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Grades 6 and up: Organizing a Comparison-Contrast Essay

- This skill sheet will teach you about **two ways to organize a comparison-contrast paper**.
 - The **Block and Point-by-Point Models** can be used for something short like a single comparison-contrast paragraph or for a much longer paper—even for an entire book!
- ⇒ Let's start by looking at some **pre-writing notes** for a comparison-contrast paragraph on high school and college. Notice that the topics in **green**, **blue**, or **red** are **points of comparison**.

High School	College
Growth as thinker and person, inside/outside of class	Growth as thinker and person, inside/outside of class
⇒ academic skills from classes	⇒ academic skills from classes
⇒ inter-personal skills from classes and outside of class	⇒ inter-personal skills from classes and outside of class
Choices? Not many!	Choices? Many!
⇒ can't always choose which classes	⇒ which classes
⇒ schedule usually set by school	⇒ schedule
⇒ format of classes usually limited by school	⇒ format of classes
⇒ some choice of extra-curriculars	⇒ extra-curriculars (clubs, sports, internships, etc.)
Independence? Some, but don't need to be 100% independent	Independence? Definitely necessary
⇒ Teachers help (example: study guides).	⇒ Instructors offer some help, but less than in high school.

What's similar?

- * Both allow room to grow as a student and a person.

What's different?

- * Less choice in high school than in college
- * Need to be more independent in college

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Based on our pre-writing notes, we can create two drafts: one **using the Block Method** of organization and the **second one using the Point-by-Point Method**.

Notice that the **middle (body)** of this **Block Method** paragraph focuses on **high school first** and **college second**:

High school and college are similar because both offer opportunities to grow as a student and a person, but they differ in terms of students' choices and degree of independence. In high school, time spent in academic classes, extra-curricular activities, and informal social groups shapes a person's growth. In academic classes, high school students improve their content knowledge, critical thinking skills, writing skills, and ability to collaborate with others. Activities outside of class can also help high school students grow and change in these and other areas. However, students typically have limited choice when it comes to the classes they take, when they attend class, the format of their classes, etc. In addition, although high school students need to complete most assignments on their own, their teachers usually offer structure and help. For example, they may provide detailed study guides to help students be successful on tests. Therefore, high schoolers need to be only somewhat independent. Like high school, college focuses on learning and offers many opportunities to grow, both inside and outside of class. Many college graduates say that college was when they truly "grew up" and became adults. Unlike high school students, however, college students have a huge array of choices when it comes to classes, class format (e.g., in-person vs. online), schedule, extra-curricular activities, and so on. College students are responsible for their own schedules, and they are also responsible for their own success. Although they can visit office hours and review sessions offered by their instructors, they may not receive study guides or other kinds of support they had in high school. College requires students to be independent adults. In conclusion, both high school and college are great places to learn and grow, but high school offers less freedom than college while college requires more independence and responsibility than high school.

The **middle (body)** of this **Point-by-Point Method** paragraph is different. It goes point-by-point (learning, choice, and independence) and **compares high school and college every step of the way**. It discusses both a **similarity** and two **differences**.

High school and college are similar because both offer opportunities to grow as a student and a person, but they differ in terms of students' choices and degree of independence. In both high school and college, students learn both in and outside of class. They develop their academic skills, learn how to work and communicate with others, and gain maturity. However, high school offers far fewer choices to students when it comes to the classes they take, when they attend class, the format of their classes, etc. By contrast, college students can usually choose their classes, schedule, and even class format (e.g. in-person or online). High school and college also differ in the amount of independence they require. Although high school students need to complete most assignments on their own, their teachers usually offer structure and help such as through detailed study guides to help students prepare for tests. College students must be more independent than high schoolers in their learning. Although they can visit office hours and review sessions offered by their instructors, they may not receive study guides or other kinds of support they had in high school, and they have to take responsibility for their own success. In conclusion, both high school and college are great places to learn and grow, but high school offers less freedom than college while college requires more independence and responsibility.