



Exposition—Comparison-and-Contrast—Introduction

- Comparing and contrasting are processes that you perform every day.
- Whether you're deciding which movie to see or which jacket to buy, you analyze the similarities and differences between the choices and make judgments about the positive qualities or shortcomings of each one.
- Developing your ability to compare and contrast is useful any time you have to make a major decision.
- When the time comes to decide which college or which job offer to accept, being able to clearly assess your options will help you take the best possible course of action.

For the Teacher: this lesson is excellent for helping students make decisions about their future. If you are using it with juniors or seniors, this is an ideal lesson to coach them in choosing a college or a major. If you are using it for younger students, find something of importance they can relate to so the lesson means more to them.

For the Student: The strategies you will learn in this lesson can be used whenever you have a decision to make, whether you write about it or "just" act on it. Comparing and contrasting items in a logical and objective way can make for better decisions on almost every level.

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Definitions

- To **compare** is to show how two or more things are similar.
- To **contrast** is to show how two or more things are different.
- An essay exploring the similarities and differences between two or more subjects is a **comparison-and-contrast essay**.

Ingredients of the C-and-C Essay

- Most effective comparison-and-contrast essays contain:
 - Two or more subjects that are being compared and contrasted.
 - Details that reveal the similarities and differences between the subjects.
 - Transitions that make relationships between the subjects clear.
 - An effective structure, such as point-by-point or subject-by-subject organization.

Types of C-and-C Essays

- Topics for a comparison-and-contrast essay range widely. Following are some examples:
 - Significant events from history
 - Works of art, literature, or music
 - Lives and achievements of historical figures
 - Effects of different laws or policies



Generating Topics

- Choose two or more subjects to explore in a comparison-and-contrast essay. For help getting started, consider the strategies below:
 - **Freewrite** for five minutes about recent decisions you have made.
 - For example have you recently purchased one brand of clothing over another brand? If so, why?
 - Review your freewriting, and use an idea from it to form the basis of your comparison-and-contrast essay.
 - **List**—First, choose a broad subject area, such as music, art, history, sports, or characters in a novel.
 - Then, list items that come to mind within that subject area—your favorite examples or ones that you find particularly interesting.
 - Finally, examine your list to find connections between the two or more items you recorded.
 - Strong connections between items indicate that they might be effective subjects for a comparison-and-contrast essay.
 - If so, choose those items and build your comparison-and-contrast essay around them.
- For more specific suggestions for your c-and-c essay, consider the following:
 - **Historical and Current Situations:** Write an essay in which you compare and contrast an event or situation from history with one that is occurring today.
 - For example, you could compare and contrast the Information Age with the Industrial Revolution
 - **Two Products:** Select two competing products that you would consider buying.
 - In your essay, focus on the merits or shortcomings of each one
 - Finally, provide the reader with a recommendation about which one is the better product or the better value.
 - **Responding to Fine Art:**
 - Study a painting such as *Minor League* by Clyde Singer (see next slide) at http://www.mlb.com/NASApp/mlb/la/history/poetry/poetry_story.jsp?content=old_batter
 - Then write a comparison-and-contrast essay about two favorite athletes or baseball today compared with baseball of the 1920s



Exposition—Comparison-and-Contrast—Prewriting

- **Responding to Literature**
 - Compare and contrast two pieces of literature (ask your teacher for suggestions).
 - Focus on the similarities and differences in the speakers, the situations they face, and the character traits they exhibit.
- **Cooperative Writing**
 - **Display**—Work in a group to discover the similarities and differences between a typhoon and a hurricane.
 - Split your group into two: one group will research similarities and the other, differences.
 - Then, collaborate to prepare a c-and-c display.
 - Assign some group members to create visuals such as maps and diagrams.
 - Let other group members write captions and explanations of the visuals.
 - Display your completed work in the classroom.
- **Evaluate Your Topic**
 - Evaluate your topic to make sure the subjects you have chosen share a valid basis for comparison.
 - Don't compare dissimilar subjects, such as the work of an artist with that of a musician, unless you have a compelling reason for doing so.
 - Make sure that the focus of your comparison isn't too broad. For example, the complete body of work of two writers is too much to handle in a single essay; two of their works or characters is a much more manageable challenge.
 - To evaluate whether or not your subjects have enough points of comparison and contrast, use a Venn diagram.

Considering Your Audience and Purpose

- The audience and purpose for your essay will affect the type of information you include in it.
- Use these questions to help you consider your audience:
 - Who will read your essay? Peers? A review panel?
 - How familiar will they be with the topic? What aspects of the topic will be most interesting to them?
- Use these questions to help you consider your purpose:
 - What aspects of the topic are most important to emphasize?
 - How will your audience use the information you are providing?





Exposition—Comparison-and-Contrast—Prewriting

Gathering Details

- Gather enough details, descriptions, facts, examples, and reasons to provide your audience with a clear understanding of each subject being compared and to support your statements about the similarities and difference between them.
- Following are three ways to gather details:
 - **Use Personal Experience**
 - Experience counts.
 - Use yours if you are comparing products, places or things with which you have direct experience or if you are comparing works of art, literature, or music.
 - For example, if you are comparing two products, use your own experience with each of them as evidence.
 - **Use Primary Sources**
 - Primary sources include original documents, such as scientific reports, company brochures, speeches, diary entries, journals, letters, or interview responses.
 - Primary source material provides the words or works of people who were participants in or eyewitnesses to an event.
 - **Use Secondary Sources**
 - Secondary sources come from a published work in which the writer presents ideas about a subject based on evidence from several primary sources.
 - For example, a biography of a president of the United States would be a secondary source.
 - To write one, its author would draw upon primary sources, including letters from the president and interviews with people who worked with the president.
 - The following chart gives examples of different types of details gathered in various ways:





Shaping Your Writing

- An effective comparison-and-contrast essay is usually organized in one of two ways:
 - **Subject-by-Subject Organization**
 - First discuss all the aspects of one subject and then discuss all the aspects of the second subject.
 - For example, you could discuss figure skating first and then discuss hockey skating
 - **Point-by-Point Organization**
 - Each aspect or point of c-and-c is discussed in turn.
 - For instance, discuss the cost of product A and the cost of product B, and then discuss the appearance of product A and that of product B, and so on.

Providing Elaboration

- During the drafting process, make sure you provide support for each of the statements you make about your subjects.
 - **Give Examples—**
 - Elaborate on your points by providing specific details and examples that clarify the similarities and differences between the subjects.
 - **Provide Facts—**
 - Provide facts to give your readers a clear understanding of each subject under discussion.
 - **Cite Quotations and Figures—**
 - Use quotations and statistical or numerical figures to lend authority to the points you make in your c-and-c essay.



Revising Your Overall Structure

- Because your essay has two or more subjects, it's particularly important to make sure that its structure is sound.
- If the structure of the essay is disorganized, a reader may become confused about which subject you are discussing.
- You also need to ensure that your essay is balanced—that equal space is devoted to each subject.
- **Revision Strategy**
 - Using a highlighter of one color go through your essay and mark each detail you have included about subject A.
 - Then use a highlighter of a second color to mark each detail you have included about subject B.
 - Examine the essay. Is there a lot of one color and just a little of the other? If so, add more information about the other subject.
 - Also, check to be sure that your essay consistently follows either point-by-point or subject-by-subject organization.
 - If the essay is well structured, your highlighted body paragraphs will form a pattern of color.

Revising Your Paragraphs

- Once you've evaluated the balance and structure of your essay, analyze your writing at the paragraph level.
- You may want to reorganize some of your paragraphs to give your essay variety and to make it more interesting to read.
- Following are some examples to help you come up with ways to structure your paragraphs.
- **Revision Strategy: TRI/PS.QA**
 - **TRI = Topic, Restatement, & Illustration**
 - **PS = Problem and Solution.** In this kind of structure, both a problem and a solution are presented.
 - **QA = Question and Answer.** Using this organization, a paragraph poses and answers a question.



Revising Your Sentences

- Read your comparison-and-contrast essay carefully, examining the sentences you have written.
- Correct run-ons and fragments by joining or breaking up groups of words as needed.
- Also revise complete sentences to create variety within your essay.
- Make sure that your sentences flow smoothly and connect ideas.
- Improve connections between ideas.
 - Review your draft, paying special attention to how well your ideas connect and flow together.
 - If your sentences are choppy and unconnected, consider combining them.
 - When combining sentences, use appropriate conjunctions to clearly indicate how the ideas within them are related.
- **Revision Strategy: Conjunctions**
 - Read your draft critically to make sure that your ideas flow smoothly and logically.
 - Whenever you find a passage that contains short, choppy sentences, combine the sentences and use a conjunction within the sentence to indicate relationships.
 - Use a coordinating conjunction to link ideas of equal importance.
 - Use a subordinating conjunction to indicate that one idea within a sentence is dependent upon another.
- **Conjunctions**
 - A conjunction is a word used to connect other words or groups of words.
 - In English, there are three main kinds of conjunctions:
 - Coordinating conjunctions
 - Correlative conjunctions
 - Subordinating conjunctions
 - As you revise your c-and-c essay, look for one example of each type of conjunction.
 - Examine each conjunction to make sure it shows the relationship you intend.
 - If you can't find any, challenge yourself to combine ideas with conjunctions.
 - **Coordinating conjunctions** connect similar kinds of groups of words.
 - There are seven coordinating conjunctions
 - *and, but, or, nor, for, yet, and so.*
 - **Examples:**
 - The golfers **and** basketball players arrived at the tournament.



Exposition—Comparison-and-Contrast—Revising

- The carryall bag given out to students was sturdy **yet** lightweight.
- Carry the picnic basket **or** the blanket outside.
- **Correlative Conjunctions** are used in pairs to connect similar words or groups of words.
 - **Examples:**
 - **Neither** thunder **nor** lightning had much of an effect on our sleepy cat.
 - **Both** Charles **and** Ed promised to help us get ready for the dance.
 - **Just as** bees fly to honey, **so** my car gravitates to potholes.
- **Subordinating conjunctions** connect two complete ideas by placing one idea below the other in rank or importance.
 - Commonly used subordinating conjunctions include:
 - *After, before, because, even if, since, so that, unless, until, when, and while.*
 - **Examples:**
 - He achieved a great deal of success **because** he practice regularly.
 - We can go to the part today, **even if** it rains.
 - **Now that** the show is over, you can go home.

Revising Your Word Choice

- **Add Transitions to Clarify Relationships**
 - Transitions indicate relationships.
 - You can improve the clarity of your writing by adding transitions that express the relationships between the ideas in your essay.
 - Check out the following chart to help you decide which transitions to use when:

Time Relationships	Spatial Relationships	Comparison-and-Contrast Relationships	Logical Relationships
Before; during; after; first; second; last; next; then; when; at the same time; now; later; immediately; soon; recently	Above; below; behind; in front of; alongside; next to; north; south; east; west; inside; outside; beneath; at the top of; at the bottom of	Along with; together with; as well as; also; similarly; although; though; however; nevertheless; yet; but; on the other hand; in contrast	If; whether; unless; therefore; thus; hence; in fact; in essence; for example; for instance





Exposition—Comparison-and-Contrast—Revising

- **Revision Strategy**
 - **Read Aloud** pairs of sentences in your draft.
 - For example, read the first and second sentence, then the second and third sentence, and so on.
 - Pause after each pair and ask: Would adding transitions clarify the relationship between the two sentences?
 - If so, add a transition from the chart above.
 - Reread the sentence to be sure that the transition works well
- **Peer Review**
 - **Ask Questions**—Work with a peer to revise your essay.
 - Write down five questions about your essay that you would like your peer reviewer to answer.
 - Then, exchange drafts and questions with your peer reviewer.
 - Take your peer's comments into consideration as you prepare a final draft.
 - **Sample Questions:**
 - What types of details would enhance my essay?
 - Have I provided a balanced treatment of the two subjects?
 - What aspects of the essay need improvement? Why?





Exposition—Comparison-and-Contrast—Editing and Proofreading, Publishing and Presenting

Editing and Proofreading

- Before sharing your comparison-and-contrast essay with others, proofread it carefully to correct errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar.
- Because comparison-and-contrast essays discuss two or more subjects, they often contain **compound sentences**.
- Pay close attention to your punctuation of compound sentences to ensure that you have correctly used commas within them.
- A **compound sentence** consists of two or more independent clauses joined by a comma and a coordinating conjunction or by a semicolon.
- As you proofread your comparison-and-contrast essay, check to be sure that you have punctuated all the compound sentences correctly.
- Use the following rules for properly punctuating compound sentences:
 - Use a comma before the conjunction that joins the clauses of a compound sentence
 - Eighteen tourists remained on the island, but most were safely evacuated before the hurricane struck.
 - Use a semicolon when no conjunction is used to join closely related independent clauses.
 - The tour bus was forced to take a detour; mudslides had made the main road impassable.

Publishing and Presenting

- Consider the following possibilities for publishing and presenting your comparison-and-contrast essay:
- **Building Your Portfolio**
 - **Present** your c-and-c essay to the class. Gather or create visual aids such as photographs and charts, and decide on the order in which you'll present them. Rehearse your presentation to give it polish.
 - **Electronic Essay**—Add to the details in your essay with digitized photographs, sound or video clips, or other multi-media elements. Share your essay with others by posting it on a Web site or uploading it onto a classroom computer.
- **Reflecting on Your Writing**
 - Think back on your writing experience.
 - Then, answer the following questions and save your responses in your portfolio.
 - What surprises did you encounter while gathering details for your essay?
 - If you could start over, would you choose the same subjects to compare and contrast? Why or why not?





Exposition—Comparison-and-Contrast—Rubric for Self-Assessment

Comparison and Contrast Essay

Name _____

Title of Essay _____

Total Score _____

	Score 4	Score 3	Score 2	Score 1	Your Score
Audience and Purpose	Chooses details and language that engage audience and achieve purpose	Chooses details and language appropriate for audience and purpose	Chooses details that mostly suit audience and purpose	Chooses details inappropriate for audience and that do not fulfill any purpose	
Organization	Clearly presents information in a consistent organization best suited to the topic	Presents information using an organization suited to the topic	Chooses an organization not suited to comparison and contrast	Shows a lack of organizational strategy	
Elaboration	Elaborates several ideas with facts, details, or examples; links all information to comparison and contrast	Elaborates most ideas with facts, details, or examples; links most information to comparison and contrast	Does not elaborate all ideas; does not link some details to comparison and contrast	Does not provide facts or examples to support a comparison and contrast	
Use of Language	Demonstrates excellent sentence and vocabulary variety; includes very few mechanical errors	Demonstrates adequate sentence and vocabulary variety; includes few mechanical errors	Demonstrates repetitive use of sentence structure and vocabulary; includes many mechanical errors	Demonstrates poor use of language; generates confusion; includes many mechanical errors	





Exposition—Comparison and Contrast—Assignment

Exposition: Comparison and Contrast

Name _____

Choose one of the following options and write an effective 5-Paragraph essay complete with full thesis (PLACED AT THE BOTTOM OF THIS PAGE).

1. Write an essay in which you compare and contrast an event or situation in history with one that is occurring today.
2. Select two competing products that you would consider buying. In your essay, focus on the merits or shortcomings of each one. Finally, provide the reader with a recommendation about which one is the better product or the better value.
3. Write a comparison and contrast essay about two favorite athletes or musical groups (or individuals).

