanding.

Putting the record straight

It may seem unfair on H... that L... should take the credit (or the blame) for the privatisation of Britoil. It was **after all**, H... who put it in motion before he was re-shuffled.

'The Sunday Telegraph' 14.11.82

The truth is that H... initiated the plan to remove Britoil from public to private ownership. The credit, or blame (whichever way you look at it) should not go to L..., who came on the scene later.

This link word must not be confused with *after all* as two separate items:

How can you be so ungrateful after all I have done for you?

all in all

summing up

All in all says, 'Having considered all the relevant facts (the data), this is my conclusion...'

Election prospects

All in all, the results are encouraging for the Conservatives, though not as much so as recent nationwide opinion polls might seem to indicate... For Labour, the outlook, barring some providential disaster like the miners' strike of 1974, is bleak indeed.

'The Sunday Telegraph' 31.10.82

The conclusion assesses the Labour Party's election prospects: on present data they are not bright.

George Bowling recognises a girl he used to know in Lower Binfield. Like most things in the village, she has changed, and not for the better, in his opinion. (See synopsis, page 126.)

'She'd no hat on, as though she'd slipped out of the house for a moment, and the way she walked gave you the impression that her shoes were down at heel. **All in all**, she looked a bit of a slut.'

'Coming up for Air' George Orwell (Secker & Warburg)

The decision of King Edward VIII to marry a divorcée and to abdicate in 1936 caused a constitutional crisis in Britain.

His private emotional turmoil hid from him the central fact that he had not been simply a lover defied but the mainspring of a constitutional crisis. I think he learned it later, with

infinite reluctance, but was too proud to admit it. It may explain the persistence to the end of that wistful, baffled expression, as of a playful child that once stepped on a land mine.

All in all, few disasters in the history of the English kings were more fortunate for the British people than the appearance in the Prince's social set of the divorcée from Baltimore. When the war came, Britain found herself with a modest and dutiful King, a devoted Queen, and two bright children — a microcosm of middle-class dependability that saw the country through when the going was bad.

'Six Men' Alistair Cooke (Bodley Head)

The argument has led the writer to the conclusion that the abdication was a disaster. But, paradoxically, it was a 'blessing in disguise' as he goes on to explain.

all the same

concession

also just the same

These link-words are also concessive and are used to correct an imbalance of fact or truth. They are anaphoric, ie they refer back to a statement that requires correction.

Oil shares

'It was generally accepted that the price of these shares (ie Britoil) would drop. **All the same**, it was not expected that the drop, when it came, would be so severe as, in fact, it has been.'

BBC TV

Children in novels

Novelists can cope with children a little better than playwrights can — but not all that well, **all the same**. Jane Austen didn't try and even George Eliot had an uncertain touch; Dickens, although miles better, got bogged down now in sentimentality and now in the grotesque; in English fiction, at least, the best children are the achievements of writers of the second rank.

'The Daily Telegraph'

The writer concedes that novelists can describe children, but not as well as you would expect or hope. *Can cope* is not quite accurate: **all the same** applies the correction, 'not all that well.'

Mor, a teacher at St Bride's School, has agreed to stand as a candidate for Parliament. (See synopsis, page 125.)

'Not so fast,' said Mor. 'I want to carry out this plan, and I have now, I must say, absolutely no doubt that I will carry it out. **All the same**, to throw up my job and be a parliamentary candidate at my time of life — it's not all that simple.'

'The Sandcastle' Iris Murdoch (Chatto & Windus)

In spite of Mor's determination to carry out the plan (ie to stand for Parliament,) he recognises that there are some practical difficulties. *I will carry it out* requires the warning that these difficulties will have to be removed first.

In the same novel, Mor's adventure with Rain Carter in her car becomes embarrassing.

Mor decided that they must have passed the turning he had in mind, but he felt sure that if they continued they would find their way to the river **all the same**.

The backwards reference here is to the fact that Mor and Rain Carter had come along the wrong road. But Mor would not admit that they were lost as sure that, in the end, they would reach the river

The link word must not be confused with *all* as a complement to a noun.

Angry housewife (to her husband). 'You men are all the same. You think that women should be on call, like doctors, day and night.'

ie 'You men are all alike.' or 'All you men are alike.'

all very well

disagreement

also (all) well and good

These link words contradict themselves. They seem to be satisfied with what has been said, but in fact they are dismissive and throw doubt on its truth or accuracy. They are usually followed by *but*, so showing that one has some doubts about what has been said.

Well and good is also used for a qualified acceptance of a situation, with a hint that in reality things are far from being as satisfactory as they are supposed to be.

Telecommunications: who benefits?

British Telecommunications has been spurred to a degree of unparalleled frenzy in the business sector. International calls, for example, have been reduced in price. For places like

Australia and America, they are now 18% cheaper than in 1979. **All very well**,* says the private telephone user, but with no reduction in his phone bills he has yet to feel the benefits of competition.

'The Sunday Telegraph' 1.5.83

For the private user, it is a case of 'for whose benefit is all this competition?' It doesn't seem to be for his benefit.

Home improvement

Improving your home is one of the best investments you can make. **That's all very well**, you may say, but what about the money and how do I start going about it?

'The Daily Telegraph'

Improving your home is all right in theory, but where do you get the money from to do it?

Investments

Taking income and capital growth together, it was demonstrated that over five years the median unit trust had produced £1,948 from an initial investment of £1,000 compared with £1,593 for the best performing competitive investment — building society shares. **All well and good**, but there are snags. One is that, because unit trusts tend to track their records on an 'all-in' basis (capital growth, plus income), it is difficult to make a direct comparison of income records. Another is that it is not good enough to select the highest yielders from the 100 *or so income trust units and assume that these will produce the fastest growing income over the next decade.

'The Sunday Telegraph' 24.10.82

The writer is arguing that the average performance of unit trust investments is deceptive, especially as the average ('median') is based on those that produce the most gains. This makes a comparison with investment in building societies unfair. The result could be very different over a period of ten years.

all well and good

all very well

almost

modification

more or less

This adverb should not be confused with *all most* in such contexts as the following: