

COMPARISON & CONTRAST

When writing to compare and contrast different material, especially for the purpose of evaluating (or reviewing) different sources, you have two main approaches to choose from for organizing your content: A) The Block Method and B) The Point-By-Point Method. Both methods have their advantages depending on the complexity of the subjects being compared and contrasted.

The block method and the point-by-point method offer effective ways to structure a compare and contrast essay. Your choice should be based on the complexity of the subjects and your desired emphasis on the similarities and differences between them.

THE BLOCK METHOD

In the block method, you discuss all the characteristics of one subject/document (Subject A) first, then all the characteristics of the other subject/document (usually Subject B). This method allows for a straightforward comparison, as you are addressing each subject in its entirety before moving on to the next.

STRUCTURE

a. Introduction

Begin with an introduction that introduces both subjects and includes your thesis statement, which states what will be compared and contrasted.

b. Body Paragraphs

Paragraph 1 (Subject A): Discuss all aspects of Subject A. This could include all similarities and differences you want to highlight.

Paragraph 2 (Subject B): Move on to Subject B and discuss its aspects in the same manner.

Repeat this pattern for as many paragraphs as needed, depending on the number of points you want to compare and contrast.

c. Conclusion

Conclude by summarizing the main points discussed and reiterating the thesis statement.

ADVANTAGES

The block method provides a clear and focused structure. Readers can easily follow the comparison since each subject is discussed independently. And, this method works well when the subjects have fewer points of comparison or when the comparison is straightforward.

THE POINT-BY-POINT METHOD

In the point-by-point method, each paragraph addresses a point of comparison or contrast. You alternate between discussing aspects of Subject A and Subject B within the same paragraph or across paragraphs.

STRUCTURE

a. Introduction

Start with an introduction that introduces both subjects and includes your thesis statement, which states what will be compared and contrasted.

b. Body Paragraphs

Paragraph 1: Compare/contrast a specific point about both Subject A and Subject B.

Paragraph 2: Move on to the next point of comparison or contrast, addressing both subjects again.

Continue alternating points until all relevant points have been covered.

c. Conclusion

Conclude by summarizing the main points discussed and reiterating the thesis statement.

ADVANTAGES

This method allows for a more detailed analysis of each point of comparison or contrast. Additionally, this method can show more clearly how each point relates to the overall thesis statement, as each paragraph focuses on a specific aspect.

WHICH METHOD SHOULD YOU USE?

If the subjects/documents have many points of comparison or contrast, the point-by-point method may be more effective in showing how each point relates to both subjects. If the subjects/documents have more generalized differences, then the block method may be more useful.

Consider your audience and the purpose of your essay. The block method might be easier for readers unfamiliar with the subjects, while the point-by-point method allows for a more nuanced discussion.