Can we really multitask?

Reading + Grammar: linking words for contrast and consequence

1 KEY VOCABULARY

switch	*v.*	to change from one task to another
switching costs	*n.*	the time and focus lost when you change tasks
productivity	*n.*	how much work is done in a given time
complex	*adj.*	with many parts; difficult
familiar	*adj.*	known to you; done before
efficiency	*n.*	doing something well without wasting time
add up	*phr. v.*	to increase little by little to a large amount
executive control	*n.*	the brain's system for managing tasks
distraction	*n.*	something that takes your attention away
focus	*v. / n.*	to give full attention to one thing

2 USEFUL PHRASES & EXPRESSIONS

- **Switching tasks costs time.** — *state the main idea*
- **The costs add up.** — *small effects become big*
- **Although it seems efficient, …** — *contrast in one sentence*
- **However, it takes more time.** — *contrast in a new sentence*
- **As a result, we make more mistakes.** — *show a consequence*
- **I need to focus on one task.** — *set a priority*

6 CULTURE & BUSINESS INSIGHT

★ **Focus is a competitive advantage**

Research shows that switching between tasks has hidden costs, especially for complex work. Teams that protect focus time — fewer notifications, clear priorities — often deliver better work in less time.

3 THE KEY POINT

Contrast: although / even though + clause · **however** (new sentence) · **whereas** (compare two facts). **Consequence: so** · **therefore** · **as a result**.

Although each switch costs only a few tenths of a second, the costs add up. Multitasking seems efficient. **However**, it takes more time.

Switching costs are bigger for complex tasks. **Therefore**, avoid multitasking on difficult work.

4 QUICK PRACTICE

Choose the best linking word.

1. (However / Although) I answer emails quickly, I lose focus.
2. Simple tasks are easy to switch, (therefore / whereas) complex tasks are not.
3. I turned off notifications. (As a result / Even though), I finished early.
4. Multitasking feels productive. (Although / However), research disagrees.

5 ANSWERS & EXPLANATION

Answers: 1 Although · 2 whereas · 3 As a result · 4 However

Although joins two clauses in one sentence; **However** starts a new sentence with a comma. **Whereas** compares two facts; **As a result** shows a consequence.

Today's resource: Multitasking: Switching costs (American Psychological Association) · https://www.apa.org/topics/research/multitasking

> *Do one thing at a time — and do it well.*



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