

Comparison and Contrast Essay Writing

The differences between comparison and contrast are quite simple: if the similarities between two things, ideas, or concepts are being emphasized, it is a **comparison** essay; if the differences are being emphasized, it is a **contrast** essay. The following examples illustrate the two ways to organize a comparison/contrast essay:

Comparing or Contrasting Britney Spears and Madonna

Block

This is where you discuss one item fully in one paragraph, and then discuss the other item in a separate paragraph. The block method works best for short papers.

1. Introduction
2. Britney's physical appearance, singing ability and success, and tabloid perception
3. Madonna's physical appearance, singing ability and success, and tabloid perception
4. Discussion of the comparison and/or contrast of both items
5. Conclusion

Slice/ Point-by-Point

When comparison/contrast writing gets complex your readers will be able to see your points better if you present them side by side, using the slice method.

1. Introduction
2. Physical appearance of Britney and Madonna
3. Singing ability and success of Britney and Madonna
4. Tabloid perception of Britney and Madonna
5. Conclusion

Transition words are used in the slice structure:

Words that show comparison- and, also, similarly, likewise, in addition

Words that show contrast- although, on the other hand, but, however, on the contrary, while, whereas

Some tips for writing a comparison or contrast essay

- 1) Make sure the two items you have chosen are appropriately paired; to make a satisfactory comparison or contrast, they must have something in common.
- 2) Your main points must apply equally to both items.
- 3) Your thesis statement should clearly present the two items to be compared or contrasted and the basis for comparison.
- 4) Always read the question and notice if it says: compare **or** contrast, compare **and** contrast, compare **and/or** contrast.