Listening Signals

Your instructors are not going to send up a rocket when they state an important new idea or give an example, but they will use signals to telegraph what they are doing. Every good speaker does it, and you should expect to receive these signals. For example, they may introduce an example with “for example” as we just did.

Other common signals are:

“There are three reasons why ...” (here they come)
“First ... Second ... Third ...” (there they are)
“And most important ...”
“A major development ...” (a main idea)

They may signal the sending of support material with:

“On the other hand ...”
“On the contrary...”
“As an example...”
“For example ...”

“Similarly...”
“In contrast ...”
“Also...”
“Furthermore ...”
“For instance ...”

They may signal a conclusion or summary with:

“Therefore...”
“In conclusion...”
“As a result ...”

“Finally...”
“In summary...”
“From this we see...”

They may even signal very loud with:

“Now this is important...”
“Remember that ...”
“The important idea is that...”
“The basic concept here is...”

Signals are usually ignored by those who do not know how to listen, er, listen, effectively. Expect signals and be alert when you receive them.