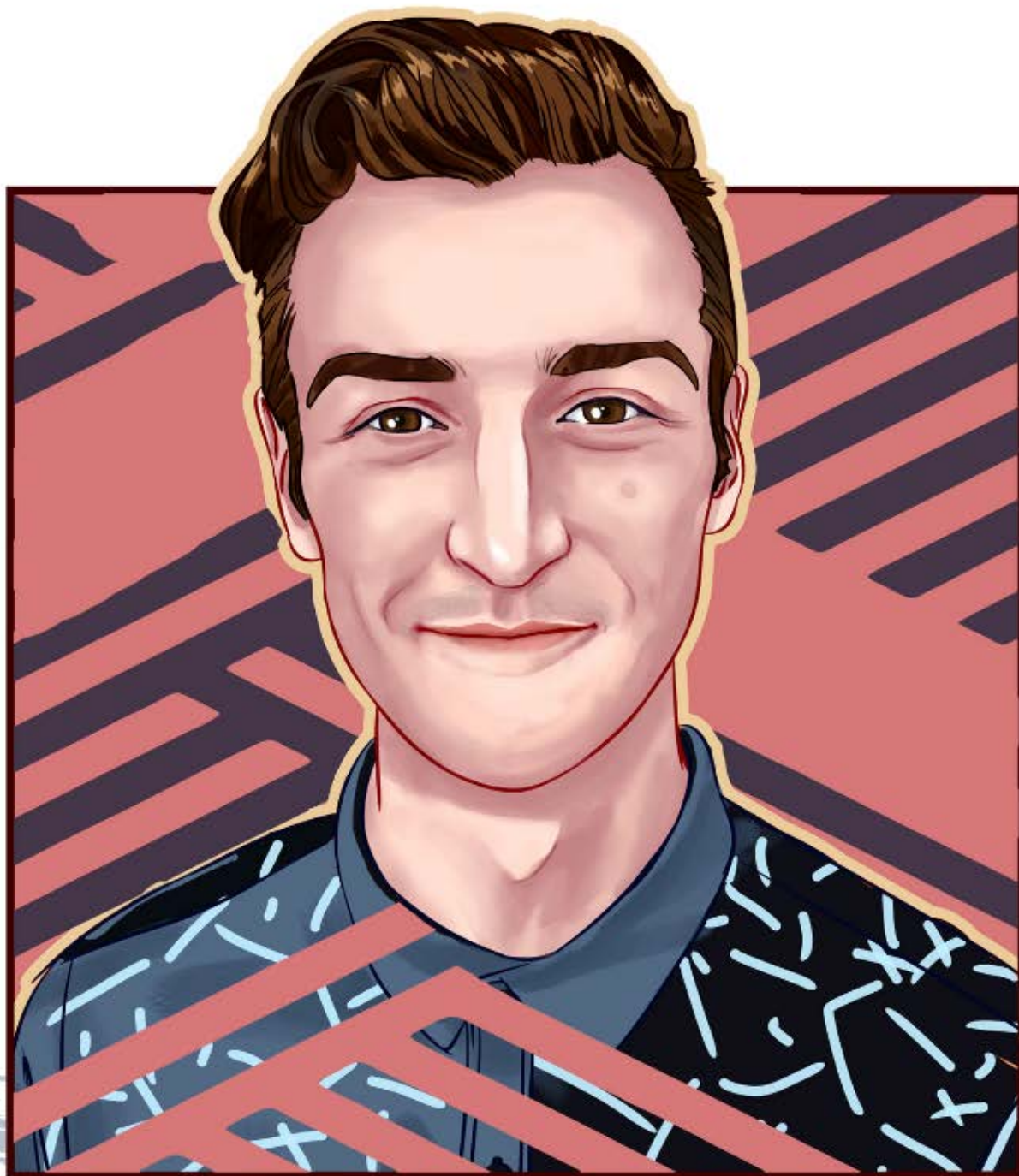


Jeremy's English Tips

Episode #26: The difference between
but, though, and although



Culips English Podcast

Transcript

Hello, everyone, this is Jeremy. And you're listening to Jeremy's English Tips, a series by the Culips English Podcast where I teach you interesting expressions or share language learning tips.

In this episode, I am going to teach you about the difference between these three words: but, though, and although. These three words technically mean the same thing, but the way that they are used is different. And they have some very subtle differences. Subtle differences are very small, hard to notice differences. So, I will do my best in this episode to explain those to you and then to give you some examples.

All right, so let's start with "but." Now, the word "but" is a word we use to negate something. "Negate" is a rather difficult word, but it is related to the word "negative." So, to negate something means to put an X on it, to cancel out that other thing, or to say the opposite. For example, "I like apples, but I don't eat them often." Notice in this example, that the word "but" is in the middle of the sentence, and it comes after a verbal pause. "I like apples - pause - but I don't eat them often." This verbal pause shows up in writing as a comma. So if you are a Culips premium member, and you are following along right now with the study guide, you will see the comma on the page there. So the word "but" we can say means "complete negation".

So one more time, if we look at the example, "I like apples, but I don't eat them often." By saying this, I am implying, "Isn't that strange? I like them, but I don't eat them. Not eating them negates the fact that I like them." Those two things do not agree. Normally, if someone likes a certain food, they will eat it often. So, in this example, by using "but" I am implying that there is something strange there. Those two things do not agree. "Isn't that strange? I like them, but I don't eat them often. If I really did like them, I would probably eat them all the time. Right? Isn't that strange?" So that's what this first example sentence is implying.

Implying, "to imply." This means that you are adding meaning to what you're saying without words. So, to imply something is to say something without words or to convey meaning without words.

Now let's move on to the next word. And that word is "though" t-h-o-u-g-h. The spelling for this one is very confusing, I know, but it is pronounced "though". The word "though", indicates partial negation. So the word "but" is complete negation. But the word "though" is partial negation. So in a way, the word "though" is sort of lessening the power of the first thing that is said.

It isn't opposing completely the first thing that was said in the beginning of the sentence. It is making it less powerful, less important.

So, let's look at an example to help this one make sense. "I like apples. *period* I don't eat them often though. I like apples. I don't eat them often though." Notice here that the word "though" is at the end of the sentence. Often it follows a verbal pause in speech and it follows a comma in writing. Not always, but quite often.

So, let's see what this sentence implies. Let's see what the nonverbal information is in this sentence. I like apples, I don't eat them often, though. This is implying, "I guess I don't like them as much as I think I do. For some reason, I don't eat them very much. Maybe they are very expensive, where I live. Or maybe they are very hard to find. For some reason, I don't eat them very much. Although I do like them."

And then finally, let's talk about "although". Now, "although" is basically the same as the word "though" but it is used at the beginning of the sentence. **Whereas**, "though" is usually used at the end. Let's look at an example, "Although I like apples, I don't eat them often." This sentence is implying, "I guess I don't like apples as much as I think I do. Otherwise, I would eat them more. For some reason, I don't eat them very often." So, "though" and "although" are pretty much the same but it's important to note that "although" sometimes sounds more formal.

Now to wrap up this episode, let's talk about one more thing. And that is how these words are used in speech. Although, "but" is usually used in the middle of a sentence, and "though" is usually used at the end and "although" is usually used at the beginning, in speech, these rules sort of break down. Let's listen to an example conversation between Person A and Person B.

Person A says, "Do you like apples?"

Person B says, "Yeah, I do."

Person A says, "Me too."

Then Person B says, "But I don't eat them very often."

Did you notice how "but" is at the beginning of the sentence here?

Here's another version for this last sentence. Person B says, "Though I don't eat them very often." Did you notice how the word "though" was used in the beginning of the sentence? And one more version here.

Person B says, “Although I don't eat them very often.” Did you notice here as well, that the word “although” is in the beginning of the sentence?

Now most of the rules can be broken, but I think that the word “although” would sound very strange going at the end of the sentence. “I don't eat them very often although.” This one sounds very strange to me and I don't think anyone would say that in speech.

Okay, that was a lot of information here. If you are a premium Culips Member, I hope that you were able to use the study guide and the transcript here to follow along, I hope that the practice exercises in the study guide were helpful for you, and if you have questions or comments, go ahead and let us know what you think on social media. Or you can email us at contact@culips.com.

Although this episode has been fun, I think it's time for me to go. But I'll be back next time in another episode. Bye, everyone.

Key Points

1. “But”, “though”, and “although” are three words that mean something very similar in English but have some subtle differences.
2. “But” indicates a complete negation and is usually used after a comma, in the middle of a sentence.
3. “Though” is usually used at the end of a sentence and indicates a partial negation.
4. “Although” is used at the beginning of the sentences and has the same meaning as “though”
5. In speech, “but” and “though” can be used at the beginning of a sentence

Key Expressions

- **Subtle differences:** Differences that are very small, insignificant, or hard to notice.
- **To wrap up:** To conclude or go about finishing a task.
- **Whereas:** A more formal version of “but.” Similar to “however.”

Writing and Discussion Questions

1. What is the difference between “but” and “though”?
2. What is the difference between “though” and “although”?
3. How do these rules break down in speech?

Study Challenges

1. Write 1 - 3 example sentences using each of “but” “though” and “although”, following the rules mentioned in this episode.
2. Ask a friend who speaks English about these words and see what they say. This will help give you more context.

Credits

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