

## Catch Word #207 – Ending a sentence with though

### Episode description

It might only be one little word, but putting though at the end of a sentence can make a big difference. Join Andrew and Jeremy as they run through the many ways of ending a sentence with though.

### Fun fact

In this episode, our hosts talk about expressions that are interchangeable. In English, strangely, the words flammable and inflammable mean the same thing!

### Expressions included in the study guide

- Though
- I'm not sure, though
- Thanks, though
- Short but sweet
- To grab [food/drink]
- Polished



## Transcript

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Note: The words and expressions that appear in **bold text** within the transcript are discussed in more detail in the Detailed Explanations section that follows the transcript.

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Andrew: You're listening to the Culips English podcast. To download the study guide for this episode, which includes the transcript, detailed vocabulary explanations, real-world examples, and a quiz, visit our website, Culips.com, C-U-L-I-P-S.com.

Hello, everybody. My name is Andrew.

Jeremy: And I'm Jeremy.

Andrew: And you're listening to Culips. Today we're going to do a Catch Word episode, which is the series where we teach all of our listeners how to use really important or interesting vocabulary, idioms, phrasal verbs, these sorts of things. And today we are going to explain a very tricky little word.

Jeremy: Yeah.

Andrew: Several of our listeners requested this topic, so I thought we should talk about it. Now we're going to talk about how to use the word **though**, **though** T-H-O-U-G-H, **though**. But only at the end of a sentence, OK? How to use **though** at the end of a sentence. And this is something native speakers do all the time.

Jeremy: Yup.

Andrew: It's very natural, and so I think it's important for our listeners to know how to be able to use this in their own English and also to be able to understand what it means when they hear other native speakers do this.

Jeremy: Yeah, very important.

Andrew: So just before we get into it, I want to remind everybody that there is a study guide for this episode. It's available for download on our website, Culips.com, and there's a lot of awesome stuff in there. You can find all the details and actually download some free samples of other study guides if you want, as well. So I would encourage you to visit Culips.com and download the study guide. It will make going through this lesson today much easier.

Three ways that we can use **though** at the end of a sentence.

Jeremy: All right, let's get into it.

Andrew: OK, so usage number one, when we use **though** at the end of a sentence. What does it mean, Jeremy, when you see **though** at the end of a sentence? What's happening?

Jeremy: It means what the person said is somehow contrary to what the other person said or thinks. So it's sort of like but, but very soft in a way. Less strong, not emphasized.

Andrew: Yeah. I agree. I think when we attach **though** to the end of our sentence, to the end of our thought, we're doing two things at once. First of all, we're communicating that we're sharing a fact or sharing our opinion, but we're also softening our speech, OK? So let's give an example of a sentence and then maybe we can analyze it together.

Jeremy: OK.

Andrew: Jeremy, let's say that we both went to a Mexican restaurant last night, OK? And, actually, Jeremy, you didn't like the nachos, OK? You had some nachos and you said, "Mmm those nachos were so-so" and then I respond by saying, "But the service was great, **though**." "But the service was great, **though**."

Jeremy: Yeah.

Andrew: OK? So what I'm doing here is, first, I'm sharing my opinion, right? My opinion is the service is great. And second of all, I'm kind of weakening the criticism that you made, right? I'm softening the criticism you made, "Ah, the nachos were terrible." "Yeah, but the service was great, **though**." Right? I'm kind of counterarguing your statement and weakening the impact of that statement.

Jeremy: Yeah.

Andrew: Like you said, I think it's easy to understand **though** at the end of the sentence here as meaning but, right?

Jeremy: Yeah.

Andrew: "The nachos were terrible, but the service was great" has the same meaning as, "The nachos were terrible. Oh, the service was great, **though**." Right? It's the same thing.

Jeremy: **Though** also makes it seem like you're adding on something. Like it's an afterthought. It's a subtle addition, sort of. Like in your example, you said, "Oh, but the service was great, **though**." So you were tagging on your subtle or slight difference in opinion.

- Andrew: Yeah, it's a marker that's saying my opinion is different from yours, but I don't wanna start an argument, right? It's just a soft way to share your opinion.
- Jeremy: In your example you said but also. You said, "But the service was great, **though**." If you said, "But the service was great," then my feeling is do you wanna fight? Are you arguing with me? But when you say **though**, it's softer, so I don't feel offended or, you know, attacked in any way.
- Andrew: It's a strategic word, it carries meaning, but also it can be used strategically so that you don't offend your listener.
- Jeremy: I often explain it to my students as a soft but.
- Andrew: Oh, a soft but, OK.
- Jeremy: B-U-T. One T, everyone. But if it helps you remember, **though** is like a soft but.
- Andrew: A soft but, well, yeah, that's a hard one to forget.
- Jeremy: Yup.
- Andrew: OK. I like it. Well, Jeremy, let's listen to a couple more examples with **though** in the sentence final position, carrying this meaning as a softener and as a way to share an opinion or a fact.
- Jeremy: All right.

- Friend 1: Did you see Monica's dress last night?
- Friend 2: What a disaster!
- Friend 1: I know, what was she thinking?
- Friend 2: Her hair looked great, **though**.

- Andrew: OK, Jeremy, so what was going on in this example?
- Jeremy: Two friends are talking about a woman's dress, Monica's dress, and they both agree that her dress looked terrible.
- Andrew: Yes.

Jeremy: However, when the word **though** is used at the end of a sentence, it is used to attach some extra contrary information. Contrary meaning positive, the initial reaction was negative saying, “What a disaster,” but when the word **though** was used, it added on information that was positive.

Andrew: Right, it was a way that they could soften their speech so they don’t sound overly critical, right? Maybe they felt bad about criticizing Monica’s dress like that, “Oh what a disaster, her dress, how terrible.”

Jeremy: Right.

Andrew: And then, “Oh, you know, on the other hand, her hair did look great.” Right? “Her hair did look great, **though**.” It’s this contrary information. It’s also a way to sort of dig themselves out of a hole so that they don’t sound too critical.

Jeremy: And to be honest, if you take the word **though** out of this example, it doesn’t really make sense. It’s very confusing. It seems like they didn’t like her dress and then someone says her hair looked great, it feels incomplete. It feels very strange to me, without the word **though**.

Andrew: I agree with you. We need **though** there or else this whole example falls apart.

Jeremy: Yeah, true. So should we listen to another example?

Andrew: Yeah, let’s do one more.

Friend 1: I can’t believe the Yankees lost. What’s their excuse?

Friend 2: They really blew it in the ninth, didn’t they?

Friend 1: Yeah, I mean, but still. It was a good game, **though**.

Friend 2: Totally, very entertaining.

Andrew: All right, so let’s think about this example here, the two friends are sad and upset that their beloved baseball team, the New York Yankees, lost the game. They’re upset because the Yankees were winning and then they blew it. They fell apart and lost the game in the ninth inning, in the very last inning of the game. However, they realize that the game was entertaining. They say still it was a good game, **though**. It was a good game, **though**. So, although they’re upset that their team lost, they are happy that the game was entertaining, right? So, again, here we see that contrast. The first part of the conversation, they’re complaining, they’re sad, and then when the word **though** is tagged on, it changes the mood. It’s a more optimistic, positive mood. So we have this contrast.

- Jeremy: Positive to negative. Or negative to positive. Right?
- Andrew: Exactly. So, it's softening the negative attitude that was present in the first half of the conversation and changing the mood to a more positive mood.
- Jeremy: Yes, so in this example maybe the game was still close. The Yankees were winning, they made a lot of mistakes in the ninth inning and they blew it, meaning they lost the game. But maybe only by one run or something like that. So that's why we would say it was still a good game, **though**.
- Andrew: All right, Jeremy, we should keep things going forward. So let's move on to using **though** at the end of the sentence with a slightly different meaning, OK? And sometimes when we use **though** at the end of a sentence, it carries the meaning of however. However.
- Jeremy: Yes.
- Andrew: OK? You can replace these two words and the sentence carries the exact same meaning: however and **though**.
- Jeremy: Interchange.
- Andrew: They're interchangeable in many situations. So there's not actually too much more to explain than that. It's just in the second sense of using **though** at the end of a sentence, it means however. OK? Why don't we listen to some examples, using **though** when it can be interchanged with however and carry the same meaning.
- Jeremy: All right. Let's have a listen.

Friend 1: Hey, man, what time does the movie start?

Friend 2: I think it starts at 10 but **I'm not sure, though**.

Friend 1: All right. I'll check online.

Andrew: All right. A **short but sweet** example here. Jeremy, what's going on in the example we just listened to?

Jeremy: Well, with the previous meaning it was changing something from positive to negative. In this example, it's changing something from sounding certain to a little uncertain. So it's still switching. It's still subtly changing something, but in a different way.

- Andrew: Right, so we heard the friends say, “I think it starts at 10 but **I’m not sure, though.**” What happens if he had simply said “I think it starts at 10 but I’m not sure.” If he took away the **though**, “I think it starts at 10 but I’m not sure.”
- Jeremy: That sounds essentially the same to me but, again, a little less soft.
- Andrew: Yup, yup.
- Jeremy: A little harsh maybe is a better word.
- Andrew: Again, I think the meaning is the same. “I think it starts at 10 but I’m not sure” and “I think it starts at 10 but **I’m not sure, though.**” Meaning is the same here for me, although I agree with you. When you put **though** on there, you’re softening your statement.
- Jeremy: You know, I think a way to understand this would be to imagine who we’re talking to. So if you and I are very close friends, we’ve known each other for a long time, we might just say but I’m not sure.
- Andrew: Right.
- Jeremy: But if you are an employee at the movie theatre, but your job is to sweep the floors, so you don’t know for sure when the movie starts, you might say **though** to maintain some level of professionalism, politeness because I am a costumer and you are an employee of the movie theatre. So you could say it’s a little more polite because it’s softer.
- Andrew: Right, yes. It definitely is more polite because it’s softer. And I would recommend to all of our listeners to just remember this phrase as a chunk, “**I’m not sure, though,**” “**I’m not sure, though.**” Because English native speakers use this all the time when we don’t know something. It’s just a polite way to say I don’t know, OK? I don’t know is kind of strong. **I’m not sure, though** is very polite, very soft, very natural. So I would recommend that everybody memorize that chunk “**I’m not sure, though.**”
- Jeremy: Just remember that it’s adding on something as well.
- Andrew: Yes, indeed. OK, let’s listen to one more example using **though** to mean however at the end of a sentence.
- Jeremy: OK.



Friend 1: Do you have time **to grab lunch** tomorrow?

Friend 2: Tomorrow? I'm really busy tomorrow. I'll probably have around 20 minutes in the afternoon if you'd like **to grab a quick coffee, though?**

Friend 1: Sure, that works. Sounds good.

Jeremy So in this example as well, the speaker is adding some information. It's an alternative to having lunch, right? So **though** indicates that this an alternative option to having lunch.

Andrew: So, again, like in all of the examples we've seen so far, there's some contrast, right? There's a contrast between having lunch and having coffee. I can't have lunch, I'm too busy, but, I can have coffee. OK? This would be a kind of beginner-level sentence; I think, right? I can't have lunch but I can have coffee. And a more advanced, a more **polished**, more nuanced way to express the exact same idea would be to say I can't have lunch, I do have time for coffee, **though**, to use **though** this way. And so we have this contrast again, here communicated with the word **though**.

All right, Jeremy, we have one more way that we can use **though** at the end of a sentence. And this is with the set expression—another chunk that everybody should add to their vocabulary is the simple phrase, **thanks, though; thanks, though**.

Jeremy: Yeah, that's a good one to know.

Andrew: Yes, and so what does it mean, **thanks, though?**

Jeremy: Well, the **though** here indicates that there is some flipping. Something contrary but soft. Softly contrary, you could say. So if I was walking down the street and I overheard someone say **thanks, though**, I would immediately know that that person was rejecting something and trying to be nice about it.

Andrew: Exactly, exactly. We can say **thanks, though** whenever somebody wants to offer you something, but you can't accept it. Or you can't do something but you don't wanna appear too rude. You know, you're rejecting somebody's offer, but you don't wanna hurt their feelings, you say, oh, **thanks, though; thanks, though**. Another common way that we express this idea is with the phrase thanks anyway. Thanks anyway. Same thing, right?

Jeremy: Yeah, exactly, the same meaning in this sense. But **though** and anyway are not always interchangeable.



Andrew: Yes, don't fall into that trap. It's really only in these two, **thanks, though**, thanks anyway expressions that they mean the same thing.

Jeremy: Yeah, agreed.

Andrew: All right, let's listen to a couple of examples using **thanks, though**.

Friend 1: Hey, dude, let's **grab a beer** after work.

Friend 2: Love to, but I got other plans tonight.

Friend 1: You sure? I'm buying.

Friend 2: I'm sure. **Thanks, though**.

Andrew: OK, Jeremy. Two friends in this example are talking about having a pint after work, and one friend says that he can't join, he can't go because he's got other plans. And so the friend really puts on the peer pressure, tries to twist his arm into coming out for a drink and says I'm buying, it's on me, I'm buying.

Jeremy: It's my treat.

Andrew: It's my treat. He says no, I'm sure, I have other plans, **thanks, though**. **Thanks, though**, all right? So here he's saying thank you for the offer of buying me a beer, but I can't do it. I have to reject it, and so **thanks, though** here is a polite way to do that.

All right, let's listen to the final example for this episode.

Friend 1: I'm getting rid of a bunch of my old books. Wanna come by and take a look? You can take whatever you like.

Friend 2: Tempting offer, but I've already got too many books sitting on my bookshelf that I haven't read. **Thanks, though**.

Andrew: What's going on in this example Jeremy?

Jeremy: So one friend is trying to get rid of some books and is offering to let his friend take any book he likes from his dusty library in his garage.

Andrew: Yup.

Jeremy: And the other friend politely thanks him for the offer, but declines because he has too many unread books. Sounds like my real-life situation.

Andrew: Yeah, books are so easy to collect and so difficult to read sometimes.

Jeremy: After all, buying a book is much easier than reading a book.

Andrew: It's very true.

Well, Jeremy, that about wraps things up for us today. I hope you guys now understand how to use **though** at the end of a sentence. If you have any questions or comments for us, please feel free to get in touch. Our email address is [contact@Culips.com](mailto:contact@Culips.com) and we love to hear from you, so please send us a message.

Jeremy: You don't have to send an email, **though**, you can find us on Facebook and ask your question that way instead.

Andrew: Very good Jeremy, very good. We are on Facebook at [Facebook.com/CulipsPodcast](https://www.facebook.com/CulipsPodcast) and we're on Twitter as well. You can search for us there, and we have study guides, like I said earlier. So visit [Culips.com](http://Culips.com) to get the study guide for this episode if you wanna take your studies to that next level.

All right guys, we'll talk to you next time. Bye.

Jeremy: Bye, everyone.

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## Detailed Explanations

### Though Conjunction

Adding **though** at the end of a sentence is a common way to contrast with what was said before. As Jeremy mentioned in this episode, you can think of it as a softer, kinder sounding but.

Here's one more example with **though**:

Paul:	I heard you moved to a new apartment. How is it?
Bryan:	Not bad.
Paul:	Your wife was telling me it's pretty small.
Bryan:	That's right. It's smaller than the previous apartment, but really nice, <b>though</b> .
Paul:	That's good. When's the housewarming party?

## I'm not sure, though

Phrase

In this episode, Andrew suggests that listeners remember **I'm not sure, though** as a fixed phrase. **I'm not sure, though** is a friendly way of saying you don't know.

Here's one more example with **I'm not sure, though**:

Nate:	Excuse me, sir. Could you please tell me where the nearest pharmacy is?
Keith:	Sure. There's one on the corner three blocks down. Look for it on your left.
Nate:	Great, thanks. Oh, it's a bit past 9:00. Do you think it's still open?
Keith:	Maybe. <b>I'm not sure, though</b> . Sorry. For your sake, I hope it is!
Nate:	Thanks!

## Thanks, though

### Phrase

**Thanks, though** is another fixed phrase our hosts suggest listeners memorize. **Thanks, though** is used show your appreciation for having been offered something even though you did not accept the offer.

Here's one more example with **thanks, though**:

Gail:	Hey, Sarah, I'll be driving by your home after work today. Do you want a ride?
Sarah:	Actually, I was thinking of walking home today. It's a beautiful day and I need the exercise.
Gail:	OK, then. No problem.
Sarah:	<b>Thanks, though.</b>

## Short but sweet

### Phrase

**Short but sweet** is a way to describe something that is not too long but is of good value. Think of a 2-minute song you really like. You can say it is **short but sweet**.

Here are a couple more examples with **short but sweet**:

Ricardo: How was Puerto Rico?

George: Really fun. The whole family really enjoyed the resort and the towns we visited.

Ricardo: How long did you stay over there?

George: Only 4 days.

Ricardo: Only 4 days? That's way too short.

George: **Short but sweet**. We weren't disappointed.

Lara: Who was it that gave the best man's speech at your wedding?

Kayla: My husband's childhood friend, Peter.

Lara: Peter? I met him once. He seems so shy.

Kayla: He is. But he gave a lovely speech. It was **short but sweet**.

## To grab [food/drink]

Verb, informal

In one of the examples heard in this episode, friends talk about **grabbing lunch** and **grabbing a quick coffee**. **To grab [food/drink]** is an informal expression that means to have food or to have a drink. **To grab a bite** is another common variation.

Here are a couple more examples with **to grab [food/drink]**:

Jill: How long is the drive to Ottawa?  
Debra: About an hour and a half. Why?  
Jill: I'm so hungry.  
Debra: We can **grab a hamburger** on the way. There are plenty of roadside restaurants.

Carly: How was work yesterday?  
Greg: Very tiring. Hillary and I ended up doing 3 hours of overtime.  
Carly: So you worked until 9:00? Did you **grab a bite** together afterwards?  
Greg: I brought it up, but she ended up saying thanks but no thanks.



## Polished

Adjective

If something is **polished**, that means it is refined. You can have **polished** objects, such as diamonds and crystals, or **polished** concepts, like a well-developed idea or a song you created. Something can also be **polished** by cleaning it, as in the body of your car or a bowling ball.

Here are a couple more examples with **polished**:

John: How do you like the new song I wrote?

Pam: I feel the song as a whole is pretty good, but I think it could benefit from a more **polished** chorus.

John: I agree. Once we bring it to the recording studio, we'll talk it over with the producer.

Pam: Cool. Make sure you sent me a copy of the finished product.

Mary: Where's Martin today? I thought he was coming to the birthday party.

Fiona: He's running late.

Mary: Is everything all right?

Fiona: Sure. He just brought the car to the cleaner. Whenever he's driving a freshly **polished** car, he drives very slowly. He doesn't want to get it dirty.

Mary: Oh. My Tommy does the same thing.

## Quiz

**1. Which of the following is a bad usage of though?**

- a) "This song is great. It's a little long, though."
- b) "His hair is green and I like it, though."

**2. Which of the following is a bad usage of thanks, though?**

- a) "Sure. I'll meet you at 5:00. Thanks, though."
- b) "Ice cream? I love ice cream. But I can't, I'm watching my calories. Thanks, though."

**3. True or false? The expression short but sweet always has to do with something that is brief and sweet in taste.**

- a) true
- b) false

**4. Which of the following is an example of something that is NOT usually polished?**

- a) a cool beer
- b) a glass marble
- c) a singing voice
- d) a wooden table

**5. True or false? The words though and anyway are always interchangeable.**

- a) true
- b) false

## Writing or Discussions Questions

1. **Though is a tag often used in English to sound more polite. What are words in your native language that you use to sound polite?**
2. **Every language has expressions that have the same meanings. What are some interchangeable expressions you can think of in your native language?**
3. **As we heard in this episode, there's a slight difference between grabbing lunch with someone and grabbing a quick coffee. Lunch takes more time. Who are some people in your life you like to grab coffee with? What about lunch?**
4. **In this episode, we heard the expressions I'm buying, it's on me, and it's my treat. When you go out with people, who usually ends up paying the bill?**

## Quiz Answers

1.b 2.a 3.b 4.a 5.b

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