



Unit 67 – Expressing Exceptions (*I've been to most European countries except for..*)

A) Except (for) means 'not including'. It refers to something or someone that a statement does not include. It can be used as a preposition or a conjunction. When used as a preposition, except (for) is followed by a noun:

- > The restaurant is open every day **except (for)** Monday. (*Monday is the only day it is closed.*)
- > The entire family came to the ceremony **except (for)** Matt. He had to work that day.

When except is used as a conjunction, it is followed by a clause or an adverbial phrase:

- > I'd love to see that concert with you **except (that)** I already have plans that day.

Note: -> 'with the exception of' and 'excluding' can also be used to express exclusion:

- > I've been to all European countries **with the exception of / excluding** Denmark.

Except (**not: except for**) is used with i) to-infinitives and ii) that-clauses:

- > I don't go back to my hometown often **except to see** old friends during the holidays.
- > The report was correct **except (that)** some important details were omitted. (*'that' can be left out*)

Except is also used before i) prepositions, ii) bare infinitives, and iii) wh-clauses:

- i) Staff are not permitted to make personal phone calls **except in** an emergency.
- ii) I have nothing to do on vacation **except sit** by the pool and relax. (*..except (I can) sit by the pool..*)
- iii) I don't usually drive fast **except when** I'm in a hurry for something.

Note: -> 'except for' is often used in these cases in casual communication although it is grammatically incorrect

B) Except (for) means 'not included', however we can add additional things / information to the statement by using the adverb 'besides', which means the conjunctions 'as well as' or 'in addition to':

- > My son won't eat any vegetables **except for** carrots. (*he only eats carrots*)
Besides carrots, my son will occasionally eat peas. (*he eats carrots as well as peas occasionally*)
- > I haven't travelled much outside of Canada **except** to the U.S. once.
Besides travelling to the U.S. once, I haven't travelled much outside of Canada.

C) 'Apart from' can also be used to convey the same message as **except (for)** and **besides**. **Apart from** is often used at the beginning of a sentence (like **besides**) to draw attention to the ensuing noun or clause.

- > Grammar patterns include: i) 'apart from (the fact that) + noun/pronoun' and ii) 'apart from + -ing (gerund)'
 - > **Apart from the hair**, he looked just like he did in high school. (*Besides / Except for the hair, he looked..*)
 - > I like all sports **apart from swimming**. I'm just not comfortable in the water.
 - > She was content in the hospital **apart from the fact that** she could not return home yet.

D) **But** has a similar meaning to *except for* and is often used after indefinite pronouns such as *anything* or *nothing*:

- > We couldn't do *anything* on vacation **except / but** stay in the hotel. It rained the entire time!
- > When I asked him about the report, he said *nothing* **except / but** that he has been busy lately.

But for has a different meaning than *except for* and often refers to the past tense. It means that something might or could have happened if something (or someone) did not affect it in some manner. -> (*used in a formal manner*)

- > **But for** the rain, we would have had a nice holiday. (*If not for / If it weren't for the rain, we..*)
- > I would have never gotten into university **but not for** your help. (*..if it wasn't / weren't for your help..*)

However, *except for* is more commonly used in the same manner as *but for*, especially in informal English:

- > **Except for** the flight being delayed, we had a smooth trip to France. (*But for the flight..*)
- > He's had a great season of training **except for** a minor injury in October. (*..but for a minor..*)

E) Except vs Accept – Although these words sound identical in spoken English, they have very different meanings:

- > **Accept** is a *verb*, and it means to take or receive (something offered) or receive with approval.

Note the differences: He **accepted** the award as the most valuable player. *or:*
He has won every single award **except** for one.



Unit 67 – Exercises:

67.1 – Complete the sentences with **except** or **except for**. In some cases, both answers may be possible. **(67-A)**

- We drove directly from Boston to New York and didn't stop _____ to get gas.
- Christine could think of nothing to say _____ that she was so sorry.
- Did you know that every continent has a city called *Rome* _____ Antarctica?
- Mom didn't let us stay up late when I was young, _____ on Christmas Eve.
- Everyone was on time, _____ Richard.
- He always wears glasses _____ when playing football.
- We couldn't do much _____ wait to hear the announcement that our flight was boarding.

67.2 – If necessary, correct the sentences with **besides** or **except (for)**. One sentence is already correct. **(67-B)**

- Everyone was okay after the accident except for that Ted had a bruised leg. _____
- There was nothing in the room besides a table, a chair, and a dim lamp. _____
- Except for his six championships, Michael Jordan also won five MVP awards. _____
- Besides spending a lot of time online, Jay also spends a lot of money on gaming. _____
- Except being a small country, Korea also has the best Internet service in the world. _____

67.3 – Rewrite each sentence including the word in brackets. **(67-A/B/C/D)**

- The earth started shaking and I knew I only had to stand still. (but)
The earth started shaking and I knew I .. **couldn't do anything but stand still.**
- I'm bored and I can only stay home and watch tv. (apart from)
I'm bored and there is .. _____.
- I didn't understand much but the lecture sounded interesting. (apart from the fact that)
_____, _____ sounded interesting.
- I have only ever travelled inside my own country. (except)
I haven't travelled _____.
- Jim spends a lot of money on concerts and festivals every summer. (besides)
_____.

67.4 – Using the word(s) in brackets, find the odd word out and explain its relationship to the other words. **(67-All)**

- bedroom/living room/kitchen/laundry room/garage -> (with the exception of)
With the exception of the garage, all of the other rooms are located inside of a house.
- America/Belgium/France/Switzerland/Germany -> (apart from)
_____.
- brush/run/dog/catch/bark -> (except for)
_____.
- surgery/church/patient/infirmarary/operating room -> (excluding)
_____.
- orchestra/stage/musical/computer/costumes/theatre -> (apart from)
_____.

67.5 – Fill in each blanks with either **except (for)** or **accept**. **(67-E)**

I had just _____ my first ever community-volunteer opportunity, which was a summer internship at a dog-shelter. When I first got there, all of the dogs were barking and very excited _____ one. That dog sat quietly at the back of its kennel and seemed quite shy although when I knelt beside her, she _____ the treats that I offered to her and slowly warmed up to me. She was all black, _____ some white around her face. I would eventually adopt her, _____ of course that I had to get permission from my parents first. They _____ my request, however, and this quiet girl quickly became a treasured part of our family!