

SECTION 3

Concession clauses

Concession clauses give information that contrasts with or opposes the facts in the main clause in an unexpected way. These clauses can be introduced with conjunctions such as *although*, *(even) though*, *however*, etc. Some of these words and phrases introduce the known or background information; others introduce the unexpected contrast.

1 POSITION OF LINKING WORDS AND PHRASES

Concession clauses can come as the first or second part of a sentence:

I stayed until the end, although I was very bored.

(= focus on being bored)

Although I was extremely bored, I stayed until the end.

(= focus on staying)

watch out!

It's important to use the conjunction with the right part of the sentence:

✗ *It was much too hot, even though I went out.*

✓ *Even though it was much too hot, I went out.*

- We often express contrast or opposition by starting a second sentence with an adverbial:
The weather was terrible. Nevertheless, we decided to go ahead with the picnic. Personally, I'm dead against the plan. However, I think I'm in the minority.
- Some adverbials and phrases can come at the end of the second sentence:
I saw my ex-fiancé last night. We didn't speak, though. I'm afraid I can't come. It was nice of you to invite me, all the same.

2 INTRODUCING BACKGROUND INFORMATION

We use many different patterns and structures to express concession.

- We use the conjunctions *although*, *though* and *even though* followed by a verb phrase:
Although she knew about his past, she couldn't help loving him. She's decided to travel alone, even though she's been warned.
- *While* and *whilst* (formal) can replace *although*:
While I see your point, I still think you're wrong. Whilst Anne's usually pleasant, she can often be bad-tempered.

- We use the pattern adjective / adverb + *as* or *though* + subject + verb in emphatic sentences:
Hard as they tried, the two sides couldn't agree a peace settlement. Difficult though it was, they finally managed to reach a compromise.
- We use *much as*, meaning 'although', with verbs such as *like*, *hate*, etc. to talk about strong feelings:
Much as I detest the idea of punishing children, I can see it has its uses.
- The prepositions *in spite of* and *despite* can be followed by a noun phrase or -ing form:
In spite of the price, I've decided to buy the car. Despite feeling dreadful, Max went swimming.
- We use a family of words ending -*ever*, e.g. *however*, *whatever*, *whoever*, to express the idea 'no matter how, what, who, etc.':
However many times you ask me, I'm not moving. Whichever day you visit, I won't be at home.

3 INTRODUCING THE UNEXPECTED CONTRAST

In everyday English, *but* is the most frequent word to introduce a contrast:

She may be annoying sometimes, but I love her.

- We often add another word or phrase to strengthen the contrast:
He left me in the lurch, but still I have tender feelings for him. I know standards have changed, but even so such scenes on TV aren't acceptable.
- We use a range of adverbs and adverbial phrases to introduce a second sentence that introduces a contrast. They follow a full-stop, a semi-colon or a dash (-):
I felt really tired. Nevertheless I continued dancing. I felt really tired. Even so, I went on dancing. I felt really tired – however, I carried on dancing. I felt really tired; all the same, I refused to stop dancing.

? check

Correct the following sentences.

- There were minutes left to the deadline, even though we refused to panic.
- Our project is meeting with considerable success, much as we might like it.
- I spent hours on the Internet even so I knew I was wasting my time.
- Despite of his youth, he had a very mature approach to life.
- Fines are a good way of punishing people, however they are of no use if they cannot be paid.