The Pivotal Words

No words are as helpful while reading as the prepositions and conjunctions that guide your mind along the pathways of the author's ideas. A word like **furthermore** says, "Keep going!" **However** says, "Easy!" Master these words and phrases and you will almost immediately become a better reader, for they will whisper directions in your inner ear.

**Additive words**

These say, "Here's more of the same coming up. It's just as important as what we have already said."

- also, further, moreover
- and, furthermore, too
- besides, in addition

**Equivalent words**

They say, "It does what I have just said, but it does this too."

- as well as, at the same time, similarly
- equally important, likewise

**Amplification words**

The author is saying, "I want to be sure that you understand my idea; so here's a specific instance."

- for example(e.g.), specifically, as
- for instance, such as, like

**Alternative words**

These point out, "Sometimes there is a choice; other times there isn't."

- either/or, other than
- neither/nor, otherwise

**Repetitive words**

They say, "I said it once, but I'm going to say it again in case you missed it the first time."

- again, in other words
- to repeat, that is(i.e.)

**Contrast and change words**

"So far I've given you only one side of the story; now let's take a look at the other side."

- but, on the contrary, still
- conversely, on the other hand, though
- despite, instead of, yet
- however, rather than, regardless
- nevertheless, even though, whereas
- in spite of, notwithstanding
Cause and effect words
"All this has happened; now I'll tell you why."
accordingly since then
because so thus
consequently hence therefore
for this reason

Qualifying words
These say, "Here is what we can expect. These are the conditions we are working under."
if although unless
providing whenever

Concession words
They say, "Okay! We agree on this much."
accepting the data granted that of course

Emphasizing words
They say, "Wake up and take notice!"
above all more important indeed

Order words
The author is saying, "You keep your mind on reading: I'll keep the numbers straight."
finally second then
first next last

Time words
"Let's keep the record straight on who said what and especially when."
afterwards meanwhile now
before subsequently presently
formerly ultimately previously
later

Summarizing words
These say, "We've said many things so far. Let's stop here and pull them together."
for these reasons in brief
in conclusion to sum up