

This Kibbitzer is based on three extracts from three successive pages of a dissertation by a Malay-speaking student of theology:

Original	Revision
<p>1. Man is very different from other animals. Due to his greater mental powers and his capacity for language, man can learn more. In fact, most sociologists stress the regularity of man's behaviour, the repetition of certain socially relevant actions, and the resulting orderliness and calculability of social life which follow from this.</p>	<p>Man is very different from other animals. Due to his greater mental powers and his capacity for language, man can learn more. Most sociologists stress the regularity of man's behaviour, the repetition of certain socially relevant actions, and the resulting orderliness and calculability of social life which follow from this.</p>
<p>2. ... men interact between each other and the environment. To ensure that their communication is meaningful, they use particular symbols and language. In fact, language becomes an important tool for human beings to interact and give meaning to their lives. Through language man can settle disputes ...</p>	<p>... men interact with each other and with the environment. To ensure that their communication is meaningful, they use particular symbols and language. Language has become an important tool allowing human beings to interact and give meaning to their lives. Through language man can settle disputes ...</p>
<p>3. Culture is what we inherit through being members of a particular society or group.</p> <p>In fact, the nature of human everyday life is a process of interacting and communicating.</p>	<p>Culture is what we inherit through being members of a particular society or group.</p> <p>The nature of everyday human life is that it is a process of interaction and communication.</p>

A problem for many of our students whose written English is in other respects excellent is that they tend to overuse and/or misuse Logical Connectives such as *in fact*. During the consultation we decided to check the use of *in fact* from the concordancer and found that the usual use appeared to be in contexts where **fact** is contrasted with **supposition**:

1. Economics has tricked us to see growth when **in fact** there is scarcity.
2. Last year, the register was budgeted to lose about £180,000. **In fact**, it will lose only £80,000 – £100,000 and will break even this year.
3. He said his last hope was when he heard that men over 40 would be exempt from military service – he is 41. But the rumour was wrong: it is **in fact** 45.
4. The "bill" of the platypus, which is covered in soft skin, is **in fact** a delicate sensory organ, precisely adapted to a life spent foraging in shallow rivers.
5. Three centuries after his death, the truth has caught up with Robert Boyle. The man who discovered what gas did at a constant temperature and was hailed as the 'supreme rationalist' was, **in fact**, a secret alchemist and dabbler in the occult.

6. That the courts systematically discriminate against women seems set to become one of the gender myths of the 1990s. **In fact** there is not a shred of evidence to support the contention, and quite a few statistics to suggest the reverse.
7. 'In our history books it never said that Jews were arrested by French police,' said Arno Klarsfeld, the 27-year-old lawyer representing the niece of one the seven Jews for whose murder Touvier is on trial. **In fact** 80,000 Jews were deported and more than 80 per cent of them were arrested by French police.'
8. Police and mountain rescue teams attributed one of their busiest weekends of the winter to improved weather, bringing more people on to the hills. "As far as we can gather, no one has gone out there ill equipped. **In fact**, the opposite seems to have occurred," said Sergeant Bill MacLean of Inverness police. "All of the people who were involved in these incidents were well equipped."

The student agreed that in in none of his three contexts was there a contrast such as that shown in these citations. In the first two contexts, the logical relationship seems to be that the first statement establishes the **setting** for understanding the second statement. If a logical connector is sought it could be *in that context* or *against that background*, as shown in the following citations:

9. The figures for performance and range, which the batteries' developers quote with enthusiasm, are based on computer simulations. **In that context** they must be considered with caution, but will be exciting if they can be justified.
10. It is a mistake to think that only one section of the community suffers from the prevalence of racism in our society. All sections suffer from unsafe streets, economic deprivation and lack of tolerance. **In that context**, simply defining an incident as racist is inadequate.
11. Capital investment is fundamental to the long-term health of the economy and it should surprise no-one that countries with a low level of new investment - such as Britain - tend to have a poor economic performance. **In that context**, virtually every respected representative of our industrial base – the CBI, for example – asked Clarke to improve capital allowances in the Budget to stimulate capital spending.
12. Croatia hopes to negotiate a potentially lucrative trade deal with the European Union. It was **against that background** that President Tudjman backed off from a threat to expel UN peacekeepers and finally agreed in March to allow a reduced force to remain in place.
13. The latest forecasts from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development estimate that output fell by 19 per cent in 1992 and a further 12 per cent in 1993. **Against that background** the 10 per cent decline pencilled in for 1994 and the further 2 per cent contraction in 1995 represent some marginal progress.
14. The growing power of the low-cost economies of the Pacific rim – particularly China – together with the potential strength of the countries of the former Soviet bloc suggest that global output is set to rise sharply over the next 20 years. **Against that background**, the need to remain competitive will be paramount, keeping the lid on inflationary pressure.

In the third context, where *In fact* introduces the new paragraph, it is clear no logical connexion is intended, the phrase being used (as the student admitted) in an attempt to give 'emphasis' to what followed.