

Contrast linkers

English Grammar · B2

although, though, even though

Contrast linkers

although	despite	however
+ a clause	+ a noun / -ing	+ a new sentence
<i>although it rained</i>	<i>despite the rain</i>	<i>... However, ...</i>

Contrast linkers: reference card grid

These conjunctions express **contrast** / **concession** (“although...but...”). They are followed by **a complete sentence** (subject + verb).

- **although** / **though**: Although. **even though**: Stronger tone, meaning “even if / despite the fact that”.

Although it was raining, we went out.

*Although it was raining, we still went out.

He passed, even though he hadn’t studied.

*Even though he didn’t study, he still passed.

Note: *though* can also appear at the **end of a sentence** to mean “however” (informal):
It’s expensive. I like it, though.

despite, in spite of

despite and **in spite of** have the same meaning as *although*, but they are followed by **nouns** / **gerunds**, **not complete sentences**.

Despite the rain, we went out.

*Despite the rain, we still went out.

In spite of being tired, she kept working.

*Despite being very tired, she continued working.

Note: Key distinction: *although* + **sentence**; *despite* / *in spite of* + **noun** / **-ing**.
~~despite it was raining~~ × → despite the rain ✓.

however, nevertheless

however and **nevertheless** are **conjunctive adverbs** that connect two sentences, usually placed at the **beginning of a sentence followed by a comma**.

It was expensive. However, we bought it.

*It was expensive. However, we still bought it.

Note: *However* typically forms its own sentence separated by a comma; do not use it to directly join two clauses like *but*.

Common Errors

- × ~~Although it was raining, but we went out.~~ → ✓ Keep only one: **Although** it was raining, we went out. / It was raining, **but** we went out. — Chinese “although...but...” appears in pairs, but English allows only one.
- × ~~Despite of the rain...~~ → ✓ **despite** the rain / **in spite of** the rain — *despite* never takes *of*; *in spite* always takes *of*; do not mix them.
- × ~~Even he studied hard, he failed.~~ → ✓ **Even though** he studied hard... — *even* alone is not a conjunction; use *even though* / *even if*.
- × ~~It was expensive, however we bought it.~~ → ✓ It was expensive. **However**, we bought it. (Or using a semicolon: ...expensive**; however,** we...) — *However* cannot join two clauses with just a comma like *but*.