

Module: Written Expression.

Level: Second Year.

Teacher: Ms. KALKOUL. N

Comparison/ Contrast Essays

Comparing and contrasting are very common in academic writing. The purpose of a comparison is to show how people, places, things or ideas are similar, and the purpose of contrast is to show how people, places, things or ideas are different. For example, in a computer science class you may be asked to compare two programming languages. In a history class, your instructor may ask you to compare and contrast two historical figures or two events. In a literature class, you might have to compare two novels or two characters in a play.

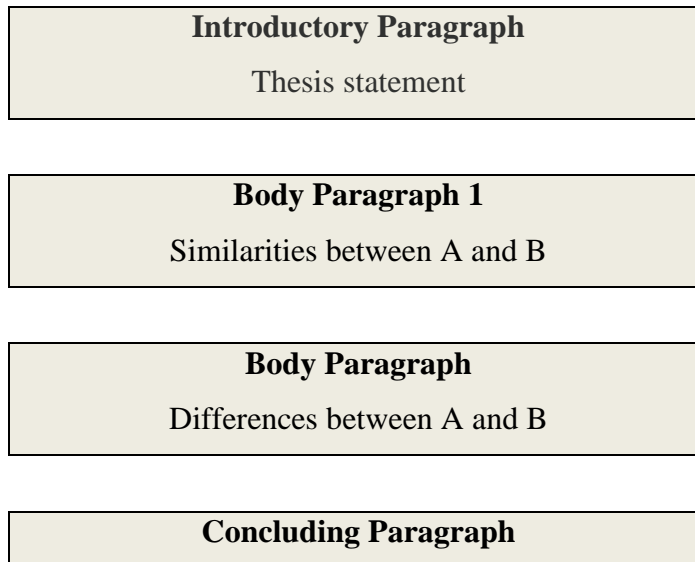
Comparison and contrast can be used independently (just similarities or differences) or in combination (both similarities and differences). Comparison and contrast essays allow you to show your knowledge of two subjects while analyzing the relationship between them.

Comparison/Contrast Organization

There are basically two ways to organize a comparison/contrast essay. One way is called *block (or subject by subject) organization*, and the other way is called *point-by-point organization*.

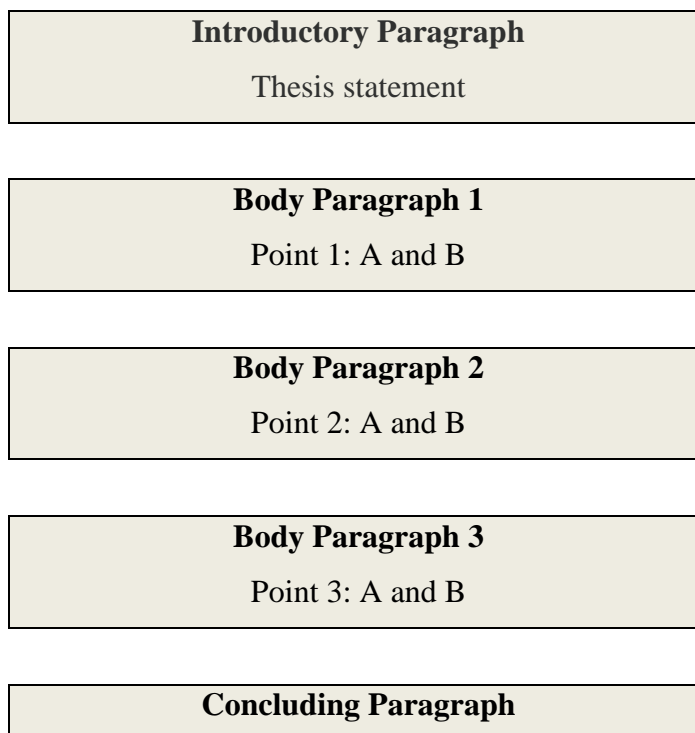
1. Block Organization

In block organization, the writer first introduces the similarities between two objects and then the differences or vice versa. Hence, the writer groups all the similarities together in one block and all the differences together in one block. It looks like this:



2. Point-by-point Organization

In a **point-by-point** structure, the writer organizes his or her writing around points of similarity or difference between the two subjects, so each subject is discussed in relation to a point of similarity or difference. This structure results in both subject A and B being discussed within a paragraph. The essay will contain as many body paragraphs as there are points of comparison. This style looks like this:



Transitions

Transitions used in comparison generally show similarity or addition, and transitions used in contrast generally show difference or dissimilarity, but many transitions can be appropriate in comparison or contrast depending on the content.

Common Transitional Devices Used for Comparison

also	in addition
as a matter of fact	in fact
besides	likewise
for instance	moreover
furthermore	similarly
both...and	not only...but also
neither...nor	
like	similar to

Common Transitional Devices Used for Contrast

conversely	nonetheless
however	otherwise
instead	on the contrary
nevertheless	on the other hand
in contrast to	unlike
different from	
while	whereas
but	yet

FOUR BASES Checklist for Comparison or Contrast

➤ ***About Unity***

- Have I made it clear in my opening paragraph what two things I am writing about and whether I will compare or contrast them?

➤ ***About Support***

- Do my supporting points offer three areas in which I will compare or contrast my two subjects?

➤ **About *Coherence***

- Have I consistently used a single method of development—one side at a time or point by point—in each supporting paragraph?
- Have I used transition words to help readers follow my train of thought?
- If one area of comparison or contrast is stronger than the others, am I using emphatic order and saving that area for my final supporting paragraph?
- Have I rounded off my essay with an appropriate concluding paragraph?

➤ **About *Sentence Skills***

- Have I avoided wordiness and used concise wording?
- Are my sentences varied?
- Have I checked my writing for spelling and other sentence skills, as listed on the inside back cover of the book?
- As you revise your essay through one or more additional drafts, continue to refer to this list until you and your reader can answer yes to each question.

Model Essay 1

The Getty and the Met

There are countless art museums in the United States. Some are small and consist of a single room, and others cover city blocks. Two of them, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles, are visited everyday by tourists as well as locals. While these two museums have similarities because they are both place that exhibit art, I believe their differences are more striking then their similarities.

Both the Met, as the Metropolitan Museum of Art is known, and the Getty have amazing collections of art. The art spans many centuries, from antiquity to modern times. They are both enormously popular. The Met has thousands of visitors every day; likewise, the Getty is so popular that there is often a waiting list just to get in. Both have been used as movie locations, and the citizens of New York and Los Angeles are proud of their famous museums.

However, in three distinct ways, the Met and the Getty are almost opposites. First of all, their architecture is very different. The architectural style of the Met is classical, ornate, and symmetrical. The Getty, in contrast, is modern, plain, and asymmetrical. They also vary a lot in age. The construction of the Met was begun in 1880 and completed in 1902, and it is now well over 100 years old. The Getty on the other hand, was just completed in 1997. Finally, the relationship between the buildings and the art inside is quite different in the two museums. While the architecture of the Met is impressive, the real treasure of the museum lies inside its walls and its fantastic collections. The Getty, in contrast, was designed and constructed as an impressive organization of walls and spaces. In fact, I believe that more people spend time outside enjoying the gardens, trees, and the exterior atmosphere of the Getty than ever go inside.

In conclusion, these two museums do have several similarities, but I feel strongly that their differences outnumber the way in which they are similar. In their architecture, their locations, and their relationship to the art they display, the two museums are worlds apart.

Model Essay 2

The Tale of Two Towns

“Where do you come from?” is a question many Americans can’t answer easily. Many Americans were born in one place, lived a few years in another, went to elementary school in a third town, and so on. In my home country, Norway, people usually live all their lives in the town where they were born, but my family is different. We moved from one small town to another when I was twelve years old. For this reason, I have two “hometowns”. Although the people in these two towns, Kristiansand and Arendal, think that they have nothing in common, in fact, they have far more similarities than differences.

The first obvious similarity lies in the location of the two towns. They are both seaside towns on the south coast of Norway. They are sheltered from the ocean storms by a large group of islands and backed by hills that defend them against the cold winter winds. There are a few minor differences in their location, of course; Kristiansand, my childhood city, has now grown to include neighborhoods across the many islands between it and the ocean, while in Arendal, my teenage town, those islands are still largely unpopulated.

Second, both Kristiansand and Arendal are small. Compared to the great continental cities of Paris and Rome, they are not even dots on a map. Kristiansand is larger with about 76.000 inhabitants, while Arendal has only about 35.000, but neither can be called metropolis.

Furthermore, at least to a visitor, they are quite similar in their natural beauty. The islands are rough and rocky. The houses of both towns are mostly small, white-painted wooden buildings, and almost exactly the same kinds of plants and trees grow in both places. In addition, the ocean is a major influence on the lifestyle of both towns, and the weather forecast is the major topic of conversation.

The economies of the two towns are also based on the same business tourism. Both native Norwegians and foreigners go on summer vacation to the two towns, and in winter, business is very slow. Of course, there are a few differences here as well. In Arendal, there are still quite a lot of fishermen making a living from the sea, while Kristiansand is a busy port for large commercial ships. Still, I doubt that either town could support its population without the tourists.

Finally, despite the opinions of the natives of Kristiansand and Arendal, I think that the people there are very similar. Because of the size of the towns, people are mostly interested in what their neighbors do and say, and they don't care very much about what is happening in the outside world. In addition, the inhabitants of the two towns have a love/hate relationship with the necessary tourists. These tourists bring in business and money in the summer, so the natives smile at them when they meet them. However, behind their backs, the townspeople wish that the tourists would just spend their money and go home.

Thus, while there are a few differences between Kristiansand and Arendal, I think that the similarities are far more obvious. In location, size, natural beauty, economy, and people, they are very much alike. Although, I sometimes feel they are too small for me now, they are my hometowns, and there is no place like home.