

8 CHAPTER THE COMPARISON AND CONTRAST ESSAY

Styles of Communication



GOALS

Writing

- To distinguish between comparison and contrast
- To identify points of comparison
- To organize a comparison and contrast essay
- To use comparison/contrast transitions to increase coherence

Reading

- To learn about different styles of communication
- To understand and explain analogies

Vocabulary

- To use synonyms and antonyms
- To recognize word partnerships

Grammar

- To review comparative forms
- To review adverbial clauses of comparison, contrast, and concession

Getting Started

Responding to Images

Study the photograph. With a partner, make a list of the ways in which the rooms in the photograph are similar. Make another list of ways in which they are different. Discuss your lists. Are there any areas about which you disagree?



Journal Writing

Choose one of the following questions and then write about it in your journal.

1. Remember a time when you had a misunderstanding with someone because of miscommunication. This could be something that happened between you and a friend, a roommate, a family member, or someone at school. Write about the situation and the different ways you and the other person understood the situation.
2. Think about all the different people you interact with during the course of a typical week. Do you act differently with certain people? What are some of the differences?

Reading and Vocabulary

Readings: Styles of Communication

We all have a particular way of communicating that seems self-evident and natural to us, so we can be surprised, frustrated, or hurt when someone misunderstands us. The following readings discuss differences in styles of communicating.

Reading 1

Conversational Ballgames

by Nancy Masterson Sakamoto

In the following reading, Nancy Masterson Sakamoto explains the difference between Japanese and American conversational styles. Born in the United States, Sakamoto has lived and taught English in Japan. As you read, consider these questions:

- How would you describe your own conversational style?
- Have you ever been in a conversation where the “conversational rules” were not clear?



- 1 After I was married and had lived in Japan for a while, my Japanese gradually improved to the point where I could take part in simple conversations with my husband, his friends, and his family. And I began to notice that often, when I joined in, the others would look startled, and the conversational topic would come to a halt. After this happened several times, it became clear to me that I was doing something wrong. But for a long time, I didn't know what it was.
- 2 Finally, after listening carefully to many Japanese conversations, I discovered what my problem was. Even though I was speaking Japanese, I was handling the conversation in a Western way.
- 3 Japanese-style conversations develop quite differently from Western-style conversations. And the difference isn't only in the languages. I realized that just as I kept trying to hold Western-style conversations even when I was speaking Japanese, so my English students kept trying to hold Japanese-style conversations even when they were speaking English. We were unconsciously playing entirely different conversational ballgames.

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- 4 A Western-style conversation between two people is like a game of tennis. If I introduce a topic, a conversational ball, I expect you to hit it back. If you agree with me, I don't expect you simply to agree and do nothing more. I expect you to add something—a reason for agreeing, another example, or an elaboration to carry the idea further. But I don't expect you always to agree. I am just as happy if you question me, or challenge me, or completely disagree with me. Whether you agree or disagree, your response will return the ball to me.
- 5 And then it is my turn again. I don't serve a new ball from my original starting line. I hit your ball back again from where it has bounced. I carry your idea further, or answer your questions or objections or challenge or question you. And so the ball goes back and forth, with each of us doing our best to give it a new twist, an original spin, or a powerful smash.
- 6 And the more vigorous the action, the more interesting and exciting the game. Of course, if one of us gets angry, it spoils the conversation, just as it spoils a tennis game. But getting excited is not at all the same as getting angry. After all, we are not trying to hit each other. We are trying to hit the ball. So long as we attack only each other's opinions, and do not attack each other personally, we don't expect anyone to get hurt. A good conversation is supposed to be interesting and exciting.
- 7 If there are more than two people in the conversation, then it is like doubles in tennis, or like volleyball. There's no waiting in line. Whoever is nearest and quickest hits the ball, and if you step back, someone else will hit it. No one stops the game to give you a turn. You're responsible for taking your own turn.
- 8 But whether it's two players or a group, everyone does his best to keep the ball going, and no one person has the ball for very long.
- 9 A Japanese-style conversation, however, is not at all like tennis or volleyball. It's like bowling. You wait for your turn. And you always know your place in line. It depends on such things as whether you are older or younger, a close friend or a relative stranger to the previous speaker, in a senior or junior position, and so on.
- 10 When your turn comes, you step up to the starting line with your bowling ball, and carefully bowl it. Everyone else stands back and watches politely, murmuring encouragement. Everyone waits until the ball has reached the end of the alley, and watches to see if it knocks down all the pins, or only some of them, or none of them. There is a pause, while everyone registers your score.
- 11 Then, after everyone is sure that you have completely finished your turn, the next person in line steps up to the same starting line, with a different ball. He doesn't return your ball, and he does not begin from where your ball stopped. There is no back and forth at all. All the balls run parallel. And there is always a suitable pause between turns. There is no rush, no excitement, no scramble for the ball.
- 12 No wonder everyone looked startled when I took part in Japanese conversations. I paid no attention to whose turn it was, and kept snatching the ball halfway down the alley and throwing it back at the bowler. Of course the conversation died. I was playing the wrong game.

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- 13 This explains why it is almost impossible to get a Western-style conversation or discussion going with English students in Japan. I used to think that the problem was their lack of English language ability. But I finally came to realize that the biggest problem is that they, too, are playing the wrong game.
- 14 Whenever I serve a volleyball, everyone just stands back and watches it fall, with occasional murmurs of encouragement. No one hits it back. Everyone waits until I call on someone to take a turn. And when that person speaks, he doesn't hit my ball back. He serves a new ball. Again, everyone just watches it fall.
- 15 So I call on someone else. This person does not refer to what the previous speaker has said. He also serves a new ball. Nobody seems to have paid any attention to what anyone else has said. Everyone begins again from the same starting line, and all the balls run parallel. There is never any back and forth. Everyone is trying to bowl with a volleyball.
- 16 Now that you know about the difference in the conversational ballgames, you may think that all your troubles are over. But if you have been trained all your life to play one game, it is no simple matter to switch to another, even if you know the rules. Knowing the rules is not at all the same thing as playing the game.
- 17 Even now, during a conversation in Japanese I will notice a startled reaction, and belatedly¹ realize that once again I have rudely interrupted by instinctively trying to hit back the other person's bowling ball. It is no easier for me to "just listen" during a conversation than it is for my Japanese students to "just relax" when speaking with foreigners. Now I can truly sympathize with how hard they must find it to carry on a Western-style conversation. ■

¹belatedly: too late

COMPREHENSION

1. What happened when Sakamoto first began participating in Japanese conversations? Why?
2. Sakamoto uses two analogies to contrast the two styles of conversation. What does she compare a Western-style conversation to? Explain the analogy.
3. What does Sakamoto compare a Japanese-style conversation to? Explain the analogy.
4. In drawing the analogies, Sakamoto contrasts the two styles of conversation. Explain the differences in the following:
 - a. Taking turns
 - b. Approach to the topic (the ball)
 - c. Pausing
 - d. Reactions of participants
 - e. Determining the score
5. What is Sakamoto's thesis? Where in the essay is it stated?

DISCUSSION

1. Have you ever been in different conversational ballgames? What rules were you following? What rules was the other person following? What happened in the conversation?
2. Are the conversational rules in your culture more similar to the Western style or the Eastern style described here? Explain the similarities and differences.
3. Think about an analogy to describe a conversational style familiar to you, such as a culture you belong to or a group of friends that you frequently meet with.

Reading 2

Home Ground, Schoolyard: A Double Life by Daria Muse

Daria Muse lived in South-Central Los Angeles in a neighborhood with an urban culture but attended school in a more privileged suburban community where she was expected to behave differently. In this essay, she describes how she learned to live a double life and be accepted by people in both cultures.



- 1 During my elementary and middle-school years, I was a well-behaved, friendly student at school and a tough, hard-nosed¹ “bad girl” in my neighborhood. This contrast in behavior was a survival tool, for I lived in a part of South-Central Los Angeles where “goody-goodies” aren’t tolerated, and I attended school in Northridge, where troublemakers aren’t tolerated.
- 2 Beckford Ave. Elementary School was in the heart of middle-class suburbia, and I, coming from what has been described as the “urban jungle,”² was bused there every day for six years. That it was a privilege for kids like us to be bused to a good school like Beckford was drummed into our heads by our teachers and principal so as to induce us, “the bus kids,” into behaving like the young ladies and gentlemen they wanted us to be, instead of the uncontrollable delinquents³ they thought we were. In a roundabout way, I was told from the first day of school that if I wanted to continue my privileged attendance in the hallowed classrooms of Beckford, I would have to conform and adapt to their standards. I guess I began to believe all that they said, because slowly I began to conform.

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¹hard-nosed: stubborn, tough

²urban jungle: a high-crime area in a city

³delinquents: someone likely to break the law

3 Instead of wearing the tight jeans and T-shirt that were the style in South-Central at the time, I wore schoolgirl dresses like those of my female classmates. I even changed my language. When asking a question, instead of saying, “Boy! Gimme those scissors before I knock you up you head!” in school, I asked, “Excuse me, would you please hand me the scissors?” When giving a compliment in school I’d say, “You look very nice today,” instead of “Girl, who do you think you are, dressin’ so fine, Miss Thang.”

4 This conformation of my appearance and speech won me the acceptance of my proper classmates at Beckford Ave. Elementary School, but after getting out of the school bus and stepping onto the sidewalks of South-Central, my appearance quit being an asset and became a dangerous liability.⁴ One day, when I got off the school bus, a group of tough girls who looked as though they were part of a gang approached me, looked at my pink and white lace dress, and accused me of trying to “look white.” They surrounded me and demanded a response that would prove to them that I was still loyal to my black heritage. I screamed, “Lay off me, girls, or I’ll bust you in the eyes so bad that you’ll need a telescope just to see!” The girls walked away without causing any more trouble.

5 From then on, two personalities emerged. I began living a double life. At school I was prim and proper in appearance and in speech, but during the drive on the school bus from Northridge to South-Central, my other personality emerged. Once I got off the bus I put a black jacket over my dress, I hardened my face, and roughened my speech to show everyone who looked my way that I was not a girl to be messed with.⁵ I led this double life throughout my six years of elementary school.

6 Now that I am older and can look back at that time objectively, I don’t regret displaying contrasting behavior in the two different environments. It was for my survival. Daria, the hard-nosed bad girl, survived in the urban jungle and Daria, the well-behaved student, survived in the suburbs. As a teenager in high school I still display different personalities: I act one way in school, which is different from the way I act with my parents, which is different from the way I act with my friends, which is different from the way I act in religious services. But don’t we all? We all put on character masks for our different roles in life. All people are guilty of acting differently at work than at play and differently with coworkers than with the boss. There’s nothing wrong with having different personalities to fit different situations; the trick is knowing the real you from the characters. ■

⁴liability: disadvantage

⁵messed with: cause trouble for

COMPREHENSION

1. What is the topic of Muse’s essay? Does the essay focus primarily on comparison or on contrast?
2. Explain how Muse’s teachers and the girls in her neighborhood made it clear to her that different behavior was required in each setting.
3. Make a chart comparing Muse’s way of speaking, dressing, and body language at school and at home.

DISCUSSION

1. What do you think would have happened if Muse had used her school behavior in her neighborhood or vice versa?
2. Do you agree with Muse that we all “put on character masks for our different roles in life”? If so, what are some of the roles that you play?
3. Have the different roles that you play ever come in conflict? How did this make you feel? How did you resolve the situation?

Building Vocabulary: Learning Synonyms and Antonyms

When comparing, we sometimes use **synonyms**—words with similar meanings—to show how things are the same. When contrasting, we might use **antonyms**—words with opposite meanings—to show how things are different.

Examples: hard-nosed bad girl = troublemakers (synonyms) slow = gradual (synonyms)
 goody-goodies ≠ troublemakers (antonyms) slow ≠ fast (antonyms)

As you consider synonyms and antonyms, remember what you learned about connotation and denotation in Chapter 7, so you don’t use a synonym with a negative connotation when a positive meaning is required.

EXERCISE 1 VOCABULARY Match the words with their synonyms and antonyms by writing the words in the correct column. If the word has a positive connotation, write +; if the word has a negative connotation, write –; if the word is neutral, write Ø.

materialize	obscure	successive	dispassionately
remain constant	appear	make apparent	conceal
evolve	with bias	disappear	become invisible
prior	resist change	subsequent	impersonally
reveal	preceding	adjust	emotionally

	Synonyms	Antonyms
display	1. _____ <i>reveal</i> Ø _____ 2. _____	1. _____ 2. _____
emerge	1. _____ 2. _____	1. _____ 2. _____
objectively	1. _____ 2. _____	1. _____ 2. _____
adapt	1. _____ 2. _____	1. _____ 2. _____
previous	1. _____ 2. _____	1. _____ 2. _____

Word Partnership Use *challenge* with:

ADJ. **biggest** challenge, **new** challenge, **legal** challenge

V. **accept a** challenge, **present (with)** a challenge, **dare to** challenge, **rise to a** challenge

Word Partnership Use *response* with:

ADJ. **correct** response, **enthusiastic** response, **immediate** response, **military** response, **overwhelming** response, **negative/positive** response, **quick** response, **written** response

EXERCISE 2 **WORD PARTNERS** Use the information in the Word Partnership boxes to complete the sentences in the paragraph. You may need to change the form of the verb. More than one answer may be possible. The first one is done as an example.

What goals have you set for yourself? What challenges do you face? Whether you are able to successfully (1) rise to the challenge may depend on your reaction to the situation. You will have the best chance at success if your (2) _____ reaction is to approach the problem with positive thinking and (3) _____ the challenge. On the other hand, a more (4) _____ response is to turn away from the problem at hand or assume that you will fail. As it turns out, a positive attitude and an eager, (5) _____ response to difficulty causes a (6) _____ chemical response in your body and your brain. Even your breathing and circulation improve, not to mention your confidence and energy. Of course, the (7) _____ challenge is to employ positive thinking when you have been (8) _____ with a challenge. Experts suggest that you try positive visualization. Create a mental picture of yourself as you achieve the goal. For many years, sports stars and other high achievers have found positive thinking and visualization to be the (9) _____ response when obstacles present themselves. The next time you are faced with a (10) _____ challenge, why not give it a try?

Adapted from Levitt. *Your Career*, 7E. South-Western. 2010.

Writing: Comparison and Contrast

Very often, a writing assignment will require you to **compare and contrast** two things, places, or people. In your history class, you might be asked to compare and contrast the Greek and Roman empires; in your biology class, you might be required to compare and contrast DNA and RNA. Comparing and contrasting is a process we all do every day. This table shows some purposes for comparing and contrasting, along with examples of each purpose.

Purpose	Examples
To determine the superiority of one thing over another	Decide which car to buy by comparing features. Persuade others to vote for a political candidate by contrasting her plans with her opponent's plans.
To explain something that is unknown by comparing it to something that is known	Explain what a barometer is by comparing it to a thermometer, but explain that it measures atmospheric pressure instead of temperature. Describe how an electric car works by contrasting its function with that of a gasoline-powered car.
To show that two apparently similar things are in fact quite different or to show that two apparently dissimilar things are quite similar	Discover that two very different cultures have some important things in common. Show how an author's new book or a musical group's new album is surprisingly different from the last one.
To show how something or someone has changed	Contrast how a favorite holiday was celebrated when you were a child with how that holiday is celebrated now. Compare and contrast Haiti before and after the earthquake in 2010.

However, there is one thing to keep in mind: With comparison and contrast, the purpose is not just to point out similarities and differences but also to persuade, explain, or inform. Think about comparison and contrast as a method of development—not as a purpose for writing.

Points of Comparison

Let us suppose you are asked to compare and contrast two people—perhaps two teachers or two politicians. What would you compare and contrast about them? You could compare their looks, backgrounds, philosophies, the way they treat people, their intelligence, their lifestyles, and so on. The list could continue, but this is just the problem—you would have an endless list. When comparing and contrasting two things, people, countries, and so forth, especially for a standard 300- to 500-word essay, it is best to limit yourself to two to four **points of comparison** that will support the central idea in your essay. For example, if you wanted to compare two politicians in order to show that one is better as a public servant, you would not discuss their tastes in food because this point would be irrelevant.

EXERCISE 3 For each thesis statement, add additional relevant points of comparison or contrast.

1. It may seem that learning in a classroom and learning online are vastly different, but after taking an online class, I realized that they share several basic features.
 - a. The syllabus tells you what is expected.
 - b. It is important to keep up with the reading and assignments.
 - c. Class participation matters.
 - d. _____

2. It is true that driving a car offers a lot of personal freedom, but since I sold my car, I have found that public transportation offers me many advantages.
 - a. Helps me to keep to a schedule
 - b. Is less stressful
 - c. _____
 - d. _____

3. While many of the subjects covered in high school and college are the same, the expectations of how students must study are very different.
 - a. Amount of required reading
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____

Emphasis on Comparison or Contrast

In a comparison and contrast essay, you usually emphasize either comparison or contrast depending on your purpose. If you are comparing two rather similar things, you should acknowledge the obvious similarities but focus on the differences. If you are comparing two obviously dissimilar things, you should acknowledge the obvious contrasts but emphasize the less obvious similarities.

Patterns of Organization

There are two basic patterns of organization for developing a comparison and contrast essay. Although they are called by various names, we will call Pattern A the *Point-by-Point* organization and Pattern B the *All of One/All of the Other* organization. To show how these patterns work, let's consider the topic of two automobiles: the Road Runner XL and the Speed Demon 280. Your points of comparison might be the cost of maintenance, performance, and comfort.

Pattern A (Point-by-Point)

In this pattern, each **point of comparison** is discussed separately. Study the following organization.

Thesis Statement: The Speed Demon is a better car than the Road Runner.

- I. Cost of Maintenance
 - A. The Road Runner
 - B. The Speed Demon
- II. Performance
 - A. The Road Runner
 - B. The Speed Demon
- III. Comfort
 - A. The Road Runner
 - B. The Speed Demon

Pattern A (Point-by-Point) is useful for organizing complex topics. It is an easy pattern to follow because the comparison/contrast is made clear throughout the essay. For example, a paragraph comparing the cost of maintenance of the two automobiles might be developed as follows:

The Road Runner and the Speed Demon differ in cost of maintenance. The Road Runner is rather expensive to maintain. This car gets poor mileage, with 23 miles per gallon on the highway and 18 miles per gallon in the city. Moreover, it requires the more expensive premium gasoline. In addition, the Road Runner needs a tune-up every four months and an oil change every 90 days. The average driver who owns a Road Runner must pay approximately \$1,400 a year to keep this car running. The Speed Demon, on the other hand, is quite economical. It gets an impressive 38 miles per gallon on the highway and 34 in the city, and unlike the Road Runner, the Speed Demon takes the less costly regular gasoline. In addition, whereas the Road Runner requires tune-ups and oil changes, the Speed Demon requires little maintenance. It needs to be tuned up only every 12 months; the oil needs to be changed only every four months. In summary, instead of paying \$1,400 per year to keep the car running, the owner of a Speed Demon spends only \$600, which is significantly less.

The previous paragraph can be outlined as follows:

- I. The Road Runner and the Speed Demon differ in cost of maintenance.
 - A. The Road Runner is rather expensive to maintain.
 - 1. Mileage
 - 2. Tune-ups
 - 3. Oil changes
 - 4. Average cost of maintenance
 - B. The Speed Demon is economical to maintain.
 - 1. Mileage
 - 2. Tune-ups
 - 3. Oil changes
 - 4. Average cost of maintenance

Because the paragraph is rather long, it is even possible to break it into two paragraphs, with two controlling ideas: (1) “The Road Runner is rather expensive to maintain” and (2) “The Speed Demon, on the other hand, is quite economical.”

EXERCISE 4 **WRITING** Study the information below about the Road Runner and the Speed Demon. Write a controlling idea about the difference in comfort. Then write a paragraph comparing and contrasting the comfort of the two cars.

The Road Runner	The Speed Demon
<i>Interior</i> Spacious; ample head and leg room in both front and back. Two people can sit comfortably in the front and three in the back.	<i>Interior</i> Tight; ample head and leg room in front but cramped in the back. Two people can fit comfortably in front, but only two can sit comfortably in back.
<i>Seats</i> Although the seats are large, they are vinyl and get hot in the summer.	<i>Seats</i> Leather seats are cool in the summer and pleasant all year round.
<i>Cooling and heating</i> The air conditioner does not cool the back seat area; the heater is effective.	<i>Cooling and heating</i> Excellent air-conditioning and heating system. The air conditioner cools the entire car rapidly; the heater is equally effective.

Pattern B (All of One/All of the Other)

In this pattern, each item is discussed separately. Notice the organization.

Thesis Statement: The Speed Demon is a better car than the Road Runner.

- I. The Road Runner
 - A. Cost of Maintenance
 - B. Performance
 - C. Comfort
- II. The Speed Demon
 - A. Cost of Maintenance
 - B. Performance
 - C. Comfort

Note that the points of comparison are the same and that they are discussed in the same order under each section in both patterns of organization. Pattern B is useful for more limited topics.

Using the Two Patterns of Comparison and Contrast in Essays

The two patterns—“point-by-point” and “all of one/all of the other”—can also be used to write both paragraphs and essays. Typically, you will devote one paragraph to each of the points of comparison. Of course, in the essay, you will provide significantly more support through examples, facts, and details than in a paragraph.

EXERCISE 5 Read this student essay about two brothers. As you read, notice how the tension between East and West is used to help the reader envision the differences between the brothers. Then answer the questions that follow.

My Two Brothers

1. No two people are exactly alike, and my two older brothers, Nhan and Hung, are no exceptions. When I think of them, I think of Rudyard Kipling’s words:
*East is East,
and West is West,
and never the twain shall meet.*
2. Even though they have the same parents, their considerable differences in looks, personality, and attitude toward life reflect the differences between Eastern and Western cultures.
3. Like the majority of Asian men, Nhan is short, small, and has a full, moon-shaped face. His smooth white skin and small arms and feet make him

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look somewhat delicate. Nhan always likes to wear formal, traditional clothes. For example, on great holidays or at family rite celebrations, Nhan appears in the traditional black gown, white pants and black silky headband, all of which make him look like an early twentieth-century intellectual.

4. In contrast to Nhan, Hung, who is his younger brother by ten years, looks more like an American boxer. He is tall, muscular, and big-boned. He is built straight as an arrow, and his face is long and angular as a Western character. Unlike Nhan, Hung has strong feet and arms, and whereas Nhan has smooth skin, Hung's shoulders and chest are hairy, large and full. Unlike Nhan, too, Hung likes to wear comfortable T-shirts and jeans or sports clothes. At a formal occasion, instead of wearing traditional formal clothes, Hung wears stylish Western style suits.
5. Nhan and Hung also differ in personality. I don't know how my father selected their names correctly to reflect their personalities. Nhan's name means "patience," and his patience is shown in his smile. He has the smile of an ancient Chinese philosopher that Western people can never understand. He always smiles. He smiles because he wants to make the other person happy or to make himself happy. He smiles whenever people speak to him, regardless of whether they are right or wrong. He smiles when he forgives people who have wronged him. Nhan likes books, of course, and literature and philosophy. He likes to walk in the moonlight to think. Nhan also enjoys drinking hot tea and singing verses. In short, in our family, Nhan is the son who provides a good example of filial piety and tolerance.
6. Hung, on the other hand, does not set a good example of traditional respectful behavior for his brothers and sisters. His name means "strength," but his strength is self-centered. As a result, unlike Nhan, Hung only smiles when he is happy. When he talks to people, he looks at their faces. Because of this, my eldest brother Nhan considers him very impolite. As one might expect, Hung does not like philosophy and literature; instead, he studies science and technology. Whereas Nhan enjoys tea and classical verses, Hung prefers to sunbathe and drink Coca-Cola while he listens to rock and roll music. And like many American youths, Hung is independent; in fact, he loves his independence more than he loves his family. He wants to move out of our house and live in an apartment by himself. He is such an individualist that all the members in my family say that he is very selfish.
7. My brothers' differences do not end with their looks and personalities. Concerning their attitudes toward life, they are as different as the moon and the sun. My eldest brother Nhan is concerned with spiritual values. He is affected by Confucian, Taoist, and Buddhist theories. These theories suggest that the human life is not happy. Therefore, if a man wants to be happy, he should get out of the competitiveness of life and should not depend on material objects. For example, if a man is not anxious to have a new-model car, he does not have to worry about how to make money to buy one. And, if he does not have a car, he does not have to worry about the cost of gas. My oldest brother is deeply affected by these theories, so he never tries hard to make money to buy conveniences.

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8. In contrast to Nhan, my brother Hung believes that science and technology serve human beings and that the West defeated the East because the West was further advanced in these fields. Therefore, each person must compete with nature and with other people in the world in order to acquire different conveniences such as cars, washing machines, and television sets. Hung is affected by the Western theories of real values; consequently, he always works hard to make his own money to satisfy his material needs.
9. In accordance with the morality of the culture of my country, I cannot say which one of my brothers is wrong or right. But I do know that they both want to improve and maintain human life on this earth. I am very lucky to inherit both sources of thought from my two older brothers.

1. What is the thesis of the essay? What are its points of comparison?
2. Does the essay focus more on comparison or on contrast?
3. Which pattern of organization does the writer follow? Why was this pattern selected?
4. Does the essay have topic sentences that state the controlling idea for each point of comparison? If so, what are they?
5. Is the conclusion logical?
6. Make an outline of the essay.

EXERCISE 6

WRITING Choose one of the following topics for a comparison and contrast essay. Then brainstorm a list of similarities and a list of differences. Use your lists to choose three or four points of comparison. Write a thesis statement with a controlling idea that relates to these points of comparison. Draft the essay using Pattern A to organize your essay.

1. Two educational systems that you are familiar with, such as the university system in two different countries, or high school as opposed to college.
2. Two people or two products (such as two different automobiles, cameras, cell phones, or mp3 players).

EXERCISE 7

In “My Old Neighborhood,” the writer evokes the feelings of disappointment that come from seeing favorite childhood memories through adult eyes. Read the essay and answer the questions that follow.

My Old Neighborhood

1. Several years ago, I returned to Washington, D.C., and visited one of my old neighborhoods. I had not been on Nash Street for more than 20 years and as I walked along the street, my mind was flooded by waves of nostalgia. I saw the old apartment building where I had lived and the playground where I had played.

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As I viewed these once-familiar surroundings, images of myself as a child there came to mind. However, what I saw and what I remembered were not the same. I sadly realized that the best memories are those left undisturbed.

2. As I remember my old apartment building, it was bright and alive. When I was a child, the apartment building was more than just a place to live. It was a medieval¹ castle, a pirate's den, a space station, or whatever my young mind could imagine. I would steal away with my friends and play in the basement. This was always exciting because it was so cool and dark, and there were so many things there to hide among. Our favorite place to play was the coal bin. We would always use it as our rocket ship because the coal chute could be used as an escape hatch out of the basement into "outer space."
3. All of my memories were not confined to the apartment building, however. I have memories of many adventures outside of the building, also. My mother restricted how far we could go from the apartment building, but this placed no restrictions on our exploring instinct. There was a small branch² in back of the building where my friends and I would play. We enjoyed it there because honeysuckles grew there. We would go there to lie in the shade and suck the sweet-smelling honeysuckles.³ Our biggest thrill in the branch was the day the police caught an alligator there. I did not see the alligator, and I was not there when they caught it, but just the thought of an alligator in the branch was exciting.
4. This is how I remembered the old neighborhood; however, as I said, this is not how it was when I saw it again.



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¹**medieval**: related to the years 450 to 1450 A.D.

²**branch**: stream or small river

³**honeysuckle**: a sweet-smelling flower that grows on a vine

5. Unlike the apartment building I remembered, this one was now rundown and in disrepair. What was once more than a place to live looked hardly worth living in. The court was dirty and broken up, and the windows of the building were all broken out. The once-clean walls were covered with graffiti⁴ and other stains. There were no medieval knights or pirates running around the place now, nor spacemen; instead, there were a few tough looking adolescents who looked much older than their ages.
6. As for the area where I used to play, it was hardly recognizable. The branch was polluted and the honeysuckles had died. Not only were they dead, but they had been trampled to the ground. The branch itself was filled with old bicycles, broken bottles, and garbage. Now, instead of finding something as romantic as an alligator, one would expect to find only rats. The once sweet-smelling area now smelled horrible. The stench⁵ from my idyllic⁶ haven⁷ was heart wrenching.
7. I do not regret having seen my old neighborhood. However, I do not think my innocent childhood memories can ever be the same. I suppose it is true when they say, “You can never go home again.”

⁴graffiti: words or pictures drawn on walls

⁶idyllic: peaceful, simple

⁵stench: a bad smell

⁷haven: a safe place

1. What is the thesis? Where is it stated?
2. What pattern of organization does the writer use? Does he cover the same points in the first part as he does in the second?
3. What is the controlling idea about the apartment building as it was when the author was a child?
4. What is the controlling idea about the apartment building when he visited it 20 years later?
5. What is the controlling idea about the branch as it was when he was a child?
6. What is the controlling idea about the branch as he saw it 20 years later?
7. One of the paragraphs is only one sentence long. What function does that sentence serve?
8. Make an outline of the essay.

EXERCISE 8

WRITING Choose one of the following writing assignments. Begin by prewriting to gather ideas and plan your writing. Then write a thesis statement with a controlling idea and draft the essay.

1. Have you ever visited a place you had left a long time ago and found it had changed considerably? Write an essay comparing and contrasting the “way it was” with the “way it is now.” Try to formulate a controlling idea about the change. Have things changed for the better? The worse?
2. When you were younger, you probably had several expectations about your future. Choose one to three aspects of your life and experiences now and contrast the way you thought they would be with the way they are.

Composition Skills

Transitions for Comparison and Contrast

There are many transitions that can be used for comparison and contrast. They fall into the following four major groups. Study them carefully, and note the necessary punctuation for each type.

TRANSITIONS FOR COMPARISON AND CONTRAST	
Type	Examples
Phrase + Noun <i>For similarity:</i> similar to in comparison to <i>For difference:</i> in contrast with unlike	Similar to New Orleans, Los Angeles attracts many tourists. In comparison to airline travel, you are also allowed to check luggage on a train. In contrast with Dallas, San Francisco has a cold climate. Unlike the Road Runner, the Speed Demon is quite economical.
Coordinating Conjunctions <i>For similarity:</i> and <i>For difference:</i> but yet	New York and San Francisco both have good public transportation. San Diego is very dry, but Houston is not. The Speed Demon is cheaper than the Road Runner, yet it has a better air-conditioning system.
Subordinating Conjunctions <i>For similarity:</i> just as <i>For difference:</i> whereas	Just as Boston has four seasons, Montreal does too. Whereas American students may study part-time, Lebanese students must study full-time.
Expressions Between Sentences <i>For similarity:</i> likewise similarly <i>For difference:</i> on the other hand in contrast however	Rainfall has been higher than normal in New England this spring. Likewise , the west coast has seen more rain than usual. Miami has a big seafood business. Similarly , a great deal of fishing is done around San Francisco. Senator Smith wants to reduce the budget deficit by raising taxes. On the other hand , Jones advocates making more cuts in spending. Miami has hot, humid summers. In contrast , San Francisco's summers are cool and windy.

The expression *on the contrary* is also used when emphasizing contrast, but it is very restricted in its use. It indicates that the two ideas being expressed cannot both be true. For example:

JOSÉ: It's rather hot today.

HONG: It is not very hot today. **On the contrary**, it is quite cool.

JOSÉ: The Earth is the fifth planet from the sun.

HONG: The Earth is not the fifth planet from the sun. **On the contrary**, it is the third.

Another transition that can sometimes be used in place of *on the contrary* is *in fact*.

It is not very hot today; **in fact**, it is quite cool.

EXERCISE 9 Complete the sentences with either *on the other hand* or *on the contrary*, whichever is appropriate.

1. New Orleans does not have a harsh winter. _____, it is quite mild.
2. New Orleans does not have a harsh winter. _____, its summers are terrible.
3. New Orleans does not have a large population. _____, it is not a village.
4. Many people think that New Orleans is a large city. _____, it has quite a small population.
5. New Orleans was not originally settled by the Spanish. _____, its first European settlers were French.
6. New Orleans is a big seaport. _____, its manufacturing industry is quite small.

EXERCISE 10 First, read about the writer Jorge Luis Borges. Then turn to the next page and use the information about the writer Yukio Mishima to write sentences comparing and contrasting the two writers. Use the transitions given. The first one is done for you.

Jorge Luis Borges is one of the greatest modern writers in Spanish. Born in Argentina, he was educated in Europe, and in his early days, he served as a municipal librarian in Buenos Aires. Borges has written a variety of works, including poetry, essays, film criticism, and short stories. He was at odds with the policies of the Perón government in Argentina in the 1940s and 1950s. After the Perón government was overthrown, Borges became a professor of literature at the University of Buenos Aires. Many of his works have been translated into English and other languages.



Jorge Luis Borges



Yukio Mishima

1. Yukio Mishima is considered one of the greatest modern Japanese writers.

like Like Borges, Mishima is considered one of the greatest modern writers. _____

also Borges is a great modern writer. Mishima is also considered a great modern writer. _____

similarly Borges is a great modern writer. Similarly, Mishima is considered to be a great modern writer. _____

2. Mishima was educated in his native country of Japan.

unlike _____

but _____

3. In his early days, Mishima worked for the Finance Ministry.

in contrast to _____

whereas _____

4. Mishima was a prolific writer, authoring short stories, poems, plays, essays, and novels.

similar to _____

likewise _____

5. Mishima was critical of the Japanese military policies.

in the same way _____

similarly _____

6. Mishima performed as an actor.

however _____

in contrast _____

7. Many of Mishima's works have been translated into English and other languages.

like _____

in comparison to _____

Connect to the Internet

Companies use their Web sites to communicate with customers and to project a brand image. Find two companies that are in a similar business, such as two banks, two athletic apparel companies, or even two colleges. Compare and contrast the two websites, and make a list of similarities and differences. Then use the transitions on page 164 to write five sentences about the websites.

- EXERCISE 11** In the following essay, transitions have been omitted from the italicized sentences. Edit the essay for coherence by using a variety of transitional devices.

1. When scientists first examined the human brain, they found it to be divided into two halves, or hemispheres, which are nearly identical in appearance, mirroring each other just as the two sides of the body do. When Roger Sperry examined patients whose connection between the two hemispheres—the corpus callosum—was severed, he found that the two sides of the brain seemed to have different functions. Many investigators have studied the differences between the functions of the two hemispheres and found their relationship to be quite complex. Unfortunately, however, most people have tended to over-generalize. The left brain is supposed to be logical, rational, and analytical, whereas the right brain is supposed to be creative and emotional. The brain's hemispheres are not so simplistically split into two neat divisions. In fact, both halves of the brain participate in almost all our mental activity.
2. To begin with, both sides of the brain are in operation when we reason. The left brain seems to dominate in the kind of reasoning it takes to translate symbols, recognize abstract differences, and handle algebra and geometry problems. *The left hemisphere may be dominant in these types of reasoning. The right hemisphere also reasons.* The right half of the brain functions to integrate information and draw conclusions. *The left hemisphere is dominant in recognizing abstract differences.*

continued ►

The right hemisphere tends to recognize sameness. For example, the right side is where we mediate facial recognition and recognize shapes.

3. The two hemispheres act as partners in language and communication. It appears that the left hemisphere is dominant when it comes to understanding grammar and syntax, but when it comes to interpreting emotions in communication, the right brain excels. *The right brain can interpret tone of voice and facial expressions. Whenever we use language, both sides of the brain process the information.*
4. The brain is not totally divided about music. Many people assume that music is mediated solely in the right brain. *That is not so.* It is true that the right brain recognizes chords and melodies and seems to mediate pure and slow tones. *The left hemisphere is also involved in music.* Fast music, such as bluegrass, requires judgments about sequencing and rhythm, and for this the left hemisphere lends its services. When words are involved, again the left brain dominates.
5. Both halves of the brain are involved in our mental activities. The corpus callosum and other bridges between the two hemispheres obviously serve to integrate the functions of the two halves, which are in constant communication to make sense out of life.

Information from Thompson, Richard. *The Brain: An Introduction to Neuroscience*. New York: W. H. Freeman and Co., 1985, and Wortman, Camille B. and Loftus, Elizabeth F. *Psychology*. New York: Alfred H. Knopf, 1985.

EXERCISE 12 WRITING Revise the following paragraphs in two ways. First, write an essay by using Pattern B (All of One / All of the Other). Be sure to divide the long paragraphs into shorter paragraphs. Then write an essay by using Pattern A (Point-by-Point). Use appropriate transitions. You may use the following thesis statement for each essay.

Thesis Statement: There are some interesting parallels between the Roman and Chinese empires, even though these empires ended differently.

The Roman Empire ruled the Mediterranean world from about 500 B.C. to about 500 A.D. From a geographic base around Rome, it spread out to include North Africa, the Middle East, and Northern Europe. It developed a higher level of civilization than the areas surrounding it. It had a complex governmental structure and a bureaucracy, while the people surrounding it were barbarians and nomads. These barbarians were a constant threat to the Roman Empire. The leaders of the empire devised three ways to protect the empire. First, they conquered territory whose outer boundaries were natural barriers. Examples are the Rhine and Danube Rivers. They also built fortifications to keep out invaders. They built some fortifications, for example, between the Rhine and Danube and between Scotland and England. Third, they used precautionary buffer states, like colonies, which were midway between barbarism and civilization. These all helped to protect the base of the empire, Rome itself. However, toward the end of the

continued ►

empire's rule, some of the buffer states revolted. The final collapse occurred when the German and Slavic barbarians broke through the fortifications. In a short 200 years, the Roman Empire fell to the power of the Germans.

The Chinese Empire grew and remained intact from 221 B.C. to 1911 A.D. From a geographic base around the Yellow River, it spread northward to Peking, west to the Central Plain, and south to Canton. It developed a higher level of civilization than the areas surrounding it. It became a center for art and philosophy, while the people surrounding it were nomads and barbarians. These barbarians, Huns and Mongols, were a constant threat to the empire. The leaders of the empire devised three ways to deal with them. First, they used natural boundaries like the Yellow and later the Yangtze Rivers. They built the incredible Great Wall of China, and they used buffer states that learned much from China, becoming civilized in the process. However, at times the barbarians broke through the fortifications and the buffer states. The barbarians did not destroy the Chinese Empire, however. Because the barbarians admired the superior culture of China, they set up dynasties imitating the Chinese way of life. Examples are the Chau, Yuan, and Manchu dynasties. In other words, the Chinese Empire absorbed its intruders and lived on. The one exception to this was a short rule by the Mongols, lead by Genghis and Kublai Khan from 1215–1279. The subjugated Chinese dynasty reasserted itself shortly, however. The Chinese Empire continued to decline slowly until the Manchu dynasty ended in 1911 and a republic was declared.

Information from King, C. Harold. *A History of Civilization: Earliest Times to the Mid-Seventeenth Century*. New York: Scribner's, 1964.

Refining Grammar Skills

If you want further review of grammatical structures that will help you achieve coherence and grammatical accuracy in your writing, see Unit 3: *Refining Grammar Skills*. The following sections are designed to coordinate with the comparison and contrast essay.

Adverb Clauses of Comparison	page 310
Adverb Clauses of Contrast	page 310
Adverb Clauses of Concession	pages 310–312
Comparative Forms	pages 323–327

EXERCISE 13 **EDITING** The following paragraph contains errors. Find and correct the errors. The kind and number of errors are indicated.

Comparison—5

Subject-verb agreement—4

Verb forms—3

The differences between a classical music performance and a rock concert are immediately apparent, even to a first time attendee. The expected dress at each kind of concert, for example, couldn't be differenter. The attire at a classical music concert is as formal the clothing at a rock concert is informal. The behavior of the attendees are also not very similar. At the classical performance, the audience sits quietly and expectantly. They do not dancing or talking and may even close their eyes so they can be gooder listeners. At a rock concert, the crowd dances and sways. Shouting, pushing, and jumping is common as well. At a classical music concert, it would be very surprising indeed if an audience member began to sing along with the performers. On the contrary, rock musicians sometimes points the microphone toward the crowd to encourage them to sing along with favorite lyrics. However, classical concerts were not always so dignified. In the 18th century, the audience clapped, yelled, and sometimes even throwed food. Even though the manners at these concerts is not very similar, neither audience is less passionater about the music, and their appreciation for the talent and effort of the musicians is similar to. They simply shows it in completely different ways.

Final Writing Assignment

Choose one of the following topics for your final writing assignment.

1. In "Conversational Ballgames," Nancy Masterson Sakamoto shows the contrast between Eastern-style and Western-style conversations. Write about the differences between conversational styles in your native language and your second language.
2. In "Home Ground, Schoolyard: A Double Life," Daria Muse contrasts two surprisingly different parts of her own life. Write an essay in which you contrast two parts of your life that are surprisingly different or in which you compare two parts of your life that are unexpectedly similar.
3. Review the information about the writers Borges and Mishima in Exercise 10. Write an essay comparing and/or contrasting two famous people—two political leaders, two artists, two performers, and so on. Be sure to include a thesis expressing your attitude about the two people.
4. Write an essay comparing or contrasting two different attitudes. For example, you might choose your parents' attitude toward punctuality compared with your own attitude toward punctuality.

Follow these steps to complete the assignment:

1. Prewrite to generate ideas.
2. Decide whether you will emphasize comparison or contrast. Then choose related points of comparison or contrast as the basis for your essay.
3. Write a thesis statement with a strong controlling idea to introduce the points of comparison or contrast that you have chosen. Remember that the purpose of the comparison and contrast essay is to persuade, explain, or inform, not just to list differences or similarities. Ensure that your thesis sentence is persuasive and expresses an attitude.
4. Decide which pattern of organization is more appropriate for your content and then write an outline of the essay.
5. Use the outline to draft the essay.
6. Share your paragraph with a classmate and then complete a peer review. Use the Peer Review Worksheet in Appendix 1 or use the Peer Review Worksheet specifically for comparison and contrast essays on the companion website.
7. Revise your paragraph for coherence, taking care to check your use of transitions. Use appropriate grammar structures to achieve coherence.
8. Proofread your paragraph for accuracy.

ASSIGNMENTS FROM THE DISCIPLINES

Examine these writing assignments typical of those assigned in college classes. With others in your class, discuss how you would approach each assignment. What is the topic? What might the controlling idea be? Would you emphasize comparison or contrast? What kind of transitions might you use?

1. **Linguistics:** Contrast typical differences between spoken and written language.
2. **Electrical Engineering:** Compare and contrast the properties and uses of analog and digital signals.