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Quick and Handy Grammar Review: Complex Sentences

We have already studied *simple* sentences and *compound* sentences. Now it is time to analyze the last sentence type, *complex* sentences. A complex sentence has two clauses, one **independent** and one **dependent**. There must be at least one independent clause to make a complete sentence. A dependent clause cannot stand on its own. It must be accompanied by an independent clause. There are two possible combinations of clauses in a complex sentence.

1. Dependent + Independent
2. Independent + Dependent

Let's analyze each of them:

1. The first type of complex sentence is more common. This sentence begins with an adverb followed by the subject and verb. A comma goes in the middle of the sentence. Then there is another subject and verb. The formula is: **Adverb SV, SV.**

The first clause is **dependent**. The second clause is **independent**.

Although Henrietta eats a lot, she is very thin.

(Adv) (Subject) (Verb) , (S) (V)

[dependent clause] [independent clause]

Notice that the sentence has two clauses: the first dependent, and the second independent.

Because it was raining, Toshiko stayed home.

After Bobbie cleaned the kitchen floor, he cooked dinner.

If you get home before 10, you should call me.

Although Jim has short legs, he is a very fast runner.

Because introduces a result clause. *After* begins a time clause. *If* starts a conditional sentence. *Although* introduces contrast.

2. In the second type of complex sentence, we may switch the order of the two clauses. We may begin with an *independent* clause and end with a *dependent* clause. The formula is:

SV adverb SV.

Notice that there is no comma in the middle of this kind of sentence.

Cordelia feels very sad because she misses her friends.

(Subject)(Verb) (Adv) (S) (V)

[independent clause] [dependent clause]

We will have a party when our cousin gets out of jail.

I still love you although you are a liar.

Mark eats in expensive restaurants although he has no money.

Teresa will help you if you ask her.

Quick and Handy Grammar Review Continued: Complex Sentences for Contrast

In this unit, we use complex sentences to write about contrast. There are two common cases of contrast: unexpected situations and opposites.

1. For unexpected situations, we use three common adverbs: **although**, **though**, and **even though**, which all have the same meaning. Let's see how a sentence is constructed. We begin with a dependent clause:

Although Phyllis is rich

The connotation of the clause is *positive*: it is good to be rich. However, because the sentence begins with the word **although**, we know that something negative is coming up. The second clause is independent. It will introduce a surprise (something unexpected).

Although Phyllis is rich, *she doesn't spend a dime*.

Because Phyllis has a lot of money, you expect her to buy many things, eat out all the time, and go to shows and concerts. However, she holds onto her money, which is a surprising, unexpected thing.

2. The adverbs **while** and **whereas** are also used in contrast sentences. Note that **while** has a different meaning than when we use it in time sentences, where it means at the same time [While I was taking a shower, I sang the latest Shakira song]. In contrast, **while** and **whereas** are used for *direct opposites*. We begin with a dependent clause:

While Victor is a pessimist

This clause has a *negative* connotation. Victor has a negative view of life. In the second clause, we have to introduce an opposite idea, usually with a different person.

While Victor is a pessimist, *Maria is an optimist*.

The second clause is *positive*. Victor and Maria have opposite attitudes.

Complex sentences for contrast may also follow the other formula, starting with an independent clause:

Mara has a lot of money in the bank even though her salary is not high.

Rose loves opera whereas Hank finds it boring.

I ate everything on my plate although the food was terrible.

Despite the fact that and in spite of the fact that

These formal phrases also introduce dependent clauses. Like **although**, **though**, and **even though**, they are used in contrast sentences in which the other clause introduces a surprise or unexpected situation.

Despite the fact that it was raining hard, the game was not canceled.

You would expect the game to be canceled if it is raining hard. The fact that they played the game is a surprise.

In spite of the fact that Barcelona played a better game, they lost 1–0.

Again, it is surprising that Barcelona lost the game because they played better. Of course, in sports (and in life), the unexpected often happens.

Despite and in spite of

Don't forget that **despite** and **in spite of**, without the phrase **the fact that**, must be followed only by a noun or gerund. We won't practice them in this lesson, but here is an example:

Despite the rain, the game was not canceled. / The game was not canceled despite the rain.

Exercise 1:

Complete each sentence with an appropriate independent clause.

1. Because it is raining, ...

2. Although John lives close to school, ...

3. If you need my help, ...

4. While my brother is very tall, ...

5. When Olivia passed the nursing examination, ...

6. After I cleaned my apartment, ...

7. While Mary is always on time, her sister Josie ...

8. Although she studied all night for the examination, Rosa ...

9. While Nancy is an excellent worker, Mario ...

10. Although Paul never has much money, ...

Exercise 2:

Punctuate the following sentences.

1. While my father loves spicy food my mother hates it.

2. Although Nick runs very slowly he is an excellent defender in soccer.

3. Sal will pick up little Joey from preschool if you don't get back in time.

4. I love you because you always help me with my homework.

5. Because the weather was so bad they canceled the trip to the museum.

6. While Joe always gets high grades Lester never gets more than a C.

7. After she drove her brother to school Victoria stopped for coffee.

8. Hank is always happy while his sister Gina is often sad.

9. The teacher corrected the exams after she listened to music for an hour.

10. Patrick gets excellent grades although he never studies.

Exercise 3:*Analyze the following chart.*

Marcia, age 31	Hilda, Marcia's sister, age 26
high salary	low salary
lives in a contemporary house	lives in a very old house
lives close to work	lives far from work
very tall	short
outgoing	shy
an optimist	a realist

Write ten contrast sentences based on the information in the chart.

1. While Marcia _____.
2. While Hilda is _____.
3. While Marcia is an optimist, _____.
4. Marcia is _____ whereas Hilda is _____.
5. Marcia lives _____ while Hilda _____.
6. While Hilda is a _____.
7. While Marcia is 31 years old, _____.
8. Hilda is shy while _____.
9. Hilda earns a low salary whereas _____.
10. Marcia has an excellent job while _____.

Exercise 4:

Write five sentences comparing two of your relatives. Use “while” and “whereas.”

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Exercise 5:

Complete the sentences with something surprising or unexpected.

1. Although Han Jin weighs only 82 pounds (37 kg), _____.
2. Though it was over 100 degrees Fahrenheit (38°C), _____.
3. Even though Ms. Hanbury is a very strict professor, _____.
4. Despite the fact that Omar never studied music, _____.
5. In spite of the fact that Marta did not read the book, _____.
6. Even though Inge does not come from Russia, _____.
7. Despite the fact that Manchester United is a much better team, _____.
8. _____ in spite of the fact that it is 200 miles (322 km) away.
9. _____ despite the fact that she is relatively unknown.
10. _____ even though he was not the best worker in the company.

Exercise 6:

Error Correction. Indicate what is wrong with each sentence. Then rewrite the sentences, correcting the mistakes.

1. Although she has passed all the examinations for her degree in medicine.

2. Ashraf is thin although he doesn't eat much.

3. The course is difficult in spite of the fact that the teacher is not good.

4. Though the meeting took place in the next room, everyone was on time.

5. Greta plays well even though she studied music for 11 years.

6. In spite of the fact that it was raining, the picnic was canceled.

7. While Jill is cheap, her brother is also cheap.

8. Maya lives in a hotel whereas Barbara also lives in a hotel.

9. Kevin got a low grade in spite of the fact that he did not study.

10. Despite the fact that the road was closed due to heavy snow.

Exercise 7:

Write the missing adverbs in the blanks, and punctuate the sentences correctly.

1. _____ Nabuko lives far from Keiko she sees her every weekend.
2. Amy doesn't speak Vietnamese well _____ she lived in Hanoi for six years.
3. Ken lives in a big city _____ his brother Jeffrey lives in a small town.
4. _____ the lecture was very interesting Richard fell asleep.
5. _____ it is located right in the middle of Europe Switzerland did not participate in

World War II.
6. _____ the bag cost \$1400 dollars Carla bought it for her mother.
7. _____ Egypt has many rivers and lakes Morocco has a large desert.
8. _____ Sami is tall handsome and rich he has few friends.
9. _____ the winters are very cold people in Minnesota love to take walks in the park.
10. People still visit the old part of the city _____ the area is very dangerous.