

Help Centres – English Support



Compare-Contrast Essay Formats

In a compare and contrast essay, you examine and analyze two or more people, places, or things. When comparing, you are looking at similarities; when contrasting, you are looking at differences. There are two formats typical of this type of essay: block format and point-by-point format.

The **block format (subject by subject)** examines three aspects of one subject and then compares and contrasts the same three aspects as applied to a second subject in the next paragraph. This format works best for short essays when the points of comparison and contrast between the two subjects are easy to follow and recall between the two body paragraphs.

Outline

Introduction -- Thesis Statement: *While students often have a choice between purchasing a physical textbook or downloading an electronic version, when it comes to price, access to supplementary resources and durability, it's near impossible to argue against choosing an e-book edition.*

Body Paragraph One: Discuss physical textbooks in terms of price, access to supplementary materials and durability. These are the first, second, and third points as applied to the first subject (physical textbooks)

Body Paragraph Two: Discuss e-book editions of textbooks in terms of price, access to supplementary materials, and durability. These are the first, second, and third points as applied the second subject (e-book versions of textbooks).

Conclusion: Through summarizing the comparisons and contrasts presented in the body paragraphs, reinforce the accuracy, importance and relevance of your argument, which in this example is how electronic versions of textbooks are preferable to printed materials.

With the **alternating format (point by point)**, you organize each body paragraph around a single point of comparison/contrast analysis. The alternating format is helpful for longer essays as readers are able to easily follow each comparative/contrastive point when applied to both subjects in a single body paragraph.

Outline

Introduction -- Thesis Statement: See previous thesis statement

Body Paragraph One: Present the first point (“price”) and compare/contrast physical textbooks to e-books in relation to this point. This is comparing/contrasting the two subjects in relation to the first point of the thesis.

Body Paragraph Two: Present the second point (“access to supplementary resources”) and compare/contrast physical textbooks to e-books in relation to this point. This is comparing/contrasting the two subjects in relation to the second point of the thesis.

Body Paragraph Three: Present the third point (“durability”) and compare/contrast physical textbooks to e-books in relation to this point. This is comparing/contrasting the two subjects in relation to the third point of the thesis.

Conclusion: Through summarizing the comparisons and contrasts presented in the body paragraphs, reinforce the accuracy, importance and relevance of your argument, which in this example is how electronic versions of textbooks are preferable to printed materials.