

A person is shown from a top-down perspective, sitting at a desk and writing in a notebook. The person's right hand holds a pen, and their left hand holds a pencil. The notebook is open, and the person is writing on the right page. The background is a solid purple color.

Lesson 5

Comparison and Contrast Paragraph

Usefulness of the model

Whenever you want to examine how things are similar you compare them. Also, when you look at their differences you contrast them.

Practicality of the model

1- Sometimes you use comparison and contrast to describe something **new**; by telling your readers how a thing is similar to or different from something they know, you can help them understand the new thing.

Example: To explain a rotary automobile engine, you would probably compare and contrast it to the conventional automobile (piston) engine.

2- However, besides explaining something new, comparison and contrast also appear frequently as the basis for **decision making**.

Example: Because A and B share some characteristics but differ in others, one is better and the other worse.

Comparison and Contrast to a Thesis

Comparison and contrast lead logically to a thesis because you usually won't bother to compare and contrast unless you have some purpose in mind. Writing out our thoughts not only helps us better understand the reasons for making a decision, but can help others make more informed choices.

Example

The rotary automobile engine is different from the conventional automobile engine.

Or not to state merely the obvious

*Although the mechanical structure of the rotary automobile engine is obviously different from that of the conventional automobile engine, **the rotary engine offers little worthwhile improvement.***

Thus comparison or contrast for its own sake is generally pointless, but both are extremely useful to develop support for **a thesis.**

Conceptual Approaches to Comparison and Contrast

There are two general conceptual approaches to write comparison and contrast essays:

1-You can briefly note the difference between items but the thesis should *concentrate on their similarity* (comparison).

Example: Although the mechanical structure of the rotary automobile engine is obviously different from that of the conventional automobile engine, **the rotary engine offers little worthwhile improvement.**

2-You can briefly note the similarity between items but the thesis should *concentrate on their differences* (contrast).

Example: Although they both depend on internal combustion, **the rotary automobile engine is a significant improvement over the conventional automobile engine.**

Note:

In both cases, **the opposite** can provide the motivator section of your theme's introduction.

The thesis establishes your primary purpose, which you will concentrate on; you will obviously discuss that side in the central sections.

Yet, how will you deal with the opposite? You have two choices. If the opposite is well known, let the introduction handle it. But if the opposite is not generally understood, you may need to develop it in the body of the theme.

Two Organizational Approaches

Type I

- Introduction
- Item A
- Element 1
- Element 2
- Element 3
- Item B
- Element 1
- Element 2
- Element 3
- Conclusion

Type II

- Introduction
- Element 1
- Item A
- Item B
- Element 2
- Item A
- Item B
- Element 3
- Item A
- Item B
- Conclusion

Whether you choose the Type I or type II organization for the central paragraphs of your theme, make sure that you always cover the **same subtopic** in the **same order**.

As a result, Type I organization is better for **short paper** dealing with only a few items and elements. On the other hand, type II organization destroys the sense of the whole item as it builds the relationships of the elements . Still, type II development can handle more items and more elements, so it is more useful than Type I for a longer comparison and contrast paper.

Example of Type I

Introduction (thesis statement)

Cars:

Cost

Convenience

Comfort

Environmental impact

Transition

Public Transit:

Cost

Convenient

Comfort

Environmental impact

Conclusion

Transportation Choices

North Americans clearly prefer driving their own cars to using public transport. In many ways, the desire to own a car is easy to understand. True, cars are expensive to buy and run. Car payments, gas, insurance, and repairs can cost thousands per year. But people love the convenience of cars that they see as an expression of personal freedom. Cars provide a comfortable small personal space in which people can drink coffee and listen to music. Most car owners give little thought to the damage to the environment all these cars are doing even as they seat in traffic complaining about too many cars on the road. Unlike car owners, bus riders are prepared to make some sacrifices to save money. Bus schedules are not always convenient and buses don't take you to your door. Standing on a jerky bus is no fun either. Riders can, however, take some small pleasure in the knowledge that using a bus is environmentally responsible way to get around town. Unfortunately, until there is a huge change in the attitude of car owners towards using public transit, cars will continue to rule the roads and our environment and our cities will pay the price.

Example of Type II

Introduction

		Item A	Item B
Element 1	Cost	cars -----	transit
Element 2	Convenience	cars -----	transit
Element 3	Comfort	cars -----	transit
Element 4	Environmental	cars -----	transit

Conclusion

Transportation Choices

When faced with the choice of driving their own car or using the bus, the majority of North Americans opt for cars. They are not put off by the fact that owning and running a car is expensive when compared to the cost of monthly or annual transit passes in most cities. In addition to the initial cost of a car there is gas, repairs, insurance and parking which add up to thousands a year while a typical bus pass is about \$50 a month. Yet most people are willing to pay this price for the convenience of owning a car. They enjoy the freedom of coming and going according to their own whims. They are simply not willing to put up with waiting for buses that stop far from their homes and are often packed with unkempt strangers. Cars are comfortable and personal spaces, in contrast to the grungy and impersonal feeling of many buses. But as they motor happily along, few car owners even think about what their personal vehicle use is doing to the environment. Do they know that a loaded bus creates much less pollution per person than a car? Unfortunately, until there is a huge change in the attitude of car owners towards using public transit, cars will continue to rule the roads and our environment and our cities will pay the price.



Additional Information about Verbs

Verb Tense

Verbs tell us the time of an action. The time that a verb shows is usually called *tense*. The most common tenses are the simple present, past, and future. In addition, there are nine other tenses that enable us to express more specific ideas about time than we could with the simple tenses alone.

The perfect tenses are formed by adding *have*, *has*, or *had* to the past participle (the form of the verb that ends, usually, in *-ed*). The progressive tenses are formed by adding *am*, *is*, *are*, *was*, or *were* to the present participle (the form of the verb that ends in *-ing*). The perfect progressive tenses are formed by adding *have been*, *has been*, or *had been* to the present participle.

Present Perfect

(*have* or *has* + past participle)

The present perfect tense expresses an action that began in the past and has recently been completed or is continuing in the present.

The city *has* just *agreed* on a contract with the sanitation workers.

Anthony's parents *have lived* in that house for twenty years.

Jen *has enjoyed* mystery novels since she was a little girl.

Past Perfect

(*had* + past participle)

The past perfect tense expresses a past action that was completed before another past action.

Grace *had learned* to dance by the time she was five.

The class *had* just *started* when the fire bell rang.

Bad weather *had* never *been* a problem on our vacations until last year.

Present Progressive

(*am, is, or are* + the *-ing* form)

The present progressive tense expresses an action still in progress.

I *am taking* an early train into the city every day this week.

Alexys *is playing* softball over at the field.

The vegetables *are growing* rapidly.

Past Progressive

(*was or were* + the *-ing* form)

The past progressive expresses an action that was in progress in the past.

I *was spending* eighty dollars a week on cigarettes before I quit.

Last week, the store *was selling* many items at half price.

My friends *were driving* over to pick me up when the accident occurred.

Verbals

Verbals are words formed from verbs. Verbals, like verbs, often express action. They can add variety to your sentences and vigor to your writing style. The three kinds of verbals are *infinitives*, *participles*, and *gerunds*.

Infinitive

An infinitive is *to* plus the base form of the verb.

I started *to practice*.

Don't try *to lift* that table.

I asked Russ *to drive* me home.

Participle

A participle is a verb form used as an adjective (a descriptive word). The present participle ends in *-ing*. The past participle ends in *-ed* or has an irregular ending.

Favoring his *cramped* leg, the *screaming* boy waded out of the pool.

The *laughing* child held up her *locked* piggy bank.

Using a shovel and a bucket, I scooped water out of the *flooded* basement.

Gerund

A gerund is the *-ing* form of a verb used as a noun.

Studying wears me out.

Playing basketball is my main pleasure during the week.

Through *jogging*, you can get yourself in shape.

Active and Passive Verbs

When the subject of a sentence performs the action of a verb, the verb is in the *active voice*. When the subject of a sentence receives the action of a verb, the verb is in the *passive voice*.

The passive form of a verb consists of a form of the verb *be* plus the past participle of the main verb. Look at the active and passive forms of the verbs below.

Active

Ex: Tyra *ate* the vanilla pudding.
(The subject, *Tyra*, is the doer of the action.)

The plumber *replaced* the hot water heater.
(The subject, *plumber*, is the doer of the action.)

Passive

The vanilla pudding *was eaten* by Tyra.
(The subject, *pudding*, does not act. Instead, something happens to it.)

The hot water heater *was replaced* by the plumber.
(The subject, *heater*, does not act. Instead, something happens to it.)

In general, active verbs are more effective than passive verbs. Active verbs give your writing a simpler and more vigorous style. The passive form of verbs is appropriate, however, when the performer of an action is unknown or is less important than the receiver of the action. For example:

Ex:

My house was vandalized last night.
(The performer of the action is unknown.)

Mark was seriously injured as a result of your negligence.
(The receiver of the action, *Mark*, is being emphasized.)

Punctuation:

“Apostrophes”

Apostrophes have two basic uses in English. They indicate either a contraction or possession.

Contractions: Use an apostrophe in a contraction in a place of the letter or letters have been deleted.

he's (he is or he has), they're (they are), I've (I have), we'd (we would or we had)

Possession: Use an apostrophe to indicate possession. Add an apostrophe and the letter s after the word. If a plural word already ends in s, then just add an apostrophe.

Gandhi's role in the history of India.

yesterday's paper

the boy's books (One boy has some books.)

the boys' books (Several boys have one or more books.)

Your Mission for the Next Session

1

Review the lesson

2

Complete Grammar & Punctuation activities

3

**Don't forget to make comments
for your friends**

4

Write a five paragraph essay