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# Comparison and Contrast

This guide will help you to write a paragraph using comparison and contrast. **We use comparison and contrast to explain how things are alike and how they are different.** The subjects you write about must have at least one category in common. You can compare dogs with cats because both belong to the same category, *household pets*. You can compare dogs with elephants because both belong to the same category, *animals*.



- When you **compare** one object to another, you show how the two are alike, or similar. **The dog, like the cat, is a household pet.**
- When you **contrast** two subjects, you show how they are different. **The dog, unlike the cat, is very dependent on its master.**

- Sometimes, both **comparison and contrast** are used in the same sentence. **Both the dog and the cat make good household pets, but a dog requires more attention than a cat.**

## Key Words

To write a comparison and contrast paragraph, you will need to use transitional words and phrases that express outside points of view. You will also be using transitions that show relationships between ideas. We have grouped these key words in two categories below.

Key words commonly used to express **comparison** include:

like	similar	as
same	in the same way	too
both	most important	have in common
the same as	similarly	as well as

Key words commonly used to express **contrast** include:

although	yet	whereas
however	but	while
differ	instead	unless
unlike	on the contrary	contrary to
even though	on the other hand	the reverse

## Practice

Read each part of the following exercise and answer all **28** questions. In the model paragraph below, the author explains two subjects by using comparison and contrast.

Apples and oranges are similar in some ways, yet they are also different. They are both fruits that grow on trees. Apples, however, do well in colder climates, while oranges grow best where it's hot year-round. The two fruits are both round and small, but their skins differ in thickness and in color. The orange is thick-skinned and orange in color, whereas the thin-skinned apple can be red, green, or yellow. You can eat the skin of an apple; however, the skin of an orange is inedible. The insides of both are juicy and delicious to eat. Most important, apples and oranges are very nutritious foods that satisfy your "sweet tooth."

Answer the questions below by filling in the blanks. Refer to the model to help you complete this exercise.

1. What two subjects are being compared in this paragraph?  
\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_
2. To what general category do both of these subjects belong?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. How many of the key words used in writing comparison and contrast can you find in the paragraph? \_\_\_\_\_
4. List **five** of the key words. \_\_\_\_\_

Listed below are characteristics of fruit that can be used in comparing and contrasting apples and oranges. Use the model to complete the chart below. Not every characteristic is referred to in the paragraph, so you will have some blanks. The first one is done for you.

CHARACTERISTIC	APPLES	ORANGES
<b>Where they grow</b>	<b>trees</b>	<b>trees</b>
5. calories		
6. shape		
7. skin colors(s)		
8. growing climate		
9. taste		
10. size		
11. skin (thick, thin)		
12. cost		
13. skin (edible, inedible)		
14. food value		
15. seeds		

For each of the following, indicate whether the sentence uses **comparison**, **contrast** or **both**.

16. The banjo is very much like the guitar in its construction.

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17. Day is light while dark is night.

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18. Flowers and weeds are both plants, but people prefer flowers because of their beauty.

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19. Lions, like tigers, are big cats that roam the jungle.

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20. Although the dog is said to be man's best friend, cats are easier to care for.

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21. Silver is less expensive than gold.

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22. Although they have no arms, snakes can still climb as well as monkeys.

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23. It's hot in the summer, but cold in the winter.

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24. Both the sun and moon are round.

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25. The Civil War between the North and the South was, in some ways, similar to earlier wars.

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26. Milk and soda are both beverages, but milk is a healthier drink.

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27. Frank and John are the same height and weight, but John is much stronger.

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28. Skiing, like ice skating, requires strong leg muscles and a good sense of balance.

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**Score the Practice exercise using the Answer Key, and go on to the Composition part of this guide.**

# Composition

This part of the guide will help you apply what you have learned about writing a paragraph using comparison and contrast. Choose **one** topic and make a chart that compares and contrasts at least five characteristics of your subject. Use this list as you follow the plan for writing a paragraph using comparison and contrast.

## Topics

Summer and winter

Youth and old age

Two sports of your choice

Men and women

Two of your friends

## Plan

- Introduce the two subjects you will compare and contrast, and the category they have in common.
- Compare and contrast at least five characteristics of your subjects.
- Use the list of key words provided in the Practice exercise to help connect your ideas.
- Conclude your paragraph by telling the reader what you believe is the most important way in which your subjects are alike, or different.

**Use the Checklist to help you review and revise your writing. Do this for all drafts and your final copy.**

<b>Checklist</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
1. Before I began my paragraph, I made a chart that compares and contrasts five characteristics of my subjects	___	___
2. I began my paragraph by introducing the two subjects and the category they have in common.	___	___
3. I wrote sentences that compare and contrast at least five characteristics of my subjects.	___	___
4. I used key words associated with comparison and contrast to help connect ideas. These words are: _____	___	___
5. In my conclusion, I tell the reader the most important way in which my subjects are alike, or different.	___	___
6. I wrote complete sentences that begin with capital letters, and used proper punctuation.	___	___
7. I proofread and edited my composition.	___	___
8. I wrote a corrected copy of my work.	___	___

**Submit the completed writing assignment and Practice exercise to your instructor for evaluation.**

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