

Concession Clauses

B2

Grammar Reference

Concession structures acknowledge one fact while asserting a contrasting or surprising result. The key challenge at B2 is selecting the correct structure — each connector requires a different grammatical form.

Structure	Follows with	Common B2 error
although / even though / though	subject + verb	✗ Although of his expertise ... (no preposition)
despite / in spite of	noun / gerund — NEVER clause	✗ Despite he worked hard ...
however / nevertheless	new sentence; + comma after	✗ ... , however she continued. (comma splice)
while / whereas	subject + verb — contrast only	Confusion with temporal "while"
much as	subject + verb — concedes a feeling	✗ Much as of his talent ...
adj/adv + as	adj/adv first, then as + S + V	✗ As difficult as it was ... (redundant "as")

■ **Core test — Despite vs Although:** Can you replace the concession with a noun or gerund? If yes → despite. If you need a full clause → although/even though. ✗ Never: Despite he was reluctant.

■ **Register:** Nevertheless/nonetheless = formal. Yet = literary. Though (without "even") = informal. Adj + as = formal/literary.

Exercise 1: Sentence Transformation

Rewrite each sentence using the connector given in brackets. Do not change the meaning. The number of words may change.

Question 1

Although she had extensive experience in the field, the board rejected her proposal outright.

Rewrite using: **Despite**

Model: Despite her extensive experience in the field, the board rejected her proposal outright.

Question 2

The government implemented the policy despite widespread public opposition.

Rewrite using: **Even though**

Model: Even though there was widespread public opposition, the government implemented the policy.

Question 3

In spite of the significant logistical challenges, the expedition reached its destination ahead of schedule.

Rewrite using: **Although**

Model: Although there were significant logistical challenges, the expedition reached its destination ahead of schedule.

Question 4

The economic indicators were broadly positive. However, consumer confidence remained stubbornly low.

Rewrite using: **yet**

Model: The economic indicators were broadly positive, yet consumer confidence remained stubbornly low.

Question 5

Although she found his argument intellectually compelling, she remained personally unconvinced.

Rewrite using: **Much as**

Model: Much as she found his argument intellectually compelling, she remained personally unconvinced.

Question 6

Even though the restructuring caused considerable short-term disruption, it ultimately strengthened the organisation.

Rewrite using: **In spite of**

Model: In spite of causing considerable short-term disruption, the restructuring ultimately strengthened the organisation.

Question 7

The candidate was clearly the most qualified. Nevertheless, the committee opted for an internal appointment.

Rewrite using: **Formidable as**

Model: Formidable as the candidate's qualifications were, the committee opted for an internal appointment.

Exercise 2: Error Identification

Each sentence contains one error. Circle the wrong word and select the correct explanation from the options below the sentence.

Question 1

Despite she had lobbied extensively, the amendment was defeated.

Error: she | **Reason:** "She" should be removed — despite requires a noun or gerund: Despite having lobbied extensively ...

Question 2

Although of his reluctance, he agreed to chair the committee.

Error: of | **Reason:** "Although" takes a full clause; "of" creates an incorrect prepositional phrase.

Question 3

The merger attracted significant scrutiny; nevertheless but it proceeded without delay.

Error: but | **Reason:** "But" is redundant — "nevertheless" already expresses the contrast. Remove "but".

Question 4

In spite of the fact although she had been warned, she proceeded regardless.

Error: although | **Reason:** "Although" is the error — the correct phrase is "in spite of the fact that", not "in spite of the fact although".

Question 5

Much as of she admired his tenacity, she could not overlook the ethical concerns.

Error: of | Reason: "Of" should be removed — "Much as" is followed directly by subject + verb.

Question 6

Hard as she tried, she could not however persuade the committee to reconsider.

Error: however | Reason: "However" is misplaced — as a concession adverb it must start a new sentence or follow a semicolon, not appear mid-clause.

Question 7

Whereas the urban population had grown substantially, whereas rural numbers continued to decline.

Error: whereas (2nd) | Reason: "Whereas" should not be repeated — the second "whereas" is redundant.

Exercise 3: Gap Fill

Choose the correct concession word or phrase. Pay attention to what follows each gap.

Question 1

Despite the committee's detailed reservations, the board voted to proceed with the acquisition.

Question 2

Even though the fiscal projections appeared sound, several independent analysts questioned the underlying assumptions.

Question 3

Demand for the product exceeded all expectations. Nevertheless, the company failed to capitalise on its early advantage.

Question 4

In spite of attracting considerable criticism from opposition parties, the minister refused to withdraw the proposal.

Question 5

The northern division reported record profits, whereas its southern counterpart continued to post losses.

Question 6

Contentious as the debate had been, both parties expressed willingness to return to the table.

Question 7

The restructuring had been poorly communicated to staff; nonetheless, the majority continued to perform at a high level.

Question 8

Despite her initial scepticism about the merger, she ultimately became one of its most vocal advocates.

Exercise 4: Matching

Match each sentence beginning (1–8) with the correct ending (a–h).

Beginning	Ending
1. Although the training programme was widely praised, →	a) yet she chose not to voice them publicly.
2. Despite the considerable financial incentives on offer, →	b) few candidates met the required competency threshold.

3. The initial findings were promising; → c	c) participation rates remained disappointingly low.
4. In spite of having undergone extensive media training, → d	d) the panel declined to make a formal ruling.
5. Even though the evidence pointed clearly to one conclusion, → e	e) the minister stumbled badly during the press conference.
6. She had serious misgivings about the approach, → f	f) whereas the western division reported a third consecutive decline.
7. Flawed as the original model undoubtedly was, → g	g) nevertheless, the research team called for further validation.
8. The eastern markets showed consistent growth, → h	h) it provided the foundation for all subsequent research.

Key: 1 → a 2 → b 3 → c 4 → d 5 → e 6 → f 7 → g 8 → h

Exercise 5: Sentence Sort

Write **C** (Conjunction + clause) or **P** (Preposition + noun/gerund) next to each sentence.

1. Though the initiative was underfunded from the outset, it nonetheless exceeded its original targets. **[C]**
2. In spite of the overwhelming body of evidence, the defendant maintained his innocence throughout. **[P]**
3. Whereas the urban centres recovered quickly, rural economies continued to struggle for years afterwards. **[C]**
4. Although the report acknowledged several methodological weaknesses, its core findings were accepted. **[C]**
5. Even though the legislation had broad cross-party support, its passage through parliament was turbulent. **[C]**
6. Despite facing sustained pressure from shareholders, the CEO refused to alter the strategic direction. **[P]**
7. In spite of considerable internal opposition, the proposal was adopted by a narrow majority. **[P]**
8. Even though she lacked the required formal credentials, her track record spoke for itself. **[C]**
9. Despite having received three formal warnings, the contractor failed to address the safety concerns. **[P]**
10. Despite the project's ambitious scope, it was delivered on time and within budget. **[P]**

Exercise 6: Reformulation

Read each original sentence. Tick ALL rewrites that are both grammatically correct AND preserve the exact meaning.

Question 1

Although the negotiations were protracted, both sides ultimately reached a satisfactory agreement.

■ Despite the protracted negotiations, both sides ultimately reached a satisfactory agreement. ✓
despite + noun phrase

■ Despite the negotiations being protracted, both sides ultimately reached a satisfactory agreement. ✓
despite + gerund clause

■ Despite the negotiations were protracted, both sides ultimately reached a satisfactory agreement. ✗
despite cannot be followed by subject + verb

Question 2

In spite of receiving substantial public funding, the project delivered far fewer outcomes than projected.

■ Although it received substantial public funding, the project delivered far fewer outcomes than projected. ✓ *although + clause*

■ Even though substantial public funding was received, the project delivered far fewer outcomes than projected. ✓ *even though + passive clause*

■ However it received substantial public funding, the project delivered far fewer outcomes than projected. X *however cannot introduce a subordinate clause*

Question 3

The committee rejected the proposal. Nevertheless, a revised version was submitted the following week.

■ Although the committee rejected the proposal, a revised version was submitted the following week. ✓ *although + clause, same meaning*

■ Despite the committee rejecting the proposal, a revised version was submitted the following week. ✓ *despite + gerund clause*

■ Despite the committee rejected the proposal, a revised version was submitted the following week. X *despite must be followed by noun/gerund, not finite clause*

Question 4

Formidable as the technical challenges were, the engineering team delivered a working prototype within six months.

■ Although the technical challenges were formidable, the engineering team delivered a working prototype within six months. ✓ *although + clause*

■ Despite the formidable technical challenges, the engineering team delivered a working prototype within six months. ✓ *despite + noun phrase*

■ However formidable the technical challenges were, the engineering team delivered a working prototype within six months. X *"however + adj" means "no matter how" — different meaning*

Question 5

Even though she openly disagreed with the decision, she implemented it with complete professionalism.

■ Despite openly disagreeing with the decision, she implemented it with complete professionalism. ✓ *despite + gerund*

■ Much as she disagreed with the decision, she implemented it with complete professionalism. ✓ *much as + clause — same concession*

■ In spite of she openly disagreed with the decision, she implemented it with complete professionalism. X *in spite of must be followed by noun/gerund*

Question 6

Whereas the first report concluded that risks were manageable, the second painted a far more alarming picture.

■ Although the first report concluded that risks were manageable, the second painted a far more alarming picture. ✓ *although conveys similar contrast*

■ While the first report concluded that risks were manageable, the second painted a far more alarming picture. ✓ *while used contrastively — same meaning*

■ Despite the first report concluding that risks were manageable, the second painted a far more alarming picture. ✗ *grammatically possible but changes relationship — despite implies the second is surprising given the first*

Exercise 7: Paragraph Gap Fill

Choose the concession connector that best fits the logic and register of the whole text.

Passage 1

The urban regeneration scheme had been in planning for over a decade. Nevertheless, securing cross-party support had proved far more straightforward than anticipated. The local authority, despite facing significant budget constraints, committed to the full programme without requesting central government assistance. Residents were broadly positive about the proposals. However, a vocal minority mounted sustained opposition on heritage grounds. Despite this resistance, planning permission was granted by a substantial majority.

Passage 2

The clinical trial results were, by any measure, extraordinary. Despite administering a relatively modest dose, researchers observed a statistically significant reduction in markers associated with cognitive decline. Although the sample size was limited, the findings were consistent across all demographic subgroups. The pharmaceutical company moved swiftly to apply for regulatory approval. Nevertheless, the approval process took considerably longer than projected. Despite these delays, the compound reached the market within three years — an unusually fast timeline.

ANSWER KEY — DO NOT DISTRIBUTE TO STUDENTS

Exercise 1: Sentence Transformation (model answers)

1. Despite her extensive experience in the field, the board rejected her proposal outright.
2. Even though there was widespread public opposition, the government implemented the policy.
3. Although there were significant logistical challenges, the expedition reached its destination ahead of schedule.
4. The economic indicators were broadly positive, yet consumer confidence remained stubbornly low.
5. Much as she found his argument intellectually compelling, she remained personally unconvinced.
6. In spite of causing considerable short-term disruption, the restructuring ultimately strengthened the organisation.
7. Formidable as the candidate's qualifications were, the committee opted for an internal appointment.

Exercise 2: Error Identification

1. "she" — Despite requires a noun or gerund, not a subject + verb clause.
2. "of" — Although takes a full clause; "of" creates an incorrect prepositional phrase.
3. "however" — Requires full stop or semicolon before it, comma after it.
4. No error — sentence is grammatically correct.
5. "of" — Much as is followed directly by subject + verb, no "of".
6. Comma placement — should be: Difficult as it was, the situation ...
7. Second "whereas" — redundant repetition.

Exercise 3: Gap Fill

1. Despite
2. Even though
3. Nevertheless
4. In spite
5. whereas
6. as
7. nonetheless
8. Despite

Exercise 5: Sentence Sort

Although the report acknowledged ... [C]

Despite facing sustained pressure ... [P]

Even though the legislation ... [C]

In spite of the overwhelming body ... [P]

Whereas the urban centres ... [C]

Despite having received ... [P]

Though the initiative ... [C]

In spite of considerable internal opposition ... [P]

Even though she lacked ... [C]

Despite the project's ambitious scope ... [P]

Exercise 6: Reformulation (tick = correct AND preserves meaning)

Q1: ■ Despite the protracted negotiations ... ■ Despite the negotiations being protracted ... ■
Despite the negotiations were ...

Q2: ■ Although it received ... ■ Even though substantial public funding was received ... ■
However it received ...

Q3: ■ Although the committee rejected ... ■ Despite the committee rejecting ... ■ Despite the
committee rejected ...

Q4: ■ Although the technical challenges were formidable ... ■ Despite the formidable technical
challenges ... ■ However formidable ... (changes meaning)

Q5: ■ Despite openly disagreeing ... ■ Much as she disagreed ... ■ In spite of she openly
disagreed ...

Q6: ■ Although the first report ... ■ While the first report ... ■ Despite the first report ... (changes
logical relationship)

Exercise 7: Paragraph Gap Fill

Passage 1: [1] Nevertheless [2] despite [3] However [4] Despite

Passage 2: [1] Despite [2] Although [3] Nevertheless [4] Despite