

Compare/Contrast

Comparison notes either *similarities*, or *similarities and differences*.

Contrast notes only *differences*.

The comparison or contrast should **make a point** or **serve a purpose**. Often such writing does one of the following

Makes a Choice: Show that one subject is **better** than the other.

ex: one school is better than another

Shows Coexistence: How 2 dissimilar views work better together

ex: lenient parent & strict parent work better together

Lead to a fresh insight: new way of viewing something.

ex: compare one leader to another to show they are not that much different

Subjects of Compare\Contrast must be equally comparable: *ex: pro athlete to pro athlete, luxury car to luxury car,*

The **thesis** can present the subjects and indicate whether they will be compared, contrasted, or both.

The **same points** should be discussed for both subjects; it is not necessary, however to give both subjects the same degree of development.

Some common **organizational** structures include: (see note below)

- Block method (subject by subject)
- Point by point
- Comparisons followed by contrasts (or the reverse)

Use detailed topic sentences and the following connecting words to make the relationship between your subjects clear to your reader:

Connectors That Show Comparison (Similarities)

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>In additon</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Correspondingly</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Compared to</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Similarly</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Just as</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>As well as</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Likewise</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Same as</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>At the same time</i> |

Connectors That Show Contrast (Differences)

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>However</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>On the contrary</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>On the other hand</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Even though</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>In contrast</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Although</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Unlike</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Conversely</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Meanwhile</i> |



Block Method and the Point-by-Point method.

Writing a Compare/Contrast Essay

The following example contains an element of the author's opinion, but not all compare/contrast assignments allow for that. Always check your assignment sheet and ask your instructor for clarification about including your opinion.

	Point-by-Point Method	Block Method
Intro	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of general topic • Specific topic • Thesis = areas to be covered in this essay: <i>Both cats and dogs make excellent pets, but an appropriate choice depends on the pet owner's lifestyle, finances, and household accommodations.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of general topic • Specific topic • Thesis = areas to be covered in this essay: <i>Both cats and dogs make excellent pets, but an appropriate choice depends on the pet owner's lifestyle, finances, and household accommodations.</i>
Body Paragraph 1	<p>Topic Sentence - Aspect 1 <i>Cats make less of an impact on an owner's lifestyle.</i></p> <p>Topic 1 - Aspect 1: Cats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detail: Don't have to be watched during the day • Detail: Easier to get care if owner travels <p>Topic 2 - Aspect 1: Dogs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detail: Pack animals shouldn't be left alone • Detail: Harder to get care when away <p>Transition Sentence</p>	<p>Topic Sentence – Topic 1 <i>Cats are easier and less expensive to care for.</i></p> <p>Aspect 1: Lifestyle</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detail: <i>Don't have to be watched during the day</i> • Detail: <i>Easier to get care if owner travels</i> <p>Aspect 2: Cost</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detail: <i>Food and health care are usually less expensive</i> • Detail: <i>Less likely to cause property damage</i> <p>Aspect 3: House accommodations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detail: <i>Don't take up much space</i> • Detail: <i>Less intrusive</i> <p>Transition Sentence</p>
Body Paragraph 2	<p>Topic Sentence - Aspect 2 <i>Cats are less expensive to own and care for.</i></p> <p>Topic 1 - Aspect 2: Cats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detail: <i>Food and health care are usually less expensive</i> • Detail: <i>Less likely to cause property damage</i> <p>Topic 2 - Aspect 2: Dogs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detail: <i>Food is more expensive</i> • Detail: <i>Over-breeding causes some health problems</i> <p>Transition Sentence</p>	<p>Topic Sentence – Topic 2 <i>Dogs are active and loyally engaging pets.</i></p> <p>Aspect 1 – Lifestyle</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detail: <i>Pack animals shoudn't be left alone</i> • Detail: <i>Harder to get care when away Need more living space</i> <p>Aspect 2 – Cost</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detail: <i>Food is more expensive</i> • Detail: <i>Over-breeding causes some health problems</i> <p>Aspect 3 – House accommodations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detail: <i>Often need yard and fence</i> • Detail: <i>Require more safety and protective measures</i> <p>Transition Sentence</p>
Body Paragraph 3	<p>Topic Sentence - Aspect 3 <i>Cats need few special house accommodation.</i></p> <p>Topic 1 - Aspect 3: Cats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detail: <i>Don't take up much space</i> • Detail: <i>Less intrusive</i> <p>Topic 2 - Aspect 3: Dogs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detail: <i>Often need yard and fence</i> • Detail: <i>Require more safety and protective measures</i> <p>Transition Sentence</p>	<p>Optional: develop a paragraph to evaluate the comparison made in the essay: <i>Last summer, I was considering adopting a pet, so I visited the SPCA to gather more information about cats and dogs. I am a full time student and work part time in the evenings, so my lifestyle and schedule didn't seem conducive to owning a dog like I had originally planned. Now that I've had my cat Cookie for a few months, I see that she's the perfect fit and a great companion for me.</i></p>
Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of main points • Evaluation and/or possible future developments • Significance of topic to author: <i>When considering adopting a pet, a prospective owner must consider the lifestyle, finances, and household accommodations that the pet would require. Owners who neglect to compare these aspects will often not care for their pet in a safe manner.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of main points • Evaluation and/or possible future developments • Significance of topic to author: <i>When considering adopting a pet, a prospective owner must consider the lifestyle, finances, and household accommodations that the pet would require. Owners who neglect to compare these aspects will often not care for their pet in a safe manner.</i>

Compare and Contrast Essay Structure: Block Method

Use this Blank Form for Brainstorming and/or planning.

In the Block Method, each paragraph addresses ONE TOPIC ONLY from your pair of topics and includes the SHARED ASPECTS you have chosen to Compare to topic 2 . Use the following chart to organize your ideas for your essay. *(See Venn diagram steps 1 – 5 for examples on topics, aspects, and details.)*

Block Method	My Essay
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ introduction of general topic ○ specific topic ○ areas to be covered in this essay 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Aspect 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Detail □ Detail ○ Aspect 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Detail □ Detail ○ Aspect 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Detail □ Detail 	Topic Sentence:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Aspect 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Detail □ Detail ○ Aspect 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Detail □ Detail ○ Aspect 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Detail □ Detail 	Topic Sentence:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conclusion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Summary of main points ○ Evaluation and/or possible future developments 	

Compare and Contrast Essay Structure: Point by Point Method

Use this Blank Form for Brainstorming and/or planning.

In the Point-by-Point Method, each paragraph contains details on ONE ASPECT of BOTH TOPICS organized in the same order. Use the following chart to organize your ideas for your essay. *(See Venn diagram steps 1 – 5 for examples on topics, aspects, and details.)*

Point by Point Method	My Essay
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ introduction of general topic ○ specific topic ○ areas to be covered in this essay 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Topic 1 - Aspect 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Detail □ Detail ○ Topic 2 - Aspect 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Detail □ Detail 	<p style="margin-left: 20px;">Topic Sentence:</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">Topic Sentence:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Topic 1 - Aspect 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Detail □ Detail ○ Topic 2 - Aspect 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Detail □ Detail 	<p style="margin-left: 20px;">Topic Sentence:</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">Topic Sentence:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Topic 1 - Aspect 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Detail □ Detail ○ Topic 2 - Aspect 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Detail □ Detail 	<p style="margin-left: 20px;">Topic Sentence:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Conclusion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summary of main points □ Evaluation and/or possible future developments 	