

# Writing a COMPARISON/CONTRAST essay

## 1/ A comparison/contrast essay

- analyzes differences and similarities between 2 subjects;
- can *focus on* –
  - the subjects **with more differences** than similarities (**contrasting**);
  - the subjects **with more similarities** than differences (**comparing**);
  - both

## 2/ How to choose a topic

- address 2 **related subjects**;
- use your **logical** reasoning to compare and contrast the subjects;
- develop **solid** points;
- include **from 2 to 4 points** which compare or contrast the subjects;
- chose **narrow** topics instead of broad ones;
- it is also advantageous to think of some **less evident** differences/similarities rather than obvious ones, e.g. *both baking and painting require the knowledge of mixing ingredients*

### TOPICS FOR COMPARISON ESSAYS

a book and the movie based on the book  
a current and former leader in your country  
child care today and child care a century ago  
courses of study at two different colleges  
two cities

two professional athletes  
two websites for learning English  
vegetarian and non-vegetarian diets  
World War I and World War II  
two team sports

## 3/ Method and technique

### POINT-BY-POINT method

- more flexible;
- discusses two subjects in relation to one point;
- *technique* – **one point of comparison**  
= **one paragraph topic**

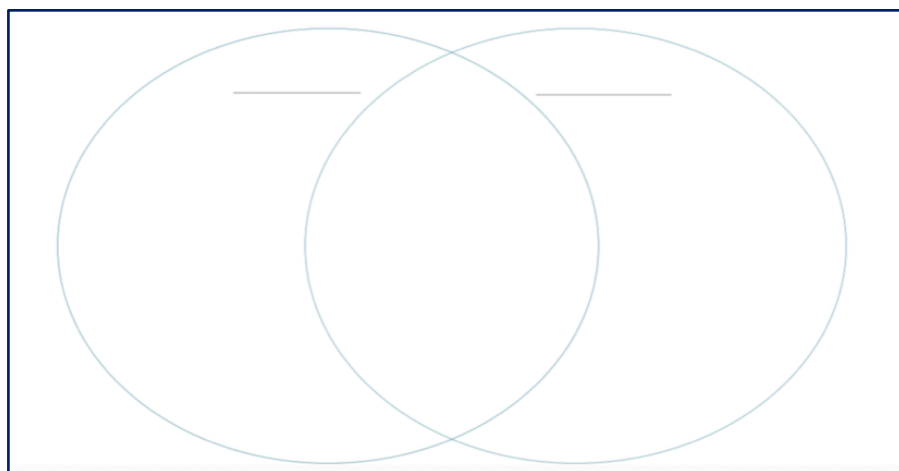
### IN BLOCKS method

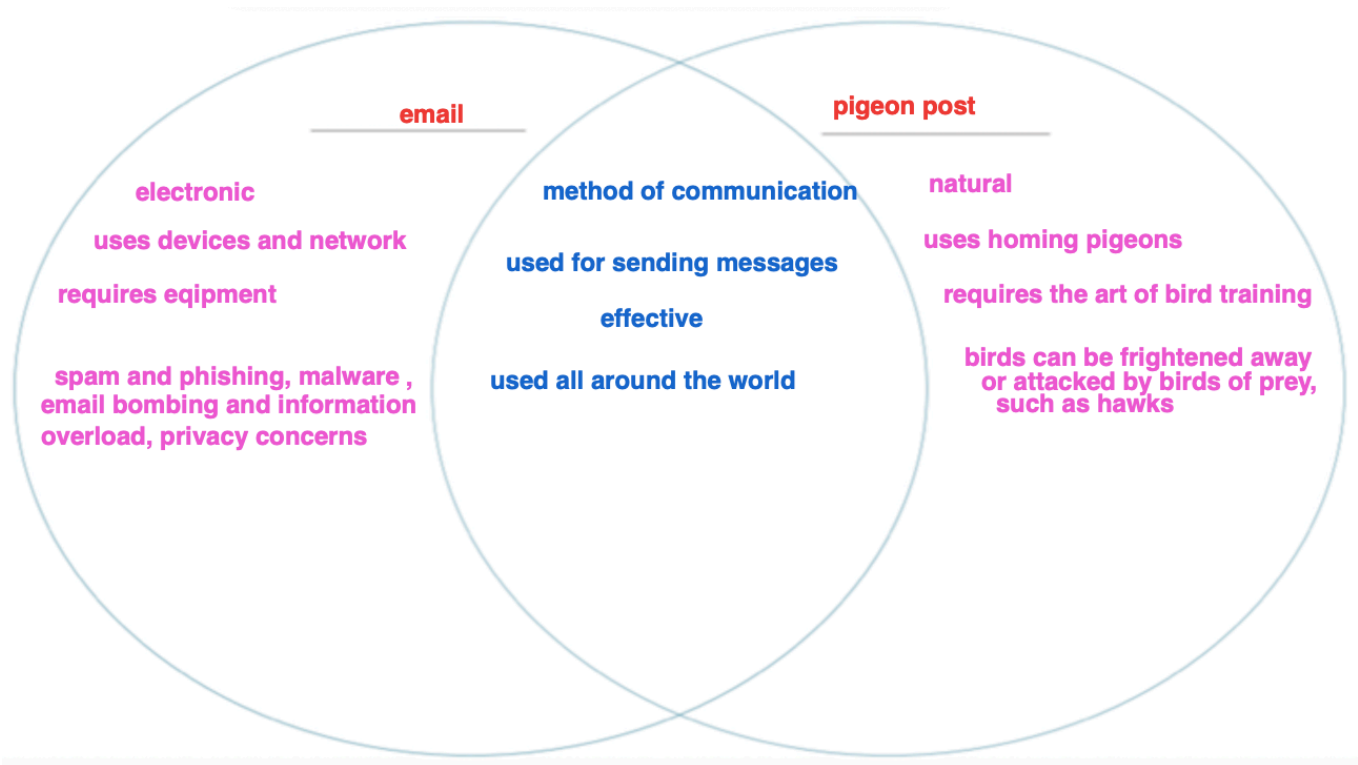
- less flexible;
- discusses all the information about one subject first and then about the other;
- *technique* - **parallel structure**

## 4/ How to organize the essay

POINT-BY-POINT METHOD	BLOCK METHOD
<b>Introduction Paragraph</b> Hook Connecting information Thesis statement	<b>Introduction Paragraph</b> Hook Connecting information Thesis statement
<b>Body Paragraph 1</b> Point 1: ease of use — car — bicycle  <b>Body Paragraph 2</b> Point 2: safety — car — bicycle  <b>Body Paragraph 3</b> Point 3: cost — car — bicycle  <b>Body Paragraph 4 (Optional)</b> Evaluation, recommendation	<b>Body Paragraph 1</b> Point 1: ease of use of a car Point 2: safety of a car Point 3: cost of a car  <b>Body Paragraph 2</b> Point 1: ease of use of a bicycle Point 2: safety of a bicycle Point 3: cost of a bicycle  <b>Body Paragraph 3 (Optional)</b> Evaluation, recommendation
<b>Conclusion Paragraph</b> Restated thesis Suggestion, opinion, or prediction	<b>Conclusion Paragraph</b> Restated thesis Suggestion, opinion, or prediction

## 5/ Brainstorming and making a rough draft





## 6/ Practice 1: Intro, Body Paragraphs & Conclusion

**Title:** Online and Face-to-Face Learning in the Digital Age

### I. Introduction

- A. Describe increasing importance of computers in education.
- B. Briefly contrast online education with traditional face-to-face classes.
- C. Thesis statement: Students should not assume that either online or face-to-face classes are superior; instead, \_\_\_\_\_

### II. Body Paragraph 1

- A. Discuss convenience of online courses versus face-to-face courses.
- B. Provide example of \_\_\_\_\_

### III. Body Paragraph 2

- A. Discuss \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Provide scholarly evidence that supports argument that online courses increase student participation.

### IV. Body Paragraph 3

- A. Discuss \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Provide example of specific classroom settings that benefit from face-to-face interaction.

### V. Body Paragraph 4

- A. Discuss \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Suggest that some students spend too much time learning how to use the computer technology rather than concentrating on the subject matter.

### VI. Body Paragraph 5

- A. Discuss \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Provide an example of how teachers cannot write effective recommendation letters for students they do not know personally.

### VII. Conclusion

- A. Suggest that students and teachers assess their learning and instructional styles in order to \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Predict that this issue will be resolved in the future.

## 7/ Practice 2: Writing a thesis statement

FOCUS	EXAMPLE THESIS STATEMENTS
Differences	<p><b>Although</b> the end goal of shopping in a store and shopping online is the same, the experiences are very different.</p> <p><b>While</b> Malaysia and Thailand <b>may seem</b> similar because they share a common border, they have striking differences.</p>
Similarities	<p><b>Despite</b> obvious differences in the two languages, English and French share a number of important similarities.</p> <p><b>While</b> Nite Owl and Rorschach, the heroes of Alan Moore's <i>Watchmen</i>, <b>appear</b> to be exact opposites, they share three important qualities that enable their heroic acts.</p>
Both differences and similarities	Both Barbara Ehrenreich's <i>Nickel and Dimed</i> and Jeffrey Sachs's <i>The End of Poverty</i> propose similar suggestions for ending poverty, yet they approach the topic in different ways.

1. two popular tourist destinations

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2. two professional sports

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## 8/ Practice 3: Using connectors

SIMILARITY	CONTRAST	EXAMPLES
<b>PREPOSITIONS</b>		
just as like similar to (the same as)	as opposed to contrasted (to / with) different from unlike	<b>Similar to</b> rice, potatoes are considered a food staple. <b>Different from</b> yogurt, ice cream has a high sugar content.
<b>COORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS</b>		
and . . . too	but yet	Soda is high in sugar, <b>and</b> ice cream is <b>too</b> . Soda is high in sugar, <b>yet</b> it remains popular.
<b>SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS</b>		
	although even though whereas while	Red meat can be high in saturated fats, <b>whereas</b> chicken is lower in saturated fats.
<b>TRANSITIONS</b>		
equally in the same way likewise similarly	however conversely on the other hand	Cars require regular maintenance. <b>Likewise</b> , bicycles need to be maintained. Cars pollute the air. <b>On the other hand</b> , bicycles are environmentally friendly.

### Fight for Survival

1 Many mammals—and other animals <sup>1</sup> (both / too)—are facing **extinction**, which threatens the diversity of animal life on Earth. <sup>2</sup> (Unlike / Equally) pets and farm animals, the existence of wild animals such as gorillas and tigers is threatened. To ensure that these creatures are protected and survive in the future, many people believe that they should be in zoos or animal reserves<sup>1</sup>. Zoos keep animals in exhibits where visitors can learn about them, <sup>3</sup> (therefore / whereas) reserves allow animals to move freely in vast expanses of land that better **simulate** their natural living conditions. Both zoos and reserves create **habitats** where animals can reproduce and thus protect their species from extinction, <sup>4</sup> (but / so) both have liabilities as well.

## 9/ Practice 4: Using parallel structures

Find the error in parallel structure in each sentence. Then rewrite the sentence correctly.

1. According to the most recent data, the population of Spain is larger than Greece.  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. The company's annual report indicates excellent sales in January, March, and in July.  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. With only five days until the deadline, our team's project is not as good as the other team.  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Many children like watching TV shows and to play video games.  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. To apply for a loan, select from our different loan packages, fill out an application, and you can submit it to a loan officer at the bank.  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. According to the report, schools in California spend more money per student than New York.  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. For better heart health, three great forms of exercise involve our legs: jogging, distance running, and when you take fast walks.

## 10/ Practice 5: Improving your style by combining shorter sentences into longer ones

Combine the ideas into one sentence. You may change the word forms, but do not change or omit any ideas. There is more than one answer.

1. Some people wake up very early.  
They do this every day.  
They do this in order to have some quiet time before the rest of their family wakes up.  
They do this in order to get to their office early.

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2. A Boeing 737 jet seats 140 passengers.  
140 is an approximate number.  
A Boeing 737 is one of the most common commercial planes.

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3. The top three names for baby girls in England are Sophia, Olivia, and Emma.  
The next two names on that list are Isabella and Ava.  
This was according to a credible website.

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