
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

6 Minute Grammar

Linking devices of contrast



This is not a word-for-word transcript

Finn

Hello and welcome to 6 Minute Grammar with me, Finn.

Catherine

And me, Catherine. Hello.

Finn

In this programme, we're talking about linking devices.

Catherine

That's right! And there are lots of different kinds of linking devices, but today we're looking at ways of contrasting one idea with another.

Finn

So, some words and phrases that do this are **however**, **although** and **despite**. We'll give you lots of information and examples...

Catherine

And of course there'll be a quiz to see what you've learnt.

Finn

So, here we go, with our first example sentences from Neil:

Neil

Dean and I were the best of friends. Sometimes we completely disagreed.

Catherine

OK. Now the ideas in those two sentences contrast with each other a little bit.

Finn

The fact that they completely disagreed is slightly surprising or unexpected if they were the best of friends, isn't it?

Catherine

It depends on the friendship but yes, it could be true.

Finn

It could be.

Catherine

And to express this contrast clearly and in an interesting way, we can link the ideas in the sentences with the word **but**, like this:

Neil

Dean and I were the best of friends, **but** sometimes we completely disagreed.

Catherine

Or we can use the word **however**, like this:

Neil

Dean and I were the best of friends. **However**, sometimes we completely disagreed.

Finn

Now, **however** doesn't make two sentences into one long sentence, like the word **but** does.

Catherine

No, as you heard, **however** usually goes at the start of a new sentence, or, we can sometimes put it at the end of a sentence, like this:

Neil

Dean and I were the best of friends. Sometimes we completely disagreed, **however**.

Finn

Right. Now if we prefer to join the two sentences together into one longer sentence, we could use **although** or **even though**. And they express surprise more than **however** or **but**. Neil.

Neil

Although Dean and I were the best of friends, sometimes we completely disagreed.

Catherine

Good. The phrase **even though** works in exactly the same way. And you can use **although** and **even though** at the beginning or in the middle of this longer sentence:

Neil

Dean and I were the best of friends, **even though** sometimes we completely disagreed.

IDENT

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Catherine

Now let's take a look at **despite** and **in spite of**. They mean the same as each other but do they mean the same as **although** and **even though**?

Finn

Actually yes, they do. They're also used to link and contrast surprising or unexpected ideas and they can go at the beginning or in the middle of a sentence. But the grammar is slightly different. Listen:

Neil

Despite being the best of friends, Dean and I sometimes completely disagreed.

Catherine

So: **despite** is followed by the -ing form of the verb, **despite being**, We don't use a subject and a verb after **despite**.

Finn

And **in spite of** is the same. We can also use a noun phrase instead of an -ing verb. Neil.

Neil

Despite our great friendship, Dean and I sometimes completely disagreed.

Catherine

OK. So the noun phrase after **despite** is **our great friendship**. And one more point about **despite** and **in spite of**. They can both be followed by the phrase **the fact that** plus a subject and a verb. Listen:

Neil

In spite of the fact that Dean and I were the best of friends, sometimes we completely disagreed.

Catherine

Right. Now we'll finish with two more linking words, **while** and **whereas**.

Finn

Yes, these are a bit different. **While** and **whereas** are used mainly for contrasting facts. They don't usually express surprise or any other attitude. Examples please, Neil?

Neil

Whereas I studied zoology, Dean studied medieval history.

Catherine

So that's a fact! And again, these words can go at the beginning or in the middle of a sentence. So we could also say:

Neil

I studied zoology **while** Dean studied medieval history.

Finn

Very good. And now it's quiz time! Number one. Complete this sentence with either a) **although** or b) **despite**. We hardly ever saw our cousins _____ living very near each other.

Catherine

And the answer is b) **despite** because it's followed by a verb-ing.

Finn

Number two. Fill the gap with either a) **despite** or b) **although**. Libraries are being closed _____ many people have protested against the move.

Catherine

And the answer is b) **although**.

Finn

Number three. Fill the gap with either a) **in spite of** or b) **whereas**. Honey is supposed to be good for you _____ sugar is considered bad.

Catherine

And it's b) **whereas**. Honey is supposed to be good for you **whereas** sugar is considered bad.

Finn

Well done! Congratulations if you got them right at home **despite the fact that** they were quite difficult!

Catherine

Well done indeed. There's more about this on our website at bbclearningenglish.com. Join us again for more 6 Minute Grammar.

Both

Bye!