

# WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN...?

VERSION FOR SPANISH, PORTUGUESE, ITALIAN AND  
FRENCH NATIVE SPEAKERS

100 LESSONS

THE MOST INCORRECTLY USED  
WORDS IN ENGLISH

Dear English Learners,

Welcome to a sample of the book “What’s the Difference Between...?” My goal with this book is to help you understand the difference between complicated words in English that students often misunderstand and get confused about, such as “either vs. neither”, “in time vs. on time”, and “make vs. do”.

In this sample, you can find the following parts:

- The table of contents pages, which describe the contents of the book
- 2 sample lessons: “Even vs. Even though vs. Even if” and “Usually do vs. Used to do vs. Be used to doing”

Each lesson has exercises to test your knowledge of the lessons with answers included, as well as additional exercises to practice with.

I hope you enjoy the book and feel free to contact me for any questions!

Sincerely,

Blake Howe  
Accelerate English

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# Even/Even though/Even if

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## Common Mistakes

- *“Even if I’m sick, I still go to school.”*
- *“Even if though I studied hard last night for the test today, I failed it.”*

## Even

The word “even” is used to emphasize that you are going to say something surprising or unexpected. One common mistake related to “even” is that students think it’s used alone to connect two clauses. However, because “even” is an adverb, and not a conjunction, it cannot connect two clauses together by itself. The word “even” alone can describe only one clause. If you want to use it to describe the relationship between two clauses, you need a conjunction with it, such as “if” (“even if”) or “though” (“even though”).

In the examples below, the adverb “even” is being used alone to describe only one clause. A clause is a subject (noun) and a base form verb. The clauses are underlined:

- *All my classmates came to our class party. Even my teacher came! – “my teacher” is surprising information*
- *I passed all parts of my test. I even passed the listening test. – I’m not good at listening, so this was surprising*
- *She knows a lot of languages. She even knows how to speak Chinese. – her Chinese ability is surprising*

**Common Use:** telling a surprising fact (with only one clause or noun): *“even my grandparents were dancing.”*

## Even Though

It’s important to know that “though” is a similar word to “but”, because both “but” and “though” connect two clauses that are contrasting or opposites. However, “though” can be at the beginning of the two clauses that it connects, while “but” can only be in the middle of the two clauses. Instead of putting “but” in the middle of two clauses, we can put “though” at the beginning:

- *We played better than the other team, but we lost the game.  
Though we played better than the other team, we lost the game.*
- *I like science fiction movies, but I didn’t like Lord of the Rings.  
Though I like science fiction movies, I didn’t like Lord of the Rings.*

You can see from the two examples above, “though” is being used to connect two clauses, but it’s used at the beginning. In both examples, the two clauses are contrasting, or opposite: “playing better” is good, but “losing” is bad, and “liking science-fiction movies” is positive, but “didn’t like Lord of the Rings” is negative.

When you combine “even” and “though” you can connect two clauses (because of “though”) and emphasize that the relationship between the two clauses is very surprising or unexpected (because of “even”).

The subject and verb of each clause below are underlined to show you that there are two clauses being connected by “even though”:

- *Even though we live together, we never see each other. – the clauses “live together” and “never see each other” is a contrast and a surprising relationship because you expect to see the people who you live with*
- *Even though I have many friends, I feel lonely. – the clauses “I have many friends” and “I feel lonely” are contrasting and surprising*

The phrase “even though” can be put in the middle of the two clauses, but if the two events happen at different times, “even though” needs to connect to the clause that happens first in time-order.

- *The company fired her, even though she was their best employee. – the clauses “the company fired her” and “she was the best employee” are surprising opposites (“she was their best employee” happened first in time-order)*

**Common Use:** connecting a surprising result to a true situation: *“even though he had never gone ice skating before, he was really good at it.”*

### Even If

In this situation, the adverb “even” is being added to the conjunction “if”. As you know, the conjunction “if” can be used for a variety of conditional situations. You can add “even” to “if” in a conditional when the two clauses in the conditional have a surprising or unexpected relationship:

- *If I won the lottery, I would quit my job.* – this is a 2<sup>nd</sup> conditional for an imaginary/unexpected situation; this relationship between the two clauses is normal because people usually quit their job when they win the lottery
- *Even if I won the lottery, I would keep my job.* – this is a surprising relationship between the two clauses because keeping your job after winning the lottery is unexpected
- *She gets angry easily if she has a lot of stress.* – this is a zero conditional for basic facts and routine behaviours; the relationship between the two clauses is not surprising, because it’s logical that people get angry when they have stress
- *She is always cheerful, even if she has a lot of stress.* – this is a surprising relationship between the two clauses; being cheerful when you have a lot of stress is unexpected and surprising

You have to be careful about the difference between “even if” and “even though” because “even if” is related to conditionals, which are usually more hypothetical situations. However, on the other hand, “even though” is used with confirmed true situations in the same way as “but”. Think about the difference between these two sentences below and how a mistake could cause problems in your communication:

- a) *Even if I lied to you...* – this is a 2<sup>nd</sup> conditional; it’s only imagining lying to you in the future (it’s not a real situation)
- b) *Even though I lied to you...* – this is saying that I already lied to you; it has the same meaning as *“I lied to you, but...”*

In the first example above, you are creating an imaginary hypothetical situation like *“If people had wings”, “If dogs could talk”* or *“If I went to jail”*. 2<sup>nd</sup> conditionals can imagine things that are unlikely or impossible.

In the second example above, there is no “if” which means it is not a conditional. It is describing a real confirmed situation. It is like saying: *“people have wings, but...”, “dogs can talk, but...”, “I went to jail, but...”*.

It’s important to recognize that factual, confirmed situations should use “though”, while hypothetical or possible situations should use “if”:

- *Even though the moon is very far away, humans have been there.* – it is confirmed that the moon is very far
- *Even if I become rich, I won’t spend most of my money.* – becoming rich is a possibility but not a confirmed truth

**Common Use:** emphasizing a surprising result in a hypothetical or imaginary situation: *“even if I was married, I wouldn’t want to have kids.”* (I’m not married in this case)

**To learn more about conjunctions, see Lesson #21 in “Grammar Essentials”**

### Key Points

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- Use “even” to emphasize something that is surprising or unexpected
- Use only “even” with one clause but not as a conjunction to connect two clauses
- Use “even if” and “even though” to connect two clauses that have an unusual or surprising relationship
- Use “even if” to make a conditional
- Use “even though” for real confirmed situations like “but”, except “even though” can be at the beginning of the two clauses and “even though” emphasizes a contrast more strongly than “but”

### Choose the Correct Answer

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1. (*Even/Even if/Even though*) he’s 60 years old, he still runs marathons.
2. (*Even/Even if/Even though*) I could find out when I will die, I wouldn’t want to know.

3. (*Even/Even if/Even though*) I reminded her to take her medicine five times, she still forgot.
4. I never hug any of my family members, (*even/even if/even though*) my mother.
5. You can't miss the test next week. You have to write it (*even/even if/even though*) you get sick.
6. When I was traveling, I missed everything about my country, (*even/even if/even though*) the cold weather.

### What's the Difference?

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- a) Even though you'll fail the final exam, you won't fail the course.
  - b) Even if you fail the final exam, you won't fail the course.
- a) Even though you are vegetarian, you can eat this burger, because it's not real meat.
  - b) Even if you are vegetarian, you can eat this burger, because it's not real meat.
  - c) People love our burger, even vegetarians! Because it's not real meat.

### Answers

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Choose the Correct Word

1. Even though
2. Even if
3. Even though
4. Even
5. Even if
6. Even

What's the Difference?

- a) this means "you will fail the final exam", so there is no chance to pass it (teachers would never say this)
  - b) this means you might pass the exam, or you might fail it (this one is the one that teachers would actually say)
- a) I am saying that I know you are a vegetarian, but you can eat it
  - b) I am saying that you might be a vegetarian or you might not be, but you can eat it regardless
  - c) I'm saying that it is surprising that *vegetarians* like this burger (the emphasis is on the noun "vegetarians")

### Additional Practice

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1. Connect the following clauses with "even though" or "even if" and then match it with the appropriate ending:
  - a)
    - I could read your mind
    - Marathons are long and physically challenging
    - I didn't have to work again in my life
    - McDonalds had only healthy food
    - Canada is a big country in size
    - Facebook is very popular
    - Christmas is a Christian holiday
    - My car could drive itself
  - b)
    - I would still want to because I would get bored
    - People from different religions celebrate it
    - I wouldn't want to do it
    - It has only 35 million people
    - I want to try one
    - I don't use it

- I would still want to drive
- I wouldn't eat there

ex. *"Even if I could read your mind, I wouldn't want to do it."* (this is imaginary and not possible)

2. What wouldn't you change about your life, even if you won the lottery?

ex. *"Even if I won the lottery, I wouldn't move to a new house. I like my current house."*

3. Which superpower wouldn't you want, even if you could get it?
4. Which sport wouldn't you go to watch, even if you got tickets for free?
5. Which product would you like to buy, even though it's expensive?
6. What is a goal that would like to achieve, even though it's hard?
7. What is a food that you have tried, even though it was strange?



# Usually do/Used to do/Be used to doing

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## Common Mistakes

- *"People in my country ~~use to~~ usually shake hands when they meet."*
- *"I don't mind doing presentations. I'm used to ~~speak~~ speaking in front of people, so I won't be nervous."*

## Usually do

The word "usually" is an adverb that describes routine actions or behaviours that are normal and common. It is connected to a base form verb, either present simple: *"Nowadays, I usually eat cereal for breakfast"* or past simple: *"In high school, I usually ate cereal for breakfast"*.

Use "usually" when you want to describe what your regular routine is:

- *I usually go to the gym on the weekend.* – this is part of my normal routine behaviour
- *She usually comes to our coffee shop around 7:30 in the morning.* – this is part of her regular routine
- *The trains usually leave on time.* – this is a common situation

**Common Use:** describing routine behaviours: *"I usually walk to work."*

## Used to do

The expression "used to do" tells us that something was true in the past but is not true anymore. When the verb "use" connects with an infinitive verb ("to do"), it can *only* be in the past tense ("used") because this expression only describes the past.

The combination of "use" with an infinitive verb *cannot* describe the present. If you want to describe a common situation in the present, use the adverb "usually", and if you want to describe something in the past that isn't true now, "used" is possible:

- *I ~~use to~~ usually arrive at my office at 8 in the morning.* – this is still true now
- *I used to arrive at my office at 8 in the morning, but now I arrive at 9.* – arriving at 8 is not true anymore

As mentioned earlier, the verb "use" can be changed to past tense ("used") to talk about the past. We connect this past tense verb with another verb in the infinitive form ("to do"). The grammar form is the same as when we connect infinitive verbs to verbs like "want", "decide" and "plan":

- *I wanted to stay home but I went.*                      *Did you want to....?*
- *I decided to leave early.*                                      *Did you decide to...?*
- *I planned to meet my friends yesterday.*                      *Did you plan to....?*
- *I used to work in Colombia (but I don't now).*                      *Did you use to....?*

Note that the present form ("use") appears in the question above (*"Did you use to?"*) because the past tense verb "did" is first, and it establishes the whole question as a past simple question.

- *I used to watch cartoons every morning.* – when I was a child
- *She used to live with her parents.* – but she lives alone now
- *He used to be shy.* – but now he's very confident

**Common Use:** remembering the past and telling stories about routine past behaviours: *"my brother and I used to play soccer in this field when we were kids."*

### Be Used to doing

Although “be used to doing” looks very similar to “used to do”, there are differences in the grammar and the meaning of these two phrases. The difference is related to the words “used” and “to”.

In the expression below, the word “used” is a past participle adjective, and it relates to a feeling. It is similar to the adjective “familiar”, which is also a feeling:

- *She is familiar with it. → She is used to it.*

The word “used” always has “d” on the end, because past participle adjectives only have one form. You can change the tense of the “be” verb, but “used” doesn’t change:

- *I am used to it. → I was used to it.*

We use “be” with “used” because we use “be” with past participle adjectives to describe the subject:

- *I am tired. → I am used to it.*

Use “be” in questions because you are asking about a past participle adjective:

- *Are you bored? → Are you used to it?*

We can use “get” with “used” to describe a change in the subject from not having the adjective state to having the adjective state:

- *I am getting sick. / I got sick. → I am getting used to it. / I got used to it.*

The word “to” in “be used to” is a preposition, like “go to school”, not part of an infinitive verb. When you connect a verb word to a preposition, it must be in gerund (-ing) form. Therefore, if you use a verb with “be used to”, it needs to be a gerund form because of the preposition “to”:

- *I am tired of waiting. → I am used to waking up early.*

When you make a past participle or adjective negative, you add “not” to the word, so the same is true with the adjective “used”. If you’ve never done something before, you can say: “I’m not used to it” because it’s unfamiliar to you:

- *I’m not angry. → I am not used to it.*

The examples below combine these points into examples:

- *When I arrived here, I was not used to wearing winter clothes, but I’m getting used to it.* – my country doesn’t have winter, so when I arrived here, I was not familiar with winter clothes but I’m becoming more familiar with them
- *I’m not used to using chopsticks. I’m used to using a fork and knife.* – using a fork and knife are familiar to me but chopsticks are not
- *Driving on the left side of the road in the U.K. was difficult because I’m used to driving on the right side.* – driving on the right side is comfortable/familiar, but not the left side

**Common Use:** telling people why you are not comfortable with something: “I’m not used to it.”

You can use both “usually” and “be used to” to describe something in present form, but the message is different. Only use “be used to” when you want to emphasize your feeling toward something. If your goal is to only express common situations or routine actions, use “usually”.

For example, if you want to tell someone that you go to the gym after work on most days, just say “I usually go to the gym after work”, because you don’t need to describe this fact with any feeling, so “be used to” is not appropriate in this case.

- *I usually cook my own dinner.* – this focuses on the fact that this is routine or common for me
- *I am used to cooking my own dinner.* – this focuses on the fact that cooking my own dinner is not uncomfortable for me

**To learn more about using prepositions like “to” with gerunds, read Lesson #17 “Grammar Essentials” and to learn more about verbs that connect with infinitive verbs, read Lesson #27 in “Grammar Essentials”**

### Key Points

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- Use “used to (do)” to describe things that were true in the past and not anymore
- Use “usually do” for common situations and behaviours
- Use “be used to doing” to emphasize familiarity with something

### Choose the Correct Answer

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1. I (*used to/usually*) be bad at managing my money, but now I'm saving it.
2. I (*am used to/usually*) have a cup of coffee in the morning before I go to work.
3. I (*used to/am used to*) work for a big telecommunications company, but I quit last year.
4. I (*usually/am used to*) wearing a uniform because every job that I have had required me to wear one.
5. Employees (*usually/are used to*) arrive around 8am and leave around 5pm.
6. He (*didn't used to/isn't used to*) humid weather so he's always uncomfortable here.
7. My grandfather (*used to/is used to*) tell me stories about his days in the war.
8. (*Did you/Are you*) used to speaking in front of people? You looked very relaxed during your presentation!
9. I got drunk easily. I (*didn't/am not*) used to drinking alcohol.
10. Where do you (*usually/used to*) park your car? I (*used to park/was used to parking*) mine in the parking lot across the street but nowadays that lot is always full.

### What's the Difference?

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- a) My boss is used to making all of the difficult decisions.
  - b) My boss usually makes all of the difficult decisions.
  - c) My boss used to make all of the difficult decisions.
- a) I usually wear glasses.
  - b) I used to wear glasses.
  - c) I am used to wearing glasses.
  - d) I am not used to wearing glasses.
  - e) I am getting used to wearing glasses.
  - f) I got used to wearing glasses.

### Answers

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Choose the Correct Word

1. Used to
2. Usually
3. Used to
4. Am used to
5. Usually
6. Isn't used to
7. Used to
8. Are you
9. Am not
10. Usually, Used to park

What's the Difference?

- a) My boss is familiar with this part of the job. Making decisions is not uncomfortable for him/her.
- b) It's common/routine for my boss to make decisions
- c) My boss made the decisions in the past but not anymore
  
- a) It's common/routine for me to wear glasses
- b) I wore glasses in the past, but I don't anymore
- c) I am comfortable with wearing glasses (I've worn them for many years, so they are familiar to me)
- d) Wearing glasses is new for me so I'm not familiar with them. They're still awkward/uncomfortable
- e) Every day I am becoming more comfortable and familiar with them (but not totally yet)
- f) Originally I was not comfortable and familiar with wearing glasses, but I changed and now I am

**Additional Practice**

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1. Describe five things that you *used to* do as a child, but you don't do anymore.  
ex. *"I used to play with dolls when I was a child."*
2. Describe some common routines in your life by using "usually":  
ex. *"I usually take my dog to the dog park on Saturday morning."*
3. Explain whether or not you are familiar with doing the following activities with "be used to":
  - Using English: ex. *"I'm not used to using English every day. It's still awkward for me."*
  - Paying a tip
  - Using chopsticks
  - Eating spicy food
  - Waking up early
  - Speaking in front of people
  - Using public transportation in my city