

Activity Type

Writing Exercises: identifying, listing, gap-fill, unscrambling, creating an outline, essay writing, peer review and feedback

Focus

Point-by-point structure for compare and contrast essays

Aim

To learn and practice point-by-point compare and contrast essay structure.

Preparation

Make one copy of the three-page worksheet for each student.

Level

Upper-intermediate (B2)

Time

90 minutes

Introduction

In this compare and contrast essays worksheet, students learn and practice point-by-point compare and contrast essay structure.

Procedure

Give each student a copy of the three-page worksheet.

First, students read a short passage explaining the difference between block structure and point-by-point structure for compare and contrast essays.

Students then read a point-by-point compare and contrast essay and scan it, listing the four points of comparison, which form the main idea of each body paragraph.

Exercise B - Answer key

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. reliability | 2. driving experience |
| 3. reputation for safety | 4. customers they appeal to |

After that, students list four points of comparison for three topics.

Exercise C - Possible answers

Jobs

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. salary and benefits | 2. qualifications and experience |
| 3. career development | 4. level of pressure and stress |

People

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. personality and character | 2. achievements |
| 3. physical appearance | 4. hobbies and interests |

Cities

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. climate and geography | 2. transportation |
| 3. art and culture | 4. tourist appeal |

Students then complete sentences with comparison and contrast transition words or phrases.

Exercise D - Answer key

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. both | 5. although |
| 2. unlike | 6. similarly/likewise |
| 3. on the other hand/in contrast | 7. similarly/likewise |
| 4. in contrast | 8. similar |

(continued on the next page)

Note: This resource can be edited using a PDF editor.

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Procedure continued

Students then move on to unscramble sentence parts to make example topic sentences for a compare and contrast essay.

Exercise E - Answer key

1. Although ABC Company and XYZ Corporation are alike in salaries and benefits, they differ in terms of opportunities for career advancement.
2. An important similarity between City University and State College is their high rankings and research quality.
3. Despite both showing strong athletic ability, Jai and Kandy have quite dissimilar personalities.

Next, students choose one of the topics from Exercise C, or their own topic, and create an outline for a point-by-point compare and contrast essay.

The outline only provides for three points of comparison, so students can discuss two differences and one similarity or vice versa. Remind students to only use keywords and phrases rather than complete sentences in the outline.

When the students have completed their outlines, they write a point-by-point compare and contrast essay.

Lastly, students swap essays with a partner. Students then read their partner's essay and provide peer feedback according to any criteria that you would like students to focus on.

For example, students could answer the following questions in their peer review.

1. Does the essay follow a point-by-point structure?
2. Does the introduction end with a clear thesis statement?
3. Do topic sentences link back clearly to the thesis statement?
4. Are transitions used with consistency to show the relationship between key points and to indicate similarities and differences?
5. Is there a mix of sentence types? (simple, compound, and complex)
6. Are comma splices and run-on sentences present?
7. Are grammar and vocabulary varied and accurate?
8. Does the conclusion paraphrase the thesis statement and summarise the main points of the body paragraphs?

In this worksheet, you will learn to write a compare and contrast essay that uses a point-by-point structure rather than a block structure. In a block structure, you would discuss all the similarities in one block and then all the differences in a separate block, or discuss the two subjects being compared separately. However, in a point-by-point arrangement, you structure your body by points of comparison. For example, if you were comparing and contrasting two universities, you might discuss the points of comparison that contribute to making a good university such as courses, facilities, reputation, or research output. In your essay, each point of comparison becomes the topic of a body paragraph. For longer essays, a point-by-point structure is usually recommended.

A. Read the example point-by-point compare and contrast essay.

People in the market for a premium car are often attracted to vehicles with a European heritage, particularly those made in Germany. The two most popular premium brands from Germany are BMW and Mercedes. Thus, when deciding on a premium car, customers are very likely to compare and contrast the various features and merits of these two brands.

One area in which these brands are similar is in terms of their reliability. Both Mercedes and BMW only score moderately on reliability scales. In an international rating of car brands, Mercedes only scored three out of five stars. Similarly, in the same rating, BMW only scored 2.5 stars, so buying a car from either of these brands means that you cannot be very confident that you will not encounter a problem within the first couple of years of ownership.

An area in which these two brands differ is driving experience. While both brands are known for offering a satisfying driver experience, BMW has a stronger reputation for offering a sportier drive. For example, BMWs tend to be lighter than Mercedes cars and are able to navigate corners better. On the other hand, Mercedes tend to focus on providing a more comfortable driving experience. In the minds of most buyers, Mercedes is synonymous with luxury while BMW is synonymous with performance.

Another similarity between the two car brands is their strong reputation for safety. Both BMW and Mercedes have a long-held and well-deserved name for producing very safe vehicles. Mercedes, more than any manufacturer, is known for being the first to introduce truly innovative safety features. For example, the company was the first to introduce crumple zones and stability control. Likewise, BMW was the first company to introduce anti-lock braking to its whole model line-up and the first to introduce the seatbelt.

Another difference between BMW and Mercedes is the type of customers they appeal to. BMWs tend to appeal more to younger drivers, whereas Mercedes are generally more popular with older drivers. BMWs often have a sporty and aggressive styling that appeals to a younger and more fashion-conscious customer base. Conversely, Mercedes tend to have a more understated and conservative appearance that appeals to a more mature customer.

To conclude, in the minds of premium car customers, BMW and Mercedes are two brands that must be considered and compared. These two brands have similar reputations for reliability and safety but differ in terms of the driving experience and the type of drivers they appeal to.

B. List the four points of comparison for the essay.

1.
2.
3.
4.

C. List four points of comparison for the following topics from which you could compare and contrast two subjects. For example, for jobs, the two subjects could be a teacher and a doctor.

Jobs

1. 2.
 3. 4.

People

1. 2.
 3. 4.

Cities

1. 2.
 3. 4.

D. Complete the sentences with the comparison and contrast transition words and phrases.

similarly on the other hand likewise although
 similar unlike both in contrast

1. ABC Company and XYZ Corporation offer very attractive salary and benefits packages.
2. City University which offers athletic scholarships, State College does not.
3. Jai is a very humorous and outgoing person., Kandy tends to prefer not being the centre of attention.
4. to Tokyo, Nikko is a small city with a low population density.
5. XYZ Corporation offers opportunities for career advancement, employees at ABC Company tend to get promoted faster.
6. City University has a high international ranking for its research output., State College is also gaining a strong reputation for quality research.
7. Kandy has a strong interest in sports and is the captain of both her hockey and netball teams., Jai is an accomplished athlete who was voted the most valuable player in his football team.
8. Tokyo and Nikko are in that they both attract tourists for their cultural and historical sites.

E. Unscramble the sentence parts to create example topic sentences for a compare and contrast essay.

1. opportunities for career advancement / and XYZ Corporation / and benefits / although ABC company / are alike in salaries / they differ in terms of

.....
.....

2. between City University / high rankings and research quality / and State College is their / an important similarity

.....
.....

3. Jamal and Kandy / strong athletic ability / have quite dissimilar personalities / despite both showing

.....
.....

F. Choose a topic from Exercise C, or your own topic, and create a point-by-point compare and contrast essay outline.

Thesis Statement:

Point of Comparison 1:

Subject A Evidence:

.....

Subject B Evidence:

.....

Point of Comparison 2:

Subject A Evidence:

.....

Subject B Evidence:

.....

Point of Comparison 3:

Subject A Evidence:

.....

Subject B Evidence:

.....

