

## Comparison and Contrast Essay

### Definition:

In this kind of essay, the aim is to show the similarities and differences of two items, two people, two countries, or how something or someone has changed. When comparing two things, we focus more on the similarities though we may mention the differences shortly. When contrasting two things, we point out the differences between them.

The most important point to consider while planning a comparison and contrast essay is choosing comparable items.

e.g. Middle East Technical University and Bogazici University.

We have to make sure that these two items have enough points to be compared. After writing the comparable points as a list,

- location,
- size,
- reputation,
- specialty,
- social clubs,
- sports facilities,

we have to eliminate some of them and choose 2-3 from the list that can lead to full supported paragraphs.

- location
- size
- specialty

### Organization:

Two patterns of organization are possible:

#### 1. Point-by-Point

In this pattern, the organization is as follows:

thesis statement: METU and BOUN are Turkey's two very prestigious universities with some differences in their specialties, facilities, and locations.

#### I. specialty

A. METU

B. BOUN

#### II. facility

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A. METU

B. BOUN

III. location

A. METU

B. BOUN

For each of the points of comparison, we compare and contrast the two items.

### 2. Block (All of One / All of the Other)

In this pattern, the two items to be compared and contrasted form two separate paragraphs. In each paragraph the points of comparison are discussed in the same order, as in the following organization:

thesis statement: METU and BOUN are Turkey's two very prestigious universities with some differences in their specialties, facilities, and locations.

I. BOUN

A. specialty

B. facility

C. location

II. METU

A. specialty

B. facility

C. location

This pattern is mostly used when the amount of information about the items is limited. Also some topics (e.g. Your life before and after the divorce of your parents) lend themselves to block type organization.

### **Language:**

The two patterns differ in terms of language as well. While pattern 2 is quite straightforward, pattern 1 requires more transitions but the end product is more understandable for the reader.

Some transitions that can be used for showing similarity:

*similar to, similarly*

*like*

*both ... and ...*

*in addition*

*moreover*

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*besides*  
*likewise*  
*in the same way*

Some transitions indicating difference:

*different from*  
*in contrast to*  
*compared with*  
*unlike*  
*but, however*  
*on the other hand*  
*conversely*  
*in contrast*

Do not forget that using transitions enables the piece of writing to be coherent; it is easier for the reader to follow our ideas when transitions are used to link them together. However, overuse of transitions causes a traffic jam and should be avoided. We should be using transitions sparingly (only when necessary).

### **Sample comparison contrast essay:**

#### **METU and Bogazici University**

Almost all high school students who would like to further their academic lives in the university search for information about the various universities of Turkey. Among many universities in Turkey, two of them are the most popular: Middle East Technical University and Bogazici University. They are considered the best. However, since both cannot be THE BEST, their specialties, facilities and locations need to be examined in detail to be able to choose the most suitable university for one's education life.

One of the areas that one should investigate is the specialties of the two universities. METU is a comparatively new university (1956). Its aim was to contribute to the development of Turkey and Middle East countries and especially to train people so as to create a skilled workforce in the fields of natural and social sciences. The first academic program to start education was the Department of Architecture. It was followed by the Department of Mechanical Engineering. Today, there are 37 undergraduate programs in five faculties of METU. Bogazici University, on the other hand, is a very old university (1863). Its first name was Robert College. It got its present name in 1971. It started education by giving Bachelor of Arts degree.

Engineering building was built later (1912). Today, Bogazici is known to graduate students who have strong social and business skills.

The second point we would like to compare is their facilities. METU is widely recognized with its cultural and intellectual facilities. The campus houses pioneers of some clubs such as mountaineering and scuba diving clubs, which are only two of a total of 25 different social clubs that students can choose. There is an alumni society. There are two gymnasiums, 7 tennis courts, a closed and an open swimming pool. However, the campus is far from the city center; therefore, there are not many places to eat at around the campus. METU has a very good library with hard and electronic copies of many books and journals. Bogazici also has a very good library, a swimming pool, a gymnasium and an alumni society that offers many extra-curricular courses, such as fitness, yoga, cooking courses. There are canteens on campus. However, unlike METU, Bogazici is situated in Etiler and it is close to Bebek, places popular with young people and there are a lot of places to eat around the campus.

This brings us to the third point we would like to compare; the campus. The two campuses are quite different from each other. Bogazici campus is quite old; dates back to the second half of 19<sup>th</sup> century. The buildings are very old. Though they are restored from time to time, they have historical value and their facades cannot be changed. The campus is full of old trees and it has an awesome view of the Bosphorus. The campus is quite large. However, new buildings cannot be added so two new campuses have been constructed. One is called the North Campus and is quite close to the main campus. The other is in Kilyos, 40 km away. There are shuttle busses for both campuses. METU, on the other hand, is modern looking with concrete and red brick buildings. The campus is large enough to allow construction of new buildings. With many green areas where students can meet and talk, it has a more academic atmosphere.

As a conclusion, we can say that METU dwells more on the technical departments and a closed campus life which enables the students to concentrate on their courses more. On the other hand, Bogazici is very good at social sciences and economics departments and has every facility to create a cultural and intellectual environment for the student. One should evaluate one's priorities before making such a choice.