

The Comparison/Contrast Method

Using Comparison & Contrast as your method of analysis means, simply, finding **connections** between multiple things and discussing them in a logical, organized manner.

You do this by developing 2 topics at the same time, and then examining their similarities OR their differences in order to **arrive at a SINGLE CONCLUSION** about them.

Choosing Comparison/Contrast as your method of analysis means:

- choosing a topic with two parts
- and then choosing your organizational structure (**point-by-point** or **subject block**)
- and then choosing some key transitional phrases to help you move between your topics in order to make your paragraph more coherent and cohesive

When you choose a topic, choose one with two parts that have enough in common to actually make them comparable – **Do Not** choose subjects that are so big that you cannot possibly handle all the relevant points in a single discussion, and **Do Not** choose subjects that are so alike you cannot find enough to say about each of them in a discussion.

When the subject is too wide or too narrow, your writing is ineffective because it is either too general or too constricted.

Ex. *Spain vs. Norway* – **too wide, too different**

Ex. *“river” vs. “rio”* – **too narrow, too similar**

Ex. *Traveling by train in the U.S. vs. Traveling by train in France* – **just right, different but still similar**

One-sided contrast:

American trains go to only a few towns, are infrequent, and are often shabby and uncomfortable. In contrast, European trains are much nicer.

Balanced contrast:

American trains go to only a few large cities, run infrequently, and are often shabby and uncomfortable. In contrast, European trains go to almost every small town, are always dependable, and are clean and attractive.