

3 | Comparison Essays



An American cruise ship docks in Havana Bay, Cuba.

OBJECTIVES

- Write a comparison essay
- Use connectors to show comparison and contrast
- Use adjective clauses correctly in an essay

FREWRITE

Look at the photo and read the caption. How would you compare the two modes of transportation in the photo? On a separate piece of paper, write what comes to mind.

ELEMENTS OF GREAT WRITING

What Is a Comparison Essay?

In a **comparison essay**, you can compare ideas, people, different times in history—any two items that are related in some way. You can focus on the similarities between the two items, on the differences, or on both the similarities and the differences. Your goal is to show—in a meaningful way—how these items are similar or different, what their strengths and weaknesses are, or what their advantages and disadvantages are. In a history class, your essay might compare heroes of the French Revolution and the American Revolution. In an economics class, you might write about the differences between supply-side and demand-side economics. In a computer science class, you might write about the differences between cloud hosting and traditional hosting of data.

Like other essays, the comparison essay has an introductory paragraph that contains a hook and a thesis statement, two or three or more paragraphs that make up the body, and a concluding paragraph.

WRITER'S NOTE Avoiding Common Comparisons

Good comparison essays do not state the obvious. They show similarities in things that are considered different and, conversely, focus on the differences between things that are considered to be similar.

Patterns of Organization

There are two basic ways to organize a comparison essay—the block method and the point-by-point method.

BLOCK METHOD	POINT-BY-POINT METHOD
Present one subject and all its points of comparison. Then do the same for the second subject. Discuss each subject completely without interruption.	Include both subjects in one point of comparison before moving on to the next point of comparison.
<p>Paragraph 1: Introduction Thesis: There are two solid options for data storage, each with pros and cons.</p> <p>Paragraph 2: Cloud data storage cost ease of use, reliability</p> <p>Paragraph 3: Traditional data storage cost ease of use, reliability</p> <p>Paragraph 4: Conclusion</p>	<p>Paragraph 1: Introduction Thesis: There are two solid options for data storage, each with pros and cons.</p> <p>Paragraph 2: Cost cloud data storage traditional data storage</p> <p>Paragraph 3: Ease of use cloud data storage traditional data storage</p> <p>Paragraph 4: Reliability cloud data storage traditional data storage</p> <p>Paragraph 5: Conclusion</p>

No matter which method of organization you choose, the information in a comparison essay must be presented in the same order. In the block-method example, notice that in Paragraph 2, all the important information about cloud data storage is presented (cost, ease of use, and reliability). The supporting information in Paragraph 3 also includes these three aspects in the same order with the focus on traditional data storage.

In the point-by-point method, the points of development are also cost, ease of use, and reliability. Each paragraph contains information about both storage systems.

ACTIVITY 1 | Comparing methods of organization

Review the two methods of organizing a comparison essay. Consider the advantages and disadvantages of both. Work with a partner to answer the questions.

1. Which method, block or point-by-point, requires more paragraphs?
2. Which is likely easier to organize and write?
3. As a reader, in which method are the points of comparison easier to follow?



Re-enactors in uniforms from the American Revolution join a fourth of July parade in Massachusetts, USA.

ACTIVITY 2 | Analyzing a comparison essay

This essay compares some features of Brazil and the United States. Discuss the questions below. Then read the comparison essay and answer the questions that follow.

1. How many different countries have you visited? Which of these countries felt “comfortable” to you? Which countries were very different from your own?
2. What does the word *individualism* mean to you?

WORDS TO KNOW Essay 3.1

asset: (n) an advantage

core: (n) center, essential part

disruptive: (adj) troublesome, disorderly

diversity: (n) variety

ethnic: (adj) sharing cultural characteristics

focus on: (v) to concentrate on

massive: (adj) huge

remarkable: (adj) amazing, extraordinary

unique: (adj) one of a kind, distinctive



ESSAY 3.1

Not as Different as One Would Think

1 All countries are **unique**. Obviously, countries are different from one another in location, size, language, government, climate, and lifestyle. Some countries, however, share some surprising similarities. In this case, Brazil and the United States come to mind. Some may think that these two nations have very little in common because they are in different hemispheres¹. On the contrary, the two countries share many similarities.

2 One important similarity between Brazil and the United States is their **massive** size. Both Brazil and the United States are extremely large countries. Brazil covers almost half of the South American continent. It has a land mass of nearly 3.3 million square miles (8.5 million square kilometers) and is home to cosmopolitan² centers such as Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. Due to its size, few Brazilians can say that they have traveled extensively within the country's borders. Like Brazil, the United States takes up a significant portion of its continent (North America). It extends from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean and has a land mass of 3.1 million square miles (8 million square kilometers), not including Alaska, Hawaii, and other territories. It is home to world-famous cities such as Los Angeles and New York. As a result of its size, it is fair to say that many people in the United States have not visited much of their country.

3 Another similarity between Brazil and the United States is the **diversity** of the population. Brazil was colonized³ by Europeans, and its culture has been greatly influenced by this fact. However, Brazilians' identity was influenced by many other cultures as well. Brazil is a “melting pot” of many **ethnic** groups that immigrated there and mixed with the indigenous⁴ people. The United States also has a diversity of ethnic groups, from the Native American population and early colonists from northern Europe to slave groups from Africa. Later immigrants from the Mediterranean, Asia, and South America added to the diversity of its citizens. The mixture of cultures and customs has worked to form ethnically rich cultures in both countries.

4 Finally, both countries share an important value: individualism. Brazil works hard to defend the concept of freedom of choice. Citizens believe that they have the right to do and be whatever they desire as long as they do not hurt others. This attitude was introduced in the 1930s and 1940s by Brazilian President Getúlio Vargas. He was responsible for establishing an individualistic government that helped modernize and industrialize the country. Individualism is also at the **core** of the culture in the United States, dating back to the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights. Both documents **focus on** individuals' many rights. Some people may believe that the desire for individual expression is **disruptive** and can make a country weak. However, the ability of people to be whatever they want is an **asset** to both countries.

5 Although Brazil and the United States have many differences, they also have **remarkable** similarities in their size, ethnic diversity, and core values. Some people believe that their culture and country are without equal. However, as with these two countries, a closer inspection shows that cultures everywhere have more in common than not.

¹hemisphere: half of the earth

²cosmopolitan: international

³colonized: settled

⁴indigenous: native; original

1. What is the main purpose of this essay? Begin with *The purpose is...*

2. Which three things (points of development) about Brazil and the United States does this essay compare?

3. What method of organization does the writer use—point-by-point or block?

4. What is the hook for this essay? Write it here.

5. Underline the thesis statement. Is the thesis restated in the conclusion? If yes, underline the sentence that restates the thesis.

6. In Paragraph 2, the author describes the size of Brazil and the United States. List the supporting information the writer uses.

7. Reread the concluding paragraph of Essay 3.1. Does the writer offer a suggestion, an opinion, a question, or a prediction?

ACTIVITY 3 | Understanding the elements of a comparison essay

Below is an outline for essay 3.1. Some of the information is missing. Reread the essay and complete the outline.

Title: _____

I. Introduction (Paragraph 1)

A. Hook: _____

B. Connecting information: Different location, size, language, government, climate, lifestyle

C. Thesis statement: _____

II. Body

A. Paragraph 2 (Similarity 1) topic sentence: _____

1. Brazil's characteristics

a. Size: _____

b. Travel: Few Brazilians have traveled extensively in their country.

2. _____

a. Size: covers most of North America, extends from Atlantic to Pacific Oceans, 3.1 million square miles (8 million square kilometers)

b. Travel: _____

B. Paragraph 3 (Similarity 2) topic sentence: Another similarity between Brazil and the United States is the diversity of the population.

1. Brazil

a. _____

b. Other ethnic groups

c. _____



2. United States

a. Native Americans

b. Northern Europe

c. _____

d. Later immigrants from Mediterranean

e. _____

f. _____

C. Paragraph 4 (Similarity 3) topic sentence: _____

1. Brazilians' belief in freedom: have the right to do and be whatever they want if don't hurt others, from President Getúlio Vargas in 1930s and 40s

2. U.S. belief in freedom: _____

III. Conclusion (Paragraph 5)

A. Restated thesis: _____

B. Opinion: All cultures are more similar than different.

WRITER'S NOTE Asking Questions

One of the best ways to develop details and facts that will support your main ideas (topic sentences) in each body paragraph is to ask yourself questions about the topic—*Where? Why? When? Who? What? How?*

Developing a Comparison Essay: Supporting Information

ACTIVITY 4 | Writing supporting information

Follow these steps.

1. Essay 3.2 includes an introduction, three topic sentences, and a conclusion. Develop each body paragraph with supporting information. You may write on a separate piece of paper.
2. After you finish, compare your supporting information with that of other students. (Note: This essay follows the point-by-point organizational pattern.)

WORDS TO KNOW Essay 3.2

consideration: (n) careful and mindful thought

eliminate: (v) to remove, destroy

intimidate: (v) to persuade by using fear

overwhelming: (adj) emotionally or physically overpowering

purchase: (n) anything that is bought



An ice cave within a glacier in Vatnajökull National Park, Iceland

ESSAY 3.2

Smartphone Choices

1 Some years ago, people were **intimidated** by shopping for a smartphone. For one, smartphone technology was so new that many people were afraid of it. It was also extremely expensive, and many consumers were not sure if these phones would soon be replaced by yet another new technology. History, of course, has shown that smartphones are here to stay.

Not only that, but they are getting smarter and smarter every year. Today's smartphone shoppers need to know what their two main options are. Although the technology is no longer new, it can still be intimidating to shop for a smartphone. Consumers can **eliminate** some of this fear by doing their homework first. One of the biggest **considerations** for a smartphone **purchase** is iOS or Android. To reach a decision, a buyer can compare these two operating systems in terms of their overall cost, convenience, and style.

2 iOS and Android devices can differ in their cost. _____

3 Another thing to consider is the convenience factor, such as the availability of certain apps. _____

4 Finally, there is the subject of style. _____

5 Choosing between these two types of smartphones is a personal decision for the consumer. This decision can be made more easily by looking at cost, convenience, and style preferences. While it can seem like an **overwhelming** task now, it certainly will not get any easier as more and more advanced smartphones come on the market.

Grammar: Connectors for Comparison Essays

Connectors help readers by providing logical connections between sentences, ideas, and paragraphs. Some connectors show comparison between sentences or ideas, and others show contrast or concession. Notice the use of commas with these connectors.

Connectors That Show Comparison between Sentences

COMPARISON	EXAMPLES
In addition , subject + verb.	Both Red Beauty and Midnight Dream roses are known for the size of their blooms, their color, and their fragrance. In addition , they are easy to grow.
Similarly , subject + verb.	The Midnight Dream rose won awards in local contests last year. Similarly , the Red Beauty rose was singled out for its beauty.
Likewise , subject + verb.	The blooms of Red Beauty roses last longer than those of most other roses. Likewise , the blooms of the Midnight Dream rose are long lasting.
Compared to subject, + verb.	Some roses last for a very short time. Compared to these roses, the blooms of Red Beauty and Midnight Dream roses last a long time.

Connectors That Show Contrast or Concession between Sentences

CONTRAST OR CONCESSION	EXAMPLES
However , subject + verb. <i>or</i> Nevertheless , subject + verb.	Many differences are clear to even beginner gardeners. Nevertheless , some of their differences are not very obvious.
On the other hand , subject + verb.	Some people find gardening dull. On the other hand , some people like nothing better than to work in their gardens.
In contrast , subject + verb.	Red Beauty has a strong, sweet fragrance. In contrast , Midnight Dream's fragrance is light and fruity.
Although subject + verb, subject + verb.	Both Midnight Dream roses and Red Beauty roses are red. Although both varieties produce red flowers, Midnight Dream roses are much darker than Red Beauty roses.
Even though subject + verb, subject + verb.	Red Beauty roses and Midnight Dream roses are long-stemmed. Even though both of these species are long stemmed, Red Beauty stems are thinner and covered with thorns.
Unlike noun, subject + verb.	What do we know about the cost of these two kinds of roses? Unlike Red Beauty, Midnight Dream roses are relatively inexpensive.

ACTIVITY 5 | Using connectors

Read the essay and choose the appropriate connectors. Refer to the grammar charts if necessary.

WORDS TO KNOW Essay 3.3

harm: (n) damage or injury

in essence: (phr) basically

lenient: (adj) tolerant, compassionate

monitor: (v) to observe something attentively

pretend: (v) to imagine, act as if something were true

scenario: (n) a situation, circumstance

when it comes to: (phr) with regards to

ESSAY 3.3

Parenting 101

1 The film previews are finished, and the movie theater is quiet as everyone waits for the feature film to begin. ¹(*However / In contrast*), the stillness is suddenly broken by a noise. The audience hears a snuffle¹. The snuffle soon turns to a cry, then a wail. There is an uncomfortable, or perhaps unhappy, toddler sitting in the movie theater. People start shuffling in their seats as they wait for what will happen next. Will the child be taken out of the theater, or will the parent **pretend** that everything is OK? **Scenarios** like these happen regularly. The parents' reaction depends on their parenting style. The two extremes are the **lenient** (*laissez-faire*²) parent and the strict disciplinarian³ parent.

2 Lenient parents often focus on their child having fun and enjoying being a kid. If a child does something careless like break a glass, lenient parents will not become angry or scream. They know that the child is probably experimenting and meant no **harm**. Likewise, the parents may even explain to the child that it was an accident and the child should not be upset. ²(*In contrast / Similarly*), lenient parents may not be too concerned about following a schedule. They will allow their children to stay up late and experience new things. The motto "You're only a kid once!" rings very true to these free spirits. These types of parents see themselves as guides for their children, which cannot be said about the second parenting group: the disciplinarians.

Every parent has a different style. This father encourages his children to play and joins them in having fun.



3 Disciplinarian parents consider themselves role models for their children. ³(*Unlike / Similarly*) lenient parents, their main priorities are the safety and protection of their children. **In essence**, children are **monitored** very carefully and may not be allowed to play outside, interact with animals, or roughhouse⁴ in general. A child who experiences a strict upbringing may be encouraged to focus on his or her studies instead of making friends. ⁴(*In addition / However*), interaction may be limited to only close family members. Children who are raised in highly disciplined environments are typically very focused on their schoolwork.

4 In the end, no parents are truly 100 percent lenient or 100 percent strict **when it comes to** raising their child. Most fall somewhere in the middle depending on the child, the environment, and the particular situation. ⁵(*Nevertheless / Similarly*), parents clearly lean toward one or the other parenting style. Society knows that both child-rearing styles have advantages and disadvantages, but the more interesting question is this: Which style will these children choose when the time comes for them to become parents?

¹snuffle: a breath taken in through the nose

²laissez-faire: French for *not interfering*; "leave it alone"

³disciplinarian: a person who believes in and demands obedience to rules

⁴roughhouse: to play in a rough way

Grammar: Subject Adjective Clauses

An adjective clause (also called a relative clause) is a group of words that describes or identifies the noun or pronoun that comes before it. An adjective clause must have a subject and a verb. In a subject adjective clause, the relative pronoun (*that*, *which*, or *who*) is the subject of the clause. Study the following rules and examples:

EXPLANATION	EXAMPLE
Use <i>that</i> or <i>which</i> for things.	<p style="text-align: center;">adjective clause</p> <p style="text-align: center;">S V</p> <p>The textbook that is required for the class is sold out.</p>
Use <i>who</i> or <i>that</i> for people.	<p style="text-align: center;">adjective clause</p> <p style="text-align: center;">S V</p> <p>The teacher who started the arts program has retired.</p>
If the information in the adjective clause is necessary to clarify the person or thing it describes, do not use a comma to separate the ideas.	<p style="text-align: center;">adjective clause</p> <p style="text-align: center;">S V</p> <p>The Florida city that is most popular with tourists is Orlando.</p>
If the information in the adjective clause is not necessary to understand the sentence, use comma(s) to separate the adjective clause. Commas indicate the information is extra. In nonessential clauses, do not use the pronoun <i>that</i> .	<p style="text-align: center;">adjective clause</p> <p style="text-align: center;">S V</p> <p>Orlando, which is located in Florida, is popular with tourists.</p>

Adjective clauses are a way to combine two ideas (simple sentences) into one complex sentence. Study the following examples:

SIMPLE SENTENCES	COMPLEX SENTENCES WITH ADJECTIVE CLAUSES
The shop is always very busy. The shop sells used sports cars.	The shop that sells used sports cars is always very busy.
Samir studies at a university. The university is well known for its technology programs.	Samir studies at a university that is well known for its technology programs .
The Khan Academy is a free online tutoring service. It focuses on science and technology education.	The Khan Academy, which focuses on science and technology education , is a free online tutoring service.

ACTIVITY 6 | Writing adjective clauses

Read the following introduction to a comparison essay on vacations. Use the information in parentheses to write adjective clauses. Write the new sentences with adjective clauses on a separate piece of paper.

WORDS TO KNOW Essay 3.4

affordable: (adj) inexpensive

burden: (n) a worrying responsibility

integral: (adj) essential, necessary

numerous: (adj) many

ESSAY 3.4

The Benefits of Taking Vacation

(Vacations are an **integral** part of life. Vacations can range from a few days to months.)¹ Vacations, which can range from a few days to months, are an integral part of life. Taking time off from school or work has **numerous** benefits on the mind, body, and spirit. (Some people might have to spend a lot of money. These people wait too long.)² _____. However, the news is not all bad. There are some **affordable** vacation options. For instance, some people might prefer to stay home. (A “staycation” is a good alternative. A staycation involves relaxing at home without the **burden** of school or work.)³ _____. Time off regenerates the individual and cannot be undervalued. Regardless of the destination, whether a traditional vacation or a staycation, (time off is necessary for everyone. The time off should be relaxing.)⁴ _____.

ACTIVITY 7 | Writing more adjective clauses

Complete each sentence with an adjective clause.

- The employee wants a supervisor who _____.
- World War II was an unforgettable event in history that _____.
- The town government passed a law that _____.
- The animals that _____ are in danger of becoming extinct.
- The Eiffel Tower, which _____, is located in Paris.

BUILDING BETTER VOCABULARY

WORDS TO KNOW

affordable (adj)

asset (n)

burden (n)

consideration (n)

core (n) **AW**

disruptive (adj)

diversity (n) **AW**

eliminate (v) **AW**

ethnic (adj) **AW**

focus on (v) **AW**

harm (n)

in essence (phr) **AW**

integral (adj) **AW**

intimidate (v)

lenient (adj)

massive (adj)

monitor (v) **AW**

numerous (adj)

overwhelming (adj)

pretend (v)

purchase (n) **AW**

remarkable (adj)

scenario (n) **AW**

unique (adj) **AW**

when it comes to (phr)

ACTIVITY 8 | Word associations

Circle the word or phrase that is more closely related to the bold word or phrase on the left.

- | | | |
|----------------------|------------|-------------|
| 1. affordable | expensive | inexpensive |
| 2. asset | useless | valuable |
| 3. burden | difficult | easy |
| 4. eliminate | get rid of | keep |
| 5. ethnic | water | food |
| 6. in essence | basically | uniquely |
| 7. integral | important | lucky |
| 8. monitor | keep | watch |
| 9. pretend | imagine | understand |
| 10. unique | many | one |

ACTIVITY 9 | Collocations

Fill in the blank with the word or phrase that most naturally completes the phrase.

core	lenient	numerous	remarkable	scenario
------	---------	----------	------------	----------

- best-case _____
- _____ approach to parenting
- _____ complaints
- a _____ recovery
- _____ values

consideration	disruptive	diversity	focus on	massive
---------------	------------	-----------	----------	---------

- _____ the positive
- _____ of opinions
- _____ behavior
- careful _____
- _____ explosion

ACTIVITY 10 | Word forms

Complete each sentence with the correct word form. Use the correct form of the verbs.

NOUN	VERB	ADJECTIVE	ADVERB	SENTENCES
diversity	diversify	diverse	diversely	1. The _____ types of palm trees found in the Middle East are fascinating. 2. One of the most interesting aspects of the Moonwalker Corporation is the _____ of its employees.
harm	harm	harmful	harmfully	3. Doctors take an oath to do no _____ to their patients. 4. It is widely known that cigarettes are _____ to one's health.

NOUN	VERB	ADJECTIVE	ADVERB	SENTENCES
intimidation	intimidate	intimidated / intimidating		5. The lawyer _____ the witness during the trial. 6. _____ is what bullies use to frighten their victims.
remark	remark	remarkable	remarkably	7. _____, the premature baby survived the operation. 8. It was a _____ movie; it is no wonder it won an Academy Award.
uniqueness		unique	uniquely	9. Her _____ skill of foreseeing problems has helped her advance in her career. 10. The _____ of sharks compared to other animals interests scientists.

ACTIVITY 11 | Vocabulary in writing

Choose five words from Words to Know. Write a complete sentence with each word.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____



BUILDING BETTER SENTENCES

ACTIVITY 12 | Writing about photos

On a separate piece of paper, write three to five sentences comparing and contrasting the two photos.



ACTIVITY 13 | Combining sentences

Combine the ideas into one sentence. You may change the word forms, but do not change or omit any ideas. There may be more than one answer.

1. The city of Pompeii had plumbing.
The plumbing was extremely modern.
The city was destroyed by a volcanic eruption.
The eruption happened in AD 79.

2. The adult human body has bones.
There are 206 bones in the adult human body.
A baby's body has 270 bones.
Two-hundred and seventy is an approximate number.

3. The highest temperature on Earth was in El Azizia, Libya.
The temperature was recorded.
The temperature peaked at 136 degrees Fahrenheit.

ACTIVITY 14 | Scrambled sentences

Unscramble the words and phrases to write complete sentences. Be sure to punctuate correctly.

1. is often crowded / especially on weekends / with the best selection / the bookstore

2. the only metal / at room temperature / Mercury is / that is liquid

3. is Florence / one of the most visited cities / which is home of the Renaissance / in Italy

4. is one of the / of the 21st century / of the driverless car / most fascinating advancements / the development

5. which is also known as the Hijri calendar / the cycles of the moon / the Islamic calendar / is based on

WRITING

Developing Ideas for Writing: Brainstorming

You may be asked to write comparison essays in your classes. Often, you will be given the two subjects to be compared, such as two poems from a literature course, two political beliefs from a political science course, or an invention and a discovery from a history or science course. When you have to choose your subjects for comparison, the following brainstorming tips will help you.

Tips for Brainstorming Topics

- 1. The two topics should have something in common.** For example, eating at home and eating out in a restaurant are both examples of places where people can get a meal. Eating at home and going out to see a movie are both activities, but they do not have enough in common to compare easily.
- 2. The two topics must also have some differences.** For example, the most obvious differences between eating at home and eating in a restaurant are atmosphere, cost, and food variety. Eating eggs at home and eating pasta at home do not have enough differences to make for an interesting comparison.
- 3. You need to have enough information on each topic to make your comparisons.** If you choose two topics that are not well known, it might be more difficult to come up with information. For example, an essay comparing eating at home and eating at your neighbor's home, which you've never visited, would be difficult to support.

Making a List

A good way to determine whether you have enough information about similarities and differences between two topics is to brainstorm a list. Read the information in the lists.

Eating at home

atmosphere always the same

less expensive

limited food options—you eat what's been prepared

food can be cooked in different ways

eat with family members

Eating in a restaurant

atmosphere varies depending on restaurant

more expensive: paying for food AND service

can choose from a variety of food on the menu

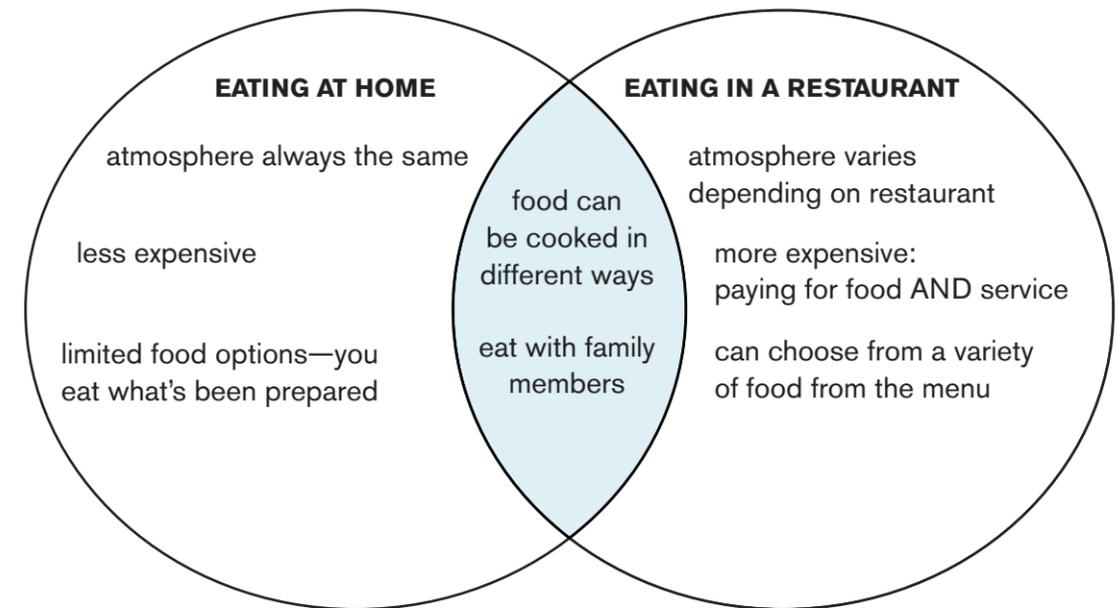
food can be cooked in different ways

eat with family members

Notice that the similarities are circled. These are “links” between the two subjects. A writer could use these links to highlight the similarities between the two options or to lead into a discussion of the differences between them: “Although food can be cooked in different ways whether eating at home or eating in a restaurant, more people prefer . . .”

Making a Venn Diagram

Another way to brainstorm similarities and differences is to use a Venn diagram. A Venn diagram is a visual representation of the similarities and differences between two concepts. The middle area, where the two circles overlap, shows the similarities. This Venn diagram compares the characteristics of eating at home and eating in a restaurant.



ACTIVITY 15 | Identifying topics for a comparison essay

Below are pairs of potential topics for a comparison essay. Write *yes* under the pairs that would be good and explain briefly what characteristics could be compared. Write *no* under topics that would not be good choices and change one or both of them into more suitable topics.

1. living in a house/living in an apartment

yes—compare costs, privacy, space

2. international travel/domestic travel

3. high school/college

4. the weather in Toronto/tourist attractions in Toronto

5. wild animals/animals in a zoo

6. computers/computer keyboards

7. hands/feet

8. the surface of the ocean floor/the surface of the continents

9. Earth/the North American continent

10. Chinese food/Mexican food

ACTIVITY 16 | Brainstorming: working with a topic

Complete the following steps to develop ideas for a comparison essay.

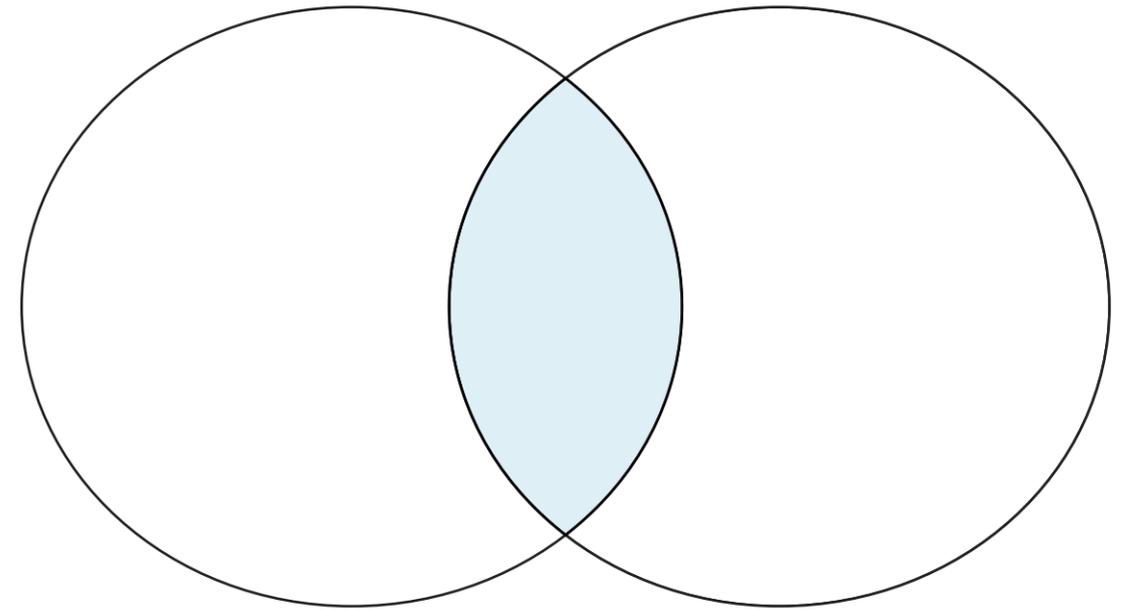
1. Choose one topic from the list or use your own idea for a topic. If you want to use an original idea, talk to your teacher to see if it is appropriate for a comparison essay.

- two movies
- two systems of education
- two machines
- two professions
- two famous people
- two desserts

2. Review the two brainstorming methods from this unit. Fill in the following chart to brainstorm a list of information about each subject.

TOPIC:	
Subject 1:	Subject 2:
<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

3. Now fill in the Venn diagram using the same information you wrote in the chart.



4. Decide if you are going to focus on the similarities or the differences between the two subjects or both in your comparison essay. Then choose three or four main points of comparison that you will use and list them here.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____



ACTIVITY 17 | Creating an outline

Use the following outline to help you brainstorm a more detailed plan for your comparison essay. For this activity, use the point-by-point method of organization. Remember that the point-by-point method organizes each paragraph by one point of development. Include your ideas from Activity 16.

Topic: _____

I. Introduction (Paragraph 1)

A. Hook: _____

B. Connecting information: _____

C. Thesis statement: _____

II. Body

A. Paragraph 2 (first point of comparison) topic sentence: _____

1. _____

a. _____

b. _____

2. _____

a. _____

b. _____

SUPPORT

B. Paragraph 3 (second point of comparison) topic sentence: _____

1. _____

a. _____

b. _____

2. _____

a. _____

b. _____

C. Paragraph 4 (third point of comparison) topic sentence: _____

1. _____

a. _____

b. _____

2. _____

a. _____

b. _____

SUPPORT

III. Conclusion (Paragraph 5)

A. Restated thesis: _____

B. Suggestion, prediction, question, or opinion: _____

If you need ideas for phrasing, see *Useful Words and Phrases* in the *Writer's Handbook*.

ACTIVITY 18 | Peer editing your outline

Exchange books with a partner and look at Activity 17. Read your partner's outline. Then use the Peer Editing Form for Outlines in the *Writer's Handbook* to help you comment on your partner's work. Be sure to offer positive suggestions and comments that will help your partner write a better outline and essay. Use your partner's feedback to revise your own outline. Make sure you have enough information to develop your supporting sentences.

ACTIVITY 19 | Writing a comparison essay

Write a comparison essay based on your revised outline from Activity 18. Use at least two of the vocabulary words or phrases presented in the unit. Underline these words and phrases in your essay. Be sure to refer to *Steps in the Writing Process* in the *Writer's Handbook*.

ACTIVITY 20 | Editing your essay

Exchange papers from Activity 19 with a partner. Read your partner's essay. Then use Peer Editing Form 3 in the *Writer's Handbook* to help you comment on your partner's writing. Be sure to offer positive suggestions and comments that will help your partner improve his or her essay. Consider your partner's comments as you revise your essay.

Additional Topics for Writing

Here are five ideas for writing a comparison essay. Follow your teacher's instructions and choose one or more topics to write about.

- TOPIC 1: Compare or contrast two places that you have visited. How are these places alike or different? Consider each place's geography, weather, food, language, etc.
- TOPIC 2: Compare a couple's life before and after having a baby. What activities are no longer done after having a baby? What activities are more difficult? What are some new experiences that couples have after having a baby?
- TOPIC 3: Choose two famous athletes that play the same sport. Write a comparison essay about how they are similar or different. A few points of comparison might be skill, background, and popularity.
- TOPIC 4: Explain how long-distance transportation is different today from 100 years ago. How did people travel long distances before modern inventions such as the airplane?
- TOPIC 5: Show the similarities and/or differences in the ways that two cultures celebrate an important event, such as a birthday, wedding, or funeral.

TEST PREP

TIP

Make sure that you understand the writing prompt or question. Every timed writing activity is asking for a particular rhetorical style. If the writing topic asks for an explanation, you must explain. If it asks for a comparison, focus on writing a comparison. Do not risk getting points taken off your timed writing because you did not respond to the writing prompt.

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task. Write a comparison essay about the following topic:

Compare two popular vacation destinations.

For this assignment, use the point-by-point method. Remember to double space your essay. Include a short introduction with a thesis statement, three body paragraphs, and a brief conclusion. Write at least 250 words.



Going camping is more complicated with a baby.