

"Even" for Emphasis: Surprising Situations & Comparatives

INTERMEDIATE

Focus: Unusual situations, Subject emphasis, Verb positions, Negatives & Comparatives

We use the adverb "**even**" to add emphasis. It suggests that something is **surprising**, **unexpected**, or **unusual**. It can strengthen statements, negatives, and comparisons.

1. General Usage: Surprising Facts

We use **even** when the information is more than we expect.

- **Normal:** *He speaks French and German.*
- **Surprising (Emphasis):** *He **even** speaks Chinese!* (This is unexpected/impressive).

2. Position in the Sentence

The position of "even" changes the meaning or focus of the sentence.

A. Mid-Position (With Verbs)

"Even" follows the same rules as adverbs of frequency (like *always* or *usually*).

- **With main verbs:** Before the verb.
 - *She **even works** on Sundays.*
- **With "To Be":** After the verb.
 - *The weather **is even** hot in winter.*
- **With Auxiliary Verbs (have/can/will):** After the first auxiliary.
 - *They **have even visited** Antarctica.*

B. Beginning of Sentence (Subject Emphasis)

We can place "even" before a noun or pronoun to emphasize that specific person or thing is the surprise.

- *Everyone failed the test. **Even the best student** failed.* (Surprisingly, the best student also failed).

3. Negatives: Not Even

In negative sentences, "**not even**" emphasizes that something did *not* happen, and it is surprising.

- *I said hello, but she **didn't even look** at me.* (She ignored me completely).
- *I **don't even know** his name.*

4. "Even" with Comparatives

We use **even + comparative adjectives** (better, worse, more, less) to say the difference is big or intense.

- *It is cold today, but yesterday was **even colder**.*
- *This book is **even more interesting** than the movie.*
- *Traffic is **even worse** in the evening.*

Practice: Fill in the Blanks

Instruction: Complete the sentences using the words in parentheses. You must include **"even"** in the correct position. Pay attention to verb tenses, negatives, and questions.

- **For statements:** Place *even* correctly with the verb or adjective.
- **For negatives:** Use the auxiliary + not + even + verb (e.g., *don't even know*).
- **For questions:** Use the correct auxiliary + subject + even + verb (e.g., *Do you even like*).

1. It was a very simple question. _____ (a child / could / answer) it.
2. I am very tired today. I _____ (not / even / brush) my teeth yet.
3. The food at that restaurant is terrible, and the service is _____ (bad / even) than the food.
4. He is extremely rich. He _____ (own / even) a private island.
5. _____ (you / even / know) how to drive this car? It looks complicated.
6. Nobody wanted to help us. _____ (our friends / even) refused to help.
7. This computer is fast, but the new model is _____ (faster / even).
8. She was so angry that she _____ (not / even / say) goodbye when she left.
9. _____ (they / even / invite) you to the wedding? I thought you were close friends.
10. It's raining now, but the weather forecast says it will be _____ (wet / even / more) tomorrow.
11. He has a bad memory. He _____ (not / even / remember) his own phone number sometimes.
12. I have looked everywhere for my keys. I _____ (check / even) inside the fridge!
13. _____ (he / even / realize) that he made a mistake?
14. The first exam was difficult, but the second one was _____ (more / even / difficult).
15. I can't finish this meal. I _____ (can / not / even / eat) the dessert.

Answer Key

1. **Even a child could answer** (Subject emphasis)
2. **haven't even brushed** (Present Perfect Negative)
3. **even worse** (Comparative: bad -> worse)
4. **even owns** (Mid-position affirmative)
5. **Do you even know** (Question emphasis)
6. **Even our friends** (Subject emphasis)
7. **even faster** (Comparative)
8. **didn't even say** (Past Simple Negative)
9. **Did they even invite** (Question emphasis)
10. **even wetter** OR **even more wet** (Comparative)
11. **doesn't even remember** (Present Simple Negative)
12. **even checked** (Past Simple Affirmative) OR **have even checked**
13. **Does he even realize** OR **Did he even realize** (Question emphasis)
14. **even more difficult** (Comparative)
15. **can't even eat** (Modal Verb Negative)