

Compare and Contrast: Explanations and Examples

Definition: A compare and contrast shows **similarities (compare)** and **differences (contrast)** between two things. In an essay, you usually compare and contrast to show or prove a point.

ALL Compare and Contrast Essays

- Every claim made must have a parallel claim from the other side.
- The claims should pertain to the topic.
- The claims should be obvious.

Point by Point Method

Definition: a comparison of one point of a topic with a point of the other topic

Advantages: Keeps each set of points for discussion close together

The reader does not have to remember as much information

Keeps the paper clearly organized

Avoids summary

Disadvantages: Can appear mechanical and monotonous

Does not provide a unified discussion of the two sides

Example: Boxers vs. Underwear

People should own boxers and underwear. When wearing boxers under pants, the boxers bunch up in different places, forming little hills out of the pants. When wearing underwear under pants, they do not bunch up, leaving the pants smooth. Boxers come up high on the waist, so people can see them above the pants unless the shirt is tucked in, but underwear do not come up high on the waist, so no one can see them above the pants. However, boxers can be worn without any clothes on top, but this can not be done with underwear. Wearing boxers without any pants on is very comfortable. Underwear is very comfortable with pants on. Because of the advantages and disadvantages of each, people should own both boxers and underwear.

Block Method

Definition: a presentation of all facts and supporting details about one topic followed by the facts and supporting details about the second topic

Advantages: Presents the whole picture of the two sides

Can be more effective if the essay is below 3-4 pages and is covering a general issue

Does not appear as monotonous

Disadvantages: Tends to become a summary if the writer is not careful

The reader must remember a lot

The paper is not always as clearly organized

Is not successful for papers over 3-4 pages

Example: Boxers vs. Underwear

People should own boxers and underwear. When wearing boxers under pants, the boxers bunch up in different places, forming little hills out of the pants. They come up high on the waist, so people can see them above the pants unless the shirt is tucked in. However, they can be worn without any clothes over them without any embarrassment. When worn like this, they are very comfortable. Underwear do not bunch up under pants, leaving the pants smooth. Usually they do not come up high on the waist, so people can not see them above the pants. They can not be worn without clothes on top without violating the law. They are very comfortable when worn under pants.

Point by Point Method Outline for an Entire Essay

Thesis (what you are trying to show): _____

Paragraph 1

- Idea 1 from topic 1: _____
- Idea 1 from topic 2: _____

Paragraph 2

- Idea 2 from topic 1: _____
- Idea 2 from topic 2: _____

Paragraph 3

- Idea 3 from topic 1: _____
- Idea 3 from topic 2: _____

Block Method Outline for an Entire Essay

Thesis (what you are trying to show): _____

Paragraph 1

- Idea 1 from topic 1: _____
- Idea 2 from topic 1: _____
- Idea 3 from topic 1: _____

Paragraph 2

- Idea 1 from topic 2: _____
- Idea 2 from topic 2: _____
- Idea 3 from topic 2: _____