

# English Grammar – Despite

The word “**despite**” (Portuguese: “*apesar de*”) is a conjunction with an interesting grammatical construct. The phrase “**in spite of**” is an informal synonym. Usually, the word “despite” is followed by a noun, but if it is followed by a verb, the verb must be in the gerund form. The subject is used in the corresponding phrase. Here are some examples:

## 1. With a noun

- **Despite** heavy rain, they continued to play football.
- **Despite** his fear of heights, he climbed to the top of the mountain.
- They arrived on time **despite** the terrible traffic.
- The movie was enjoyable **despite** the bad reviews.
- **Despite** a leg injury, she completed the race.
- He smiled **despite** the pain.
- **Despite** their differences, they remained good friends.
- **Despite** very cold weather, she refused to wear a jacket.

## 2. With a verb

- **Despite** feeling exhausted, she will go to work.
- He stayed calm **despite** facing a difficult situation.
- **Despite** being late, they let him enter the meeting.
- She won the match **despite** her leg being broken.
- **Despite** trying his best, he couldn't solve the puzzle.
- They enjoyed their trip **despite** experiencing bad weather.
- **Despite** knowing the risks, they will continue the journey.
- **Despite** having drunk two glasses of beer, he decided to drive home.

## 3. With a negative verb

- She managed to pass the exam **despite** not studying a lot.
- **Despite** not living far from his parents, he rarely visits them.
- **Despite** not speaking French, he will go to France to look for work.
- She managed to stay positive **despite** not feeling well.
- **Despite** not sleeping very well, he remained energetic the whole day.
- **Despite** not knowing the language, he managed to communicate with the locals.
- He was hired **despite** not meeting all the job requirements.
- They climbed the mountain **despite** not checking the weather forecast.

**Exercise 1.** Complete the following sentences using an appropriate verb. Consider the use of “not” if necessary.

1. Despite \_\_\_\_\_ regularly, he played the piano beautifully.
2. Despite \_\_\_\_\_, she went to work.
3. She looked confident despite \_\_\_\_\_ the answer.
4. They continued to laugh despite \_\_\_\_\_ a difficult situation.
5. Despite \_\_\_\_\_ old, he remained in good shape.
6. They went on a picnic despite \_\_\_\_\_ good weather.
7. He finished the race despite \_\_\_\_\_ pain in his leg.
8. Despite \_\_\_\_\_ interested in sports, he enjoyed the basketball game.

*(suggested answers are given on the next page)*

If you want or need to specify the subject in the “despite” clause, you can use the construction “**despite the fact that**” (PT: “*apesar do fato de*”). For example:

- **Despite the fact that** it was raining, they continued their hike.
- She won the competition **despite the fact that** she had little experience.
- **Despite the fact that** he was exhausted, he worked until 10pm.
- They enjoyed their trip **despite the fact that** their flight was delayed.
- **Despite the fact that** she studied hard, she didn’t pass the exam.
- He stayed calm **despite the fact that** everyone else was panicking.
- **Despite the fact that** they were lost, they didn’t ask for directions.
- She smiled **despite the fact that** she was feeling sad.

**Exercise 2.** Convert the above examples to the form “despite” + gerund. Note that three of them cannot be converted, because the implicit subject of the “despite” clause is not the same as the subject of the other clause.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

### Suggested answers to Exercise 1:

1. not practising
2. feeling sick / not feeling well
3. not knowing
4. facing
5. getting / feeling
6. not having / not experiencing
7. suffering from / having / feeling
8. not being

### Answers to Exercise 2:

1. She won the competition **despite having** little experience.
2. **Despite being** exhausted, he worked until 10pm.
3. **Despite studying** hard, she didn't pass the exam.
4. **Despite being** lost, they didn't ask for directions.
5. She smiled **despite feeling** sad.