

(1) Recently I had a student struggling with when to use UNLESS and when to use EXCEPT: This video is for you Michael.

(2) Unless is used to mean “Only on a specified condition”

For example:

I will not go with you **unless** you buy the tickets.

meaning “If you buy the tickets, then I will go with you. If you don’t, then I won’t.”

The girl would not receive the money **unless** the man delivered it in person.

meaning = “If the man delivered tickets in person, then the girl would have received it.”

The girl would not receive the money **unless** the man delivered it in person.

meaning = “As long as we work at the relationship, we will make it.”

(3) So notice that UNLESS is a SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTION. This means, it’s a CONNECTING WORD that is followed by a dependent clause.

(4) Another way to say it, is that a FULL CLAUSE always follows UNLESS.

For example:

I will not go with you **unless** you buy the tickets.

The girl would not receive the money **unless** the man delivered it in person.

**Unless** we work at this relationship, we’re not going to make it.

**(5) IN OTHER WORDS, you cannot follow “unless” with a noun:**

**IF YOU TRY TO SAY:**



**IT DOES NOT MAKE SENSE!**

**OR**



**NO! WRONG!**



**NO! IT DOESN NOT MAKE SENSE.**

**These sentences are incorrect.**

(6) NOW, let's look at the word "EXCEPT". It means "Not including" or "other than"

For example:

I bought all of the remaining tickets,  
**except** one.

She ate all of her dinner, **except** her peas.

He walked the dog every day **except** Friday.

She has traveled to all 50 States **except**  
Hawaii.

(7) NOTICE that EXCEPT is a preposition, followed by a noun.

For example:

I bought all of the remaining tickets,  
**except** one.

She ate all of her dinner, **except** her peas.

He walked the dog every day **except** Friday.

ALL FOUR WORDS HERE ARE  
NOUNS!

She has traveled to ~~all~~ 50 States **except**  
Hawaii.

**(8) NOTICE also that you can say EXCEPT FOR**

For example:

I bought all of the remaining tickets,  
**except for** one.

She ate all of her dinner, **except for** her  
peas.

He walked the dog every day **except for**  
Friday.

She has traveled to all 50 States **except for**  
Hawaii.

**(9) EXCEPT can also be joined to other prepositions**

We traveled with everyone **except with** my  
mom.

There was dirt everywhere, **except on** her  
shirt.

**(9) And you can use these combining with subordinating conjunctions:**

For example:

I told him everything,  
**except where** you're  
staying.

He studied very hard all the time,  
**except when** he didn't.

He loved his brothers,  
**except for when** they  
were obnoxious.

She always traveled in the Winter,  
**except for when** she had no money.

I hope this helps you, Michael, and I hope it helps other students who are trying to understand the difference between the two.

### LET'S TRY SOME PRACTICE SENTENCES:

HINT - NOTICE THE SENTENCES WITH "UNLESS" START WITH A NEGATIVE STATEMENT:

- (1) The children refused to brush their teeth \_\_\_\_\_ it was with their favorite toothpaste.
- (2) My brother enjoyed all kinds of fruit \_\_\_\_\_ apples.
- (3) The president works well with everyone \_\_\_\_\_ the FBI.
- (4) My daughter won't go \_\_\_\_\_ her friends go with her.
- (5) We will travel to Spain in the spring \_\_\_\_\_ the Pandemic is still going on.
- (6) That store accepts all major credit cards \_\_\_\_\_ Discover Cards.
- (7) I really love to travel \_\_\_\_\_ when it's really cold, or when I'm out of money.
- (8) I can't travel \_\_\_\_\_ I have enough money.
- (9) My husband called his mom every evening \_\_\_\_\_ Fridays.
- (10) The family would not be able to afford the new car \_\_\_\_\_ their dad got the bonus he was expecting from work.

**ANSWERS:**

- (1) The children refused to brush their teeth unless it was with their favorite toothpaste.
- (2) My brother enjoyed all kinds of fruit except (for) apples.
- (3) The president works well with everyone except (for) the FBI.
- (4) My daughter won't go unless her friends go with her.
- (5) We will travel to Spain in the spring unless the Pandemic is still going on.
- (6) That store accepts all major credit cards except (for) Discover Cards.
- (7) I really love to travel except (for) when it's really cold, or when I'm out of money.
- (8) I can't travel unless I have enough money.
- (9) My husband called his mom every evening except (for) Fridays.
- (10) The family would not be able to afford the new car unless their dad got the bonus he was expecting from work.