

Johnson County Community College

Comparison/Contrast

DEVELOPMENT BY COMPARISON

As contrast stresses differences, comparison stresses the likenesses--the similarities--between two or more people, places, things, or abstractions. The comparison may be developed by the same methods of organization as the contrast. The following paragraphs are examples of development by comparison.

SAMPLE PARAGRAPHS

Point-by-point organization:

Mary's dress has short sleeves, as does Mae's dress. Both dresses have round necklines; both dresses are high-waisted. Each dress has pleats in the skirt, and each hemline falls just below the knees of the wearer.

Block organization:

Blanca's dress has short sleeves, a round neckline, a high-waisted bodice, and a skirt that reaches her knees. Pam's dress also has short sleeves, a round neckline, a high-waisted bodice, and a skirt that reaches her knees.

Jim Bridger

Although few people consider him an epic figure, Jim Bridger is comparable to many legendary heroes. Bridger roamed thousands of miles over the western part of the United States, thus making his treks similar to Odysseus' wanderings around the Mediterranean Sea for twenty years. Bridger fought many times against hopeless odds--Indians, renegade whites, animals, the elements--and survived these battles just as Beowulf survived after he fought Grendel, Grendel's dam, and won the swimming contest with Breca. Bridger amassed a great deal of money by trapping beaver, trading, and leading scouting parties, but, like Robin Hood, his generosity always led him to help the needy. And, although it is a black mark in this nation's history, Bridger was extremely instrumental in helping the whites subdue the Indians west of the Mississippi River. His work here is similar to El Cid's helping rid Spain of the Moors. Thus, a candid evaluation of Jim Bridger shows that he should rank with the best of the world's epic heroes.

Amy Carson Friermeier

The Fisherman and the Hunter

A fisherman and a hunter are two of the most comparable sportsmen out of the multitude of people who go in for sports. The fisherman will spend thousands of dollars on equipment alone. He needs a fairly expensive rod and reel, many kinds of lures, sinkers, hooks, and accessories for his tackle box, and, in addition, he needs a vehicle not only to camp in but also to pull a boat. The fisherman will spend as much time at his sport as his personal life will allow, whether he takes a trip for a weekend at a nearby lake or a month's vacation to the Great Slave Lake to catch a record-sized muskie and mount it on his den wall. Then the fisherman will use the trophy to spend countless hours recounting to his guests his great skill in overcoming the difficulties of landing the catch. This will in turn lead to a longer story of "the one that got away." So it is with the hunter. The hunter will spend as much money on guns, ammunition, and accessories as will the fisherman. Also, good guns are only as good as the four-wheel drive vehicle to get him to the game. Unlike the fisherman, the hunter is more restricted by laws as to the amount of time he can spend hunting various animals, but this does not keep him from planning his entire year around the big hunt to Alaska. Of course, the hunter is also after a record-sized kill, and like the fisherman, he will mount it on his den wall. When a person sees this trophy, he had better be prepared for a long discussion about the skill, daring, and fortitude with which the animal was taken. Once that story is exhausted, the hunter will launch into a longer tale about the record-sized 'possum that got away from him, mainly because someone in Gonzales County sneezed and not because the hunter in Bexar County was too excited to shoot straight.

R.G.B. Remington

Class Registration

Registering for classes at San Antonio College is like attending "Night in Old San Antone." One's time permit is his all-important ticket for admission; the man at the door of the Nail Technical Center is the Conservation Society's ticket-talker. Once inside the building, the "fun" begins. Getting the Master Data Card is simple, much like getting a beer--there is always plenty of it and no lines. Then the process of signing up for classes begins, and this is like trying to buy your favorite taco. You stand in line for what seems hours, and the person in front of you takes the last spot in the last class you need. How many times have you seen that delicious pile of tacos vanish before your eyes as the line gets shorter? The people handling the class cards are always properly sympathetic. They tell you such things as "Another class might open later" ("There will be some more tacos in about three hours"); "Take a related course" ("Try one of our bologna enchiladas"); or "Take the course next semester" ("Come back next year"). One might philosophically bear up under this disappointment, but just then nature sends out a call that requires immediate attention. One desperately tries to remember seeing those "Men" and "Women" signs, spelled "ABC" at La Villeta. One asks seventy-five people before one knowledgeable soul waves vaguely to the east. A mad dash ensues, and sure enough there it is--one can always tell he's in the right line by the number of people with pain-filled

eyes. Somehow, though, at both places one dazedly gets from place to place--jostling, crowding, and swearing vehemently never to return, or to at least get an earlier time permit. However, when the Alka-Seltzer finally takes effect, one stupidly tells everyone how easy it all was, or how much fun he had, or how he vows to return next time.

Jason L. McIntyre

Alcohol and Marijuana

Recent research points out several comparisons between alcohol and marijuana. Marijuana, like alcohol, exerts a continuous depression on the central nervous system. The user's "high" results from depression of higher brain centers. Neither alcohol nor marijuana is classified as a narcotic, but each is a sedative-hypnotic and psychedelic drug. They have both been known to bring about psychotic reactions in poorly developed personalities. When it is used in moderate amounts, marijuana results in memory loss, confused states, and hallucinations, as does alcohol. Both psychological dependence and tolerance develop with the use of marijuana and alcohol, but neither exerts a physiological dependence. All withdrawal symptoms are psychological. These similarities are not an argument for legalization of marijuana but only a report on the latest recognized similarities between alcohol and marijuana.

Beverlee Mueller

PRACTICE EXERCISES

- A. Look around you and list some observations that might be material for comparison.
- B. Think of other aspects of life that are comparable.
- C. Write two possible sentences that would let a reader know that a paragraph will be developed by comparison.
- D. Write one paragraph developed by comparison.

DEVELOPMENT BY CONTRAST

Developing an idea by contrast stresses the differences between two or more people, places, things, or abstractions. You as a writer can use either of two common organizational methods to develop a paragraph: list or describe the contrasting points one by one, or present one complete

set of points and then present the other set of contrasting points. The following paragraphs are examples of development by contrast.

SAMPLE PARAGRAPHS

Point-by-point organization:

Mary's dress has short sleeves, whereas Dora's dress has long sleeves. Mary's dress has a high, round neckline, while Dora's has a square, plunging one. Mary's dress has a high waist, and Dora's has none. Mary's dress has pleats and falls just below the knee; Dora's dress has no pleats and reaches only to the top of the knee.

Block Organization:

Mary's dress has short sleeves, a high, round neckline, a high waist, and a pleated skirt that reaches just below the knee. On the other hand, Dora's dress has long sleeves, a square, plunging neckline, an empire waist, and a hemline that reaches only to the top of the knee.

Rock Music and Country Music

Although they provide entertainment for thousands of people, rock music and country music are different in many ways. Rock music is played very loudly; country music is soft and mellow, played mostly in a medium sound range. Rock music is a mixture of many instruments which provide a more nearly unique sound for a particular band. Basically, country-music groups are composed of guitars, drums, and a bass: the emphasis is on rhythm. Rock songs are written about a wide variety of subjects ranging from political issues to drugs; country music subjects are mostly limited to lost love, tears, beer, and trucks. Rock music is constantly changing to fit the changing atmosphere that surrounds a "progressive" audience; country music changes less and stays with the more constant aspects of life. Despite their differences, both kinds of music provide much enjoyment for many people.

Tom Jones

Flying Ants and Flying Termites

Flying ants and flying termites may look similar to an untrained eye, but they are significantly different. The ants have three distinct body segments: head, thorax, and abdomen. They have wasp-like waists. The termites have only two distinct body segments--head and thorax-abdomen--and no waist at all. The ant's wings are the same length as their bodies, whereas the termites' wings are twice as long as their bodies. Most important, the ants do not eat cellulose material (wood and wood products); therefore,

they do little damage to property. On the other hand, termites do eat cellulose material; consequently, they do thousands of dollars worth of damage. Thus, their differences are exceedingly noteworthy.

Jeri Harris

Good Students and Poor Students

The variation in mental capabilities is the reason credited by many students for the difference between a good student and a poor one. However, this is the case in only a few instances. The main difference is in the application of these mental abilities. First, the good student is consistent in class attendance. Also, once he or she gets to class, the good student is attentive and active, listening to the instructor, asking questions, and contributing to class discussions. In addition, the good student has excellent study habits. He or she does research in the library when necessary, reads each day's assignments carefully, and starts preparing for exams long before they are given. The result of this student's efforts is most often an A or a B. On the other hand, the poor student has a very poor and erratic attendance record; many times he or she is dropped from the course because of excessive cuts. When this person does honor everyone by attending class, he or she seldom pays much attention and never contributes to class discussion. If the poor student does talk, it is usually with an equally poor student. They will probably carry on a highly intellectual conversation about Alice Cooper's latest fingernail polish. The poor student's study habits are nil, but he or she will sometimes find the urge to study for an exam, most often by staying up until three or four in the morning before the quiz is to be given. When he or she does get to class and does take the test, this student is too exhausted to remember anything. The poor students' lack of effort usually results in an F. Thus, the good student learns to apply himself well, and the poor student says, "I will do it tomorrow."

Maria R. Salinas

Grandmother and Granddaughter

The woman of yesterday had a more difficult time cooking a good meal than does her granddaughter of today. Grandmother had first to go to the woodpile for fuel, maybe chopping and splitting it herself; her granddaughter doesn't have to so much as light a match when she turns on the gas or the electricity. Grandmother had to learn to cook by patient observation and painful experience; her granddaughter has books full of tested recipes, not to mention all the directions on the boxes of ready-to-cook food. Grandmother brought in her vegetables from the garden (which she probably planted and cared for herself) and cleaned them at great length under the pump; her granddaughter

just steps into the supermarket. Grandmother had to run back and forth to the well-house to keep things fresh and cool, While her granddaughter has a "planned kitchen" with the refrigerator, if not the deep freeze, within reach of the stove. In spite of her handicaps, Grandmother did some mighty fine cooking, but she spent a good deal more time and energy on the job than her granddaughter does.

Frank T. Cheek

Two Dental Careers

The profession of a dental hygienist can be contrasted to that of a dental assistant. Both careers involve direct dealings with the dental patient; however, the hygienist's job is more technical than the assistant's. The hygienist is primarily concerned with cleaning the teeth and instructing the patient on how to protect them. The dental assistant aids the dentist with operations and filling and cleaning the teeth, but the assistant is not trained to do these jobs on his or her own. The dental assistant is also responsible for a large amount of office work such as keeping patients' records and keeping the books. The employment opportunities of these two professions are different also. The hygienist is able to work for more than one dentist, often choosing his own working hours and patients. On the other hand, the dental assistant works for one dentist and has an eight-to-five job. The pay for the hygienist averages about \$1,000.00 a month; the dental assistant gets about \$500.00 for the same pay period.

Margaret Rodgers

PRACTICE EXERCISES

- A. Look around you and list some observations that might be material for contrast.
- B. Think of other aspects of life that are different.
- C. Write two possible topic sentences that would let a reader know that a paragraph will be developed by contrast.

DEVELOPMENT BY COMPARISON/CONTRAST

Comparison/Contrast shows how two things are alike and are different. We use comparison/contrast for three basic purposes:

1. To explain two items by giving information about both and comparing their characteristics. (Usually expository) Example: Italian films to Swedish films
2. To clarify something unfamiliar by comparing it to something familiar. (Usually expository) Example: Puberty rites in New Guinea with high school graduation in Kansas
3. To show one item is better than another, a criteria is established and then one thing is shown to better meet that criteria than another. (Usually judgmental or persuasive)
Example: Ford to a Chevy

To organize an essay which compares or contrasts you must choose one of two basic patterns. Note that in each outline common features are chosen to show major differences. In other words, there is a parallel structure or system.

1. Stick to the same principle of comparison: Be consistent. Give both subjects similar treatment. Points discussed for one subject should be discussed for the other.
2. Select significant points: The points of comparison should be significant. That is, they should contribute to your purpose.
3. Be complete: All of the significant points should be discussed. Don't leave out a main point of comparison.

Sample Outlines

1. Describe all of the features or characteristics of the first item and then follow with all of the similar and/or differing features of the second item.

Example:

I. Ford

- A. Cost
- B. Comfort
- C. Performance
- D. Durability

II. Chevy

- A. Cost
- B. Comfort
- C. Performance
- D. Durability

2. Alternate the points of comparison and/or contrast between the two items

Example:

- I. Cost
 - A. Chevy
 - B. Ford
- II. Comfort
 - A. Chevy
 - B. Ford
- III. Performance
 - A. Chevy
 - B. Ford
- IV. Durability
 - A. Chevy
 - B. Ford

Sample Essays

The Rebel and the Revolutionary

In the present day, when multitudes of people are caught in anxiety and helplessness, they tend psychologically to freeze up and to cast out of the city walls whoever would disturb their pretended peace. Ironically, it is during just those periods of transition when they most need the replenishing that the rebel can give them that people have the greatest block in listening to him. But in casting out the rebel, we cut our own lifeline. For the rebel function is necessary as the life-blood of culture, as the very roots of civilization.

First I must make the important distinction between the rebel and the revolutionary. One is in ineradicable opposition to the other. The revolutionary seeks an external political exchange, "the overthrow or renunciation of one government or ruler and the substitution of another." The origin of the term is the word *revolve*, literally meaning a turnover, as the revolution of a wheel. When the conditions under a given government are insufferable some groups may seek to break down the government in the conviction that any new form cannot but be better. Many revolutions, however, simply substitute one kind of government for another, the second no better than the first--which leaves the individual citizen, who has had to endure the inevitable anarchy between the two, worse off than before. Revolution may do more harm than good.

The rebel, on the other hand, is "one who opposes authority or restraint: one who breaks with established customs or tradition." His distinguishing characteristic is his perpetual restlessness. He seeks above all an internal change, a change in the attitudes, emotions, and outlook of the people to whom he is devoted. He often seems to be temperamentally unable to accept success and the ease it brings; he kicks against the pricks, and when one frontier is conquered, he soon becomes ill-at-ease and pushes on the new frontier. He is drawn to the unquiet minds and spirits, for he shares their everlasting inability to accept stultifying control. He may, as Socrates did, refer to himself as the gadfly for the state--the one who keeps the state from settling down into complacency, which is the first step toward decadence. No matter how much the rebel gives the appearance of being egocentric or of being on an "ego trip," this is a delusion; inwardly the authentic rebel is anything but brash.

True to the meaning of the rebel as one who renounces authority, he seeks primarily not the substitution of one political system for another. He may favor such political change, but it is not his chief goal. He rebels for the sake of a vision of life and society which he is convinced is critically important for himself and his fellows. Every act of rebellion tacitly presupposes some value. Whereas the revolutionary tends to collect power around himself, the rebel does not seek power as an end and has little facility for using it; he tends to share his power. Like the resistance fighters in France during the last world war, the rebel fights not only for the relief of his fellow men but also for his personal integrity. For him these are but two sides of the same coin.

The slave who kills his master is an example of the revolutionary. He can then only take his master's place and be killed in turn by later revolutionaries. But the rebel is the one who realizes that the master is as much in prison, if not as painfully, as he is by the institution of slavery; he rebels against that system which permits slaves and masters. His rebellion, if successful, saves the master also from the indignity of owning slaves.

Rollo May

Is a Bar Just a Bar?

A bar worth returning to and a bar worth forgetting are easily distinguished. Both, of course, serve alcoholic drinks, always in exchange for money, but there the similarities end. A fine bar is furnished comfortably, whether in stools perched before a foot-rail or in loungeable couches and chairs, while a poor bar is furnished in fussy, stiff seats before rocky, sticky tables. A fine bar is dimmer than daylight, lighted inconspicuously, whereas a poor bar boasts yellow and red-bulbed wrought-iron lanterns or pear-shaped glasses filled with wax and covered with sequins, flocking, or plastic mesh so that no light whatever emits. Fine bars have walls which are pleasant to look at--wood panelling, aesthetic artwork, antique mirrors, wine racks--but the solitary or wistful drinker at a poor bar is abashed by an array of furry wallpaper, remote-control ball games, more wrought iron sconces, cliches decoupaged onto knotty pine by an overeager handicrafter. A fine bar seems to attract a congenial clientele while a poor bar collects nodding derelicts, polyester-covered loudmouths, and painted hookers. In short, a fine bar resembles the living room one has just left (or would have liked to) while the poor bar reminds one of the cheap hotel best passed by.

Good Teaching Versus Bad Teaching

The student, or in many cases, the victim, of any educational attempt has the best perspective for analyzing the difference between good and bad teaching. Bad teaching is the product of conservative ideas while good teaching results from liberal thinking. Bad teaching is traditional and by the book. It avoids, almost rejects, change. Good teaching is

fresh, new, and different, always changing to produce new concepts and thoughts. Bad teaching is routine, predictable, and therefore boring. Good teaching, unlike bad, seeks not to manipulate its students but rather to be manipulated by them. Their needs, wants, and desires are considered important. Bad teaching, while concerned with standards and statistics, pushes everyone, regardless of desire or ambition, through the system. Good teaching focuses its resources on interested students and tries to leave the unconcerned ones alone. This is not meant as an insult, but rather a courtesy serving, simultaneously both types of students. Bad teaching is bogged down with outdated material, furious fact-finding, and unavoidable statistics. Good teaching uses productive application of current issues supplemented with student feedback. In short, bad teaching is boring, uneventful, and repetitious while good teaching is imaginative, applicable, inventive, and therefore constructive.

The Racket About Racquets

Of the many types of tennis racquets available today, two in particular--the graphite and the wood--have captured a corner of the market. The two differ completely in design and offer some strikingly different advantages on the court. Graphite is the latest innovation in the expanding field of tennis racquet technology. The pure graphite racquet is made mostly from graphite fibers molded together with an epoxy base. Graphite fibers are light and immensely strong; thus, graphite racquets can be made very stiff in both the shaft and the head. As a result, graphite frames typically vibrate less and have a greater resistance to twisting on off-center shots than conventional racquets. Consequently, a graphite racquet is well suited to more powerful players. They will find that they can hit the ball hard with good control. However, a graphite racquet can be harmful for a player with a history of tennis elbow since it transmits shocks more easily to the wrist and elbow. Another drawback is the outrageous retail prices asked. The conventional wood racquet is still the standard by which most players measure other racquets. Tennis purists have always played the game with wood and probably will continue to do so as long as they play. The subtle feel, precise control, gentle shock absorption, and firm power of a wood racquet are hard to duplicate in other designs. Basically, a wood tennis racquet is manufactured from one of the most abundant natural resources on the face of the Earth, a tree. Laminations, small longitudinal strips of wood, like ash or beech, are glued together to produce a frame. The diversity in types of woods used provides for totally different playing performance from one wood racquet to another. One racquet can be very flexible for the beginning player and another extremely stiff and ideal for the hard-hitting tournament player. Although wood is considered the best, there are major drawbacks, such as warping, which occurs when the racquet is used by the hard-hitting tournament player. Although wood is considered the best, there are major drawbacks, such as warping, which occurs when the racquet is exposed to moisture or extreme temperatures, and a short life span. As stated, there are many similarities between each type, and advantages and disadvantages. The choice is yours as to which racquet suits your style of play.