

Using linking words to show contrast

We use linking words to join ideas together when we're talking or writing. Sometimes we want to link two ideas that are different from each other (for example, one is a positive idea and one is a negative idea) or we want to link one idea to another one that is surprising or unexpected. We can use linking words like 'however', 'although' and 'despite' to do this.

Although

We can use 'although' at the beginning or in the middle of a sentence. It is used in front of a clause (a clause has at least a subject and a verb that agrees with the subject).

- Although the weather is bad, I love London.
- I love London, although the weather is bad.

Despite / in spite of

We use 'despite' or 'in spite of' before a noun or a gerund. It can also go in the middle or at the beginning of a sentence. 'Despite' and 'in spite of' mean exactly the same thing. You can choose whichever one you like! If you want to use 'despite' or 'in spite of' before a clause, you need to add 'the fact that'.

- I love London despite the bad weather.
- I love London in spite of the bad weather.
- Despite the bad weather, I love London.
- In spite of the bad weather, I love London.
- Despite the fact that the weather is bad, I love London.
- In spite of the fact that the weather is bad, I love London.
- I love London despite the fact that the weather is bad.
- I love London in spite of the fact that the weather is bad.

However

We use 'although' and 'despite / in spite of' to connect two clauses in the same sentence. On the other hand, 'however' isn't used to connect two clauses. Instead, we usually put the two ideas in two separate sentences. We put 'however' in the second sentence, and we can put it at the beginning, at the end, or after the subject.

- I love London. However, the weather is bad.
- I love London. The weather, however, is bad.
- I love London. The weather is bad, however.