

A Brief Overview to Writing A Comparison/Contrast Essay

Similarities and Differences



Definition

- Writing a comparison/contrast paper involves comparing and contrasting two subjects.
- A comparison shows how two things are alike.
- A contrast shows how two things are different.



Choosing a Topic

- **When you choose a topic, be sure not to choose two totally unrelated subjects.**
- **You must start with subjects that have some basic similarities.**
 - two movies
 - two short stories
 - book and movie



Brainstorm



- **Brainstorm everything you know about each subject and then go back and look for connections that show similarities and differences.**

| Points of Contrast/Comparison | Autumn | Spring |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Temperature (--) | cooler | warmer |
| Changes (--) | leaves change | flowers bloom |
| Colors (+) | brilliant colors | brilliant colors |
| Location (--) (+) | precedes winter | precedes summer |
| Symbolism (--) (+) | death | birth |

Develop a Thesis

- **The thesis statement will evolve from the brainstorming. Look at your list and ask yourself some questions.**
 - "Is there something important, significant, or interesting in the similarities and differences on my list?"
 - "What have I discovered about my two topics?"



Develop a Thesis

■ After looking at the list, a thesis statement might be:

“Although there is exquisite beauty in the seasons of autumn and spring, there are also distinctions which allow each season to stand on its own.”



Organizing the essay

- The introduction of your essay should mention both subjects in a strong and clearly defined thesis statement:

“Although there is exquisite beauty in the seasons of autumn and spring, there are also distinctions which allow each season to stand on its own.”



Organizing the essay

- There are two primary ways to organize the body of your paper:
 - **the divided pattern**
 - **the alternating pattern.**



Organizing the essay

The Divided Pattern

Give all supporting details for one subject and then give all supporting details for the other subject.

- Paragraph 1: Introduction and Thesis statement
- Paragraph 2: Discuss and give supporting details for subject 1 (autumn)
- Paragraph 3: Discuss and give supporting details for subject 2 (spring)
- Paragraph 4: Concluding statement



Organizing the essay

The Alternating Pattern

Alternate the details from one side of the comparison or contrast to the other

- Paragraph 1: Introduction and thesis statement
- Paragraph 2: Discuss and give all the details of the similarities between both subjects (spring and autumn)
- Paragraph 3: Discuss and give all the details of the differences between both subjects (spring and autumn)
- Paragraph 4: Concluding statement



Organizing the essay

Concluding Statement

- **The conclusion of your paper should include final connections about the two subjects and then a restatement of your thesis.**

