

Compare/Contrast Essay Help Sheet



There are three strategies to organize comparison and contrast papers:

1. **Whole-to-Whole, or Block:** In this structure, you say everything about one item then everything about the other.

For instance, say everything about the characters, setting, and plot for the book then everything about the characters, setting, and plot for the movie. The points in each of the sections should be the same and they should be explained in the same order (for instance, you might discuss character, setting, and plot for both, and in that order for both).

2. **Similarities-to-Differences:** In this structure, you explain all the similarities about the items being compared and then you explain all the differences.

For instance, you might explain that the characters and plot were similar in both the book and movie in the one section.

In the next section, you could explain that the settings were different. The book took place during the summer while the movie took place during the winter

In other words, the body of your paper would have two large sections: one for similarities, and another for differences.

3. **Point-by-Point:** In this structure, you explain one point of comparison before moving to the next point.

For instance, you would write about the characters in the book and movie in one section; then you would write about the setting in the book and movie in the next section. Point-by-Point comparison and contrast uses a separate section or paragraph for each point.

Point #1 for your paper could be information about the characters in the book and the movie. You'd begin a section or paragraph for Point #2.

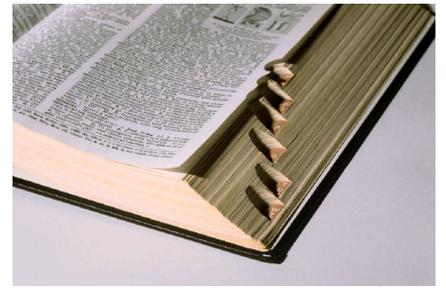
For consistency, begin with the same item in each section of your point-by-point paper. For instance, for each point that you discuss, explain the information about the book first and then about the movie.

Transition Words

In comparison and contrast, transition words tell a reader that the writer is changing from talking about one item to the other.

Transitional words and phrases help make a paper smoother and more

coherent by showing the reader the connections between the ideas that are being presented.



To Compare

also
as
as well as
both
in the same manner
in the same way
like
likewise
most important
same
similar
similarly
the same as
too

When you're comparing items, using a transition from this list will signal to readers that you're changing from one item to the next and it will also tell the reader that the two items are similar.

Here are some examples: The characters in the movie were very similar to the characters in the book.

Both the characters in the movie and in the book were interested in detective work.

To Contrast

although
but
differ
even though
however
in contrast
instead
nevertheless
on the contrary
on the other hand
unless
unlike
while
yet

On the other hand, using one of the transitions from this list of words will signal readers that the two items you're discussing are different.

Here are some examples: The setting in the book was summer while the setting in the movie was winter.

The events in the book took place during several afternoons, but the events in the movie took place during the evening.