

English B2 · Contrast linkers

Upper-intermediate English for Chinese speakers; classroom examples, not official exam items.

Colleagues with different tools

The contrast linkers are colleagues with the same job — contrast — but different tools. Learn the tool, not just the word.

The clause team

Linker	Flavour	Example
although	the standard	Although it rained, we played.
though	informal twin; can float to the end	It rained. We played, though.
even though	with emphasis	Even though the test was brutal, everyone passed.
whereas / while	side-by-side difference	I like coffee, whereas my sister likes tea.

Use the evidence

All take a full clause: subject + verb.

Your turn: the floating though

Your turn

It rained. We played, ____.

- A. although
- B. though
- C. despite
- D. however

The noun team

despite / in spite of + noun or -ing

Despite the rain, we played.

In spite of being tired, she kept working.

the traps

Despite it rained — a clause is illegal here.

Despite of — the of belongs to in spite of alone.

Your turn: the tool check

Your turn

_____ it rained, we played. (a full clause follows)

- A. Despite
- B. In spite of
- C. Although
- D. Despite of

The sentence team

Linker	Flavour	Example
however	the standard	The test was brutal. However, everyone passed.
nevertheless	formal, slightly heroic	The hotel was expensive. Nevertheless, we stayed.
on the other hand	weighing two sides	Noodles are cheap. On the other hand, the canteen's are a crime.

Your turn: one linker per contrast

Your turn

Which is correct?

- A. Although it rained, but we played.
- B. Although it rained, we played.
- C. Despite it rained, but we played.
- D. It rained, however we played.

The two hats of while

while = contrast

I like tea, while she likes coffee.

A side-by-side difference.

while = time

While I was cooking, the phone rang.

The background camera from narrative tenses.

Say it aloud

Although I love noodles, I should eat less of them.



Despite loving noodles, I should eat less.



I love noodles. However, I should eat less.



Whereas my brother studies at midnight, I study at dawn. We meet at breakfast, both wrong.

Check yourself

- Although it rained, we played — a clause takes the clause team.
- Despite the rain, we played — a noun takes the noun team.
- It rained. However, we played — a new sentence takes the sentence team.
- I like coffee, whereas my sister likes tea — difference without surprise.