



Compare and Contrast

When writing a compare and contrast essay, there are two potential approaches the writer may take. Depending on what the professor requires, follow either the subject-by-subject approach or the point-by-point approach.

SUBJECT-BY-SUBJECT APPROACH

Step 1: Choose at least two subjects, depending upon the assignment requirements, which can be thoroughly contrasted *and* compared.

Ex: Although Renaissance painters Vincent Van Gogh and Leonardo Di Vinci are regarded as two of the greatest artists of their era, they painted in vastly different styles.

STEP 2: Begin describing the subjects within the body paragraphs *one at a time*. Discuss characteristics respective to the topic.

Body Paragraph #1 Ex: Van Gogh was an impressionistic painter; he used fluid brush strokes and vibrant colors in his art.

The second body paragraph should focus on the second subject only.

Body Paragraph #2 Ex: Da Vinci was an oil painter; he preferred to paint people rather than objects.

STEP 3: Clarify the resemblances and variances between the subjects.

Body Paragraph #3 Ex: Although these artists lived during the same period and shared the same passion, Van Gogh used impressionism to depict scenes of nature or self-portraits; However, Da Vinci favored oil to create realistic portraits and biblical scenes.

Please note: There should be five or more body paragraphs for a Compare and Contrast Essay.

STEP 4: Summarize what was compared and contrasted, re-state the thesis, and do not introduce any new ideas. For more information on creating a conclusion, see the UWC's "[Writing a Conclusion](#)" handout.

POINT-BY-POINT PROCEDURE

Step 1: Choose at least two subjects, depending upon the requirements of the assignment, which share several similarities and differences.

Ex: Vincent Van Gogh and Leonardo Da Vinci were both oil painters of the Renaissance era who utilized different styles and different subject matters.

STEP 2: Develop each point of comparison and contrast within the body paragraphs. For this approach, *it is permissible to go back and forth between the subjects within the same paragraph.*

Body Paragraph #1 Ex: Both Van Gogh and Da Vinci preferred to paint in oil. However, Leonardo often utilized more pastel and muted shades whereas Van Gogh was known for the vibrant colors in his paintings.

Body Paragraph #2 Ex: Although Da Vinci and Van Gogh tended toward the same medium, Leonardo often utilized more pastel and muted shades whereas Van Gogh was known for the vibrant colors in his paintings.

STEP 3: The conclusion should be modeled in the same way as in the subject-by-subject approach as seen in Step 4 on the first page.