

Contrasts: **although** and **though**; **even though** / **if**; **while**, **whilst** and **whereas**

A

Although and though

We use **although** or (less formally) **though** to say that there is a surprising contrast between what happened in the *main clause* and what happened in the *adverbial clause*:

- Although / Though** Reid failed to score himself, he helped Jones to score two goals.

With a similar meaning, we can use **despite the fact that / in spite of the fact that** (e.g. **Despite the fact that / In spite of the fact that** Reid failed to score ...), **despite / in spite of + -ing** (e.g. **Despite / In spite of** Reid **failing** to score ...), or **despite / in spite of his / her + noun** (e.g. **Despite / In spite of his failure** to score ...).

Note that we can use **though**, but not **although**, at the end of a clause:

- I eat most dairy products. I'm not keen on yogurt, **though**.

We can give special emphasis to an adjective by putting it before **though** in the pattern **adjective + though + noun / pronoun + verb** (usually a linking verb such as **appear, be, become, feel, look, seem, sound, prove**, etc.). **As** (but not **although**) can be used instead of **though**. Compare:

- Hot though (or as) the night air was**, they slept soundly. *and*
- Although / Though the night air was hot**, they slept soundly.

B

Even though and even if

We can use **even though** (*but not* 'even although') to mean 'despite the fact that' and **even if** to mean 'whether or not'. Compare:

<input type="checkbox"/> Even though Matt doesn't speak Spanish, I think he should still visit Madrid.	= Despite the fact that he doesn't speak Spanish	i.e. the speaker knows that Matt doesn't speak Spanish
<input type="checkbox"/> Even if Matt doesn't speak Spanish, I think he should still visit Madrid.	= Whether or not he speaks Spanish	i.e. the speaker doesn't know definitely whether Matt speaks Spanish or not

C

While, whilst and whereas

In formal contexts we can use **while** or **whilst** with a meaning similar to 'although' to introduce something that qualifies what is said in the main clause or something that may seem to conflict with it. In this case, the **while / whilst** clause comes before or within the main clause, but not after it:

- While / Whilst** there is no evidence that Rob cheated, we were all astonished that he passed the exam. (*not* We were all astonished that he passed the exam, while ...)
- The diesel model of the car, **while / whilst** more expensive, is better value for money.

Note that **whilst** is a rather literary word and some people avoid using it.

We can use **while** or **whereas** (or less often **whilst**) to say that something contrasts with something in the main clause. The **while / whereas** clause may come before or after the main clause:

- Juan gets lots of homework from school, **while / whereas** Mia gets very little.
- While / Whereas** I always felt I would pass the exam, I never thought I would get an A grade.

We don't use **whereas** if what is said in the subordinate clause makes what is said in the main clause unexpected:

- Although / While** Sophie's father is from Spain, she doesn't speak Spanish. (*not* Whereas ...)

We can use **-ing** and **past participle (-ed)** clauses after **although, though, while** and **whilst**, and also clauses with the subject and verb left out (see Unit 59D).

Exercises

82.1 Join the sentence halves and give special emphasis to the adjective by moving it to the front of the sentence. Use either **though** or **as**. **A**

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 it may seem amazing | a they were very useful when I looked at them in detail |
| 2 she was frightened | b she forced herself to pick up the snake |
| 3 food became scarce | c they had never faced such severe conditions before |
| 4 the climbers were experienced | d the company is still in financial difficulties |
| 5 the instructions first appeared confusing | e they always found enough to share with me |
| 6 it looked disgusting | f she knew the examination would not be easy |
| 7 she felt confident | g my brother Johan has just won the lottery |
| 8 their new products have proved successful | h it was actually quite tasty |

1 + g Amazing though it may seem, my brother Johan has just won the lottery.
(or Amazing as it may seem ...)

82.2 Expand the notes in brackets and rewrite the sentences using **In spite of + -ing** in 1–3 and **In spite of his / her + noun** in 4–6. **A**

- Although she has to cope with three small children, ... (*taking – part-time MBA course*)
In spite of having to cope with three small children, she is taking a part-time MBA course.
- Although he was much younger than the others, ... (*was – most outstanding rider – team*)
- Although he ate a big lunch, ... (*had – three-course meal – evening*)
- Although he was frightened, ... (*allowed – huge spider – placed in his hands*)
- Although she is obviously intelligent, ... (*finds – it difficult – express – ideas in writing*)
- Although she was ill, ... (*went – walking holiday – Nepal*)

Now rewrite the sentences you have written beginning **Despite the fact that ...**

- Despite the fact that she has to cope with three small children, she is taking a part-time MBA course.

82.3 Underline the correct phrase. **B**

- The driver stopped to let on more passengers *even though / even if* the bus was already full.
- I wouldn't tell you where Mariam lives *even though / even if* I knew.
- Even though / Even if* I only play one match for my country, I'll be happy.
- Even though / Even if* he had just had lunch, Thomas bought a hamburger.
- He plays for France *even though / even if* he was born in Algeria.
- You won't see all the animals in the zoo *even though / even if* you stay for the whole day.
- Even though / Even if* I'm quite old, I still miss my parents.
- I still couldn't afford to go to Taipei, *even though / even if* I took the cheapest route.

82.4 Rewrite these sentences with a similar meaning. Begin the sentence with **Whereas** if possible and **While** if not. **C**

- Horse riding is an expensive pastime, but more and more people are taking it up.
While horse riding is an expensive pastime, more and more people are taking it up.
(*Whereas ... is not possible*)
- A decade ago only 5% of students dropped out of college, but the figure today is 25%.
- The temperature is below freezing, but it actually feels quite warm when the sun is out.
- The cost of rail travel has increased, but the number of train passengers has grown.
- I've always wanted to visit Australia, but I've never had any wish to go to Canada.