

How to Write a Compare and Contrast Essay

The Best Formats for Comparison in the Short and Long Paper

Mar 24, 2009 [Megge Hill Fitz-Randolph](#)

The best compare and contrast essays uses either a Subject by Subject or a Point by Point format. Choose the type that suits your topic and main thesis.

A Compare and Contrast essay is a useful tool to have in your toolbox of organizing strategies. Helpful anytime you want to look at two or more subjects side by side and draw conclusions, the compare contrast essay is turned to often in college papers.

Often used in college writing classes, this is the foundation from which most argument and persuasive essays are written. In order to keep the points being addressed clear and orderly it is important to choose your best organizing strategy and stick with it. Here are the two main strategies:

Subject by Subject Organization; Best for Shorter Essays

With *subject by subject* strategy each subject is taken up and examined individually. So if one is comparing football teams, for example, after writing an introductory paragraph which includes an overall point of view of both teams, normally referred to as the *thesis*, the next paragraph speaks to everything about Iowa football team. Everything about this subject is organized into one or two paragraphs and exhausted before moving on to the next subject. Following this, the other subject is taken up, say the Michigan football team. Now everything about the Michigan team is examined in one or two paragraphs.

To keep a balance between the two topics, use the same number of paragraphs in each. Also, it works best to keep the points in the same order. Subject by subject is a good organizing structure for the shorter essays where two to three paragraphs per subject is generally adequate.

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