

The Structure of a Compare or Contrast Essay

In a compare / contrast essay students have to compare two objects, problems or events and evaluate their similarities and differences.

This can be done in three ways:

1. Discuss the similarities between them
2. Discuss the differences between them
3. Discuss the similarities and differences between them

Compare or contrast essays are grouped by object or by point.

Block Arrangement

In a block arrangement the body paragraphs are organised according to the objects. The *block* arrangement discusses one of the objects in the first body paragraph and the other object in the second. All the ideas provided in the first paragraph are also provided in the second paragraph *in the same order*.

Point by Point Arrangement

In a point by point arrangement the body paragraphs are organised according to the ideas. The point by point arrangement discusses a particular point about the first object and then immediately discusses the same point about the second object.

As it is seen in the following example, the objects of the essay are the same (PC and Mac) and the supporting ideas are the same (software and ease of use). The essays are different in the way they are organised.

Block Arrangement

Thesis Statement: There are two main differences / similarities between a PC and a Mac in terms of software and ease of use.

1st Body: PC

1. Software
2. Ease of use

2nd Body: MAC

1. Software
2. Ease of use

Point by Point Arrangement

Thesis Statement: There are two main differences / similarities between a PC and a Mac in terms of software and ease of use.

1st Body: Software

1. PC
2. MAC

2nd Body: Ease of use

1. PC
2. MAC

The following examples show:

1. A Block arrangement contrast essay
2. A Point by Point arrangement compare essay

1. Block Arrangement

Thesis Statement: There are two main differences between backpacking and staying in hotels; cost and safety.

1st Body: Backpacking

1. Cost
2. Safety

2nd Body: Staying in a Hotel

1. Cost
2. Safety

2. Point by Point Arrangement

Thesis Statement: American and Turkish fast foods are similar to each other in two main ways, they are both unhealthy and they are both convenient.

1st Body: They are unhealthy.

1. American Fast Food
2. Turkish Fast Food

2nd Body: They are convenient.

1. American Fast Food
2. Turkish Fast Food

The block arrangement organises the essay according to the objects. In the block arrangement above the contrasted objects are backpacking and staying in hotels. In the first body paragraph backpacking is explained firstly in terms of its cost and then safety. In the second body paragraph staying in a hotel is explained firstly in terms of its cost and then safety.

The point by point arrangement organises the essay according to the supporting ideas. In the point by point arrangement above the compared objects are American fast food and Turkish fast food. In the first body paragraph the supporting idea 'health' is explained in terms of American fast food and then Turkish fast food. In the second body paragraph the supporting idea 'convenience' is explained in terms of American fast food and then Turkish fast food.

The sample shows essay organization

Point by Point Arrangement

Compare American Fast Food and Turkish Fast Food

In recent years more and more people are eating more of their food outside of the home. Due to changing work and social lifestyles, many people spend a lot more time in restaurants and cafes. There are many choices of food to eat, but in this country two of the most common are American fast food and Turkish fast food. American and Turkish fast foods are similar to each other in two main ways, they are both unhealthy and they are both convenient.

Firstly, both American and Turkish fast food can be harmful to our health. Both are high in fat, in sugar and in calorie content. Because of this, they can be addictive, often leading to an increase in body weight and in some cases obesity. Moreover, both American and Turkish fast foods are created in factories and are made to have a long shelf life. They both contain many preservatives and chemical additives which have unforeseen effects on bodily health.

Secondly, American and Turkish fast foods are both similar in that they are convenient. To begin with, both are inexpensive. These foods, which will easily fill your stomach, can be bought for the same price as a bowl of soup. In addition, as indicated in the name, both are very 'fast'. With busy work and social schedules, many people need to eat quickly and often whilst walking, using public transport or driving. Therefore, not only American but also Turkish fast foods are conveniently quick and easy to eat.

In summary, American and Turkish fast food are alike in that they are both damaging to health and that they are both convenient. In the 21st century fast food is very common and very popular; we must consider the negative impact of these foods on our future as individuals and as a society.

General Statements

Topic Sentence

Concluding Sentence

Thesis Statement

Topic Sentence

Final Thought

The sample shows essay connectors

Point by Point Arrangement

Compare American Fast Food and Turkish Fast Food

In recent years more and more people are eating more of their food outside of the home. Due to changing work and social lifestyles, many people spend a lot more time in restaurants and cafes. There are many choices of food to eat, but in this country two of the most common are American fast food and Turkish fast food. American and Turkish fast foods are similar to each other in two main ways, they are both unhealthy and they are both convenient.

Firstly, both American and Turkish fast food can be harmful to our health. Both are high in fat, in sugar and in calorie content. Because of this, they can be addictive, often leading to an increase in body weight and in some cases obesity. **Moreover**, both American and Turkish fast foods are created in factories and are made to have a long shelf life. They both contain many preservatives and chemical additives which have unforeseen effects on bodily health.

Secondly, American and Turkish fast foods are both similar in that they are convenient. **To begin with**, both are inexpensive. These foods, which will easily fill your stomach, can be bought for the same price as a bowl of soup. **In addition**, as indicated in the name, both are very 'fast'. With busy work and social schedules, many people need to eat quickly and often whilst walking, using public transport or driving. Therefore, not only American but also Turkish fast foods are conveniently quick and easy to eat.

In summary, American and Turkish fast food are alike in that they are both damaging to health and that they are both convenient. In the 21st century fast food is very common and very popular; we must consider the negative impact of these foods on our future as individuals and as a society.

The sample shows essay
specific vocabulary

Point by Point Arrangement

Compare American Fast Food and Turkish Fast Food

In recent years more and more people are eating more of their food outside of the home. Due to changing work and social lifestyles, many people spend a lot more time in restaurants and cafes. There are many choices of food to eat, but in this country two of the most common are American fast food and Turkish fast food. American and Turkish fast foods are **similar to** each other in two main ways, they are **both** unhealthy and they are **both** convenient.

Firstly, **both** American **and** Turkish fast food can be harmful to our health. **Both** are high in fat, in sugar and in calorie content. Because of this, they can be addictive, often leading to an increase in body weight and in some cases obesity. Moreover, **both** American **and** Turkish fast foods are created in factories and are made to have a long shelf life. They **both** contain many preservatives and chemical additives which have unforeseen effects on bodily health.

Secondly, American and Turkish fast foods are **both similar in** that they are convenient. To begin with, **both** are inexpensive. These foods, which will easily fill your stomach, can be bought for **the same** price **as** a bowl of soup. In addition, as indicated in the name, **both** are very 'fast'. With busy work and social schedules, many people need to eat quickly and often whilst walking, using public transport or driving. Therefore, **not only** American **but also** Turkish fast foods are conveniently quick and easy to eat.

In summary, American and Turkish fast food are **alike in** that they are **both** damaging to health and that they are both convenient. In the 21st century fast food is very common and very popular; we must consider the negative impact of these foods on our future as individuals and as a society.

The sample shows essay organization

Block Arrangement

Contrast between Backpacking or Staying in Hotels

Traveling is a hobby which many people now enjoy. It is a hobby which is becoming more and more popular as opportunities for travel become greater. These days there are several ways to travel around the world; two of the most common are backpacking and staying in hotels. There are two main differences between backpacking and staying in hotels; cost and safety.

First, backpacking is quite different from staying in hotels regarding costs and safety. To begin with, backpacking has been popular for many years with young people who do not have a lot of money to spend on traveling. By backpacking people can save a lot of money and see many more places than if they spent the same money staying in a hotel. Furthermore, as backpackers will need to sleep in a hostel or outside in a tent while backpacking, there will always be an issue of safety and security because backpackers sleep in the same area as other people, many of whom they do not know.

Second, staying in hotels, on the other hand, differs from backpacking in terms of cost and safety. Unlike backpacking, staying in hotels requires a lot more money. Hotels are one of the most comfortable ways of traveling, but only if you have enough money. By staying at a hotel people will spend much more money than they would spend in a hostel. In addition, a hotel provides a higher level of security to the traveler. Hotels require specific security details such as flight, credit cards or passport numbers to ensure the correct identification of their customers.

In brief, there are differences in cost and safety between backpacking and staying in hotels. The world is a much smaller place than it used to be, many people have the opportunity to travel and they have many ways in which to travel. People should consider their budget and take responsibility for their own safety and go out and see the world.

Adapted from: <http://www.eslbee.com/compcont.htm>

General Statements

Topic Sentence

Concluding Sentence

Thesis Statement

Topic Sentence

Final Thought

The sample shows essay connectors

Block Arrangement

Contrast between Backpacking or Staying in Hotels

Traveling is a hobby which many people now enjoy. It is a hobby which is becoming more and more popular as opportunities for travel become greater. These days there are several ways to travel around the world; two of the most common are backpacking and staying in hotels. There are two main differences between backpacking and staying in hotels; cost and safety.

First, backpacking is quite different from staying in hotels regarding costs and safety. **To begin with**, backpacking has been popular for many years with young people who do not have a lot of money to spend on traveling. By backpacking people can save a lot of money and see many more places than if they spent the same money staying in a hotel. **Furthermore**, as backpackers will need to sleep in a hostel or outside in a tent while backpacking, there will always be an issue of safety and security because backpackers sleep in the same area as other people, many of whom they do not know.

Second, staying in hotels, on the other hand, differs from backpacking in terms of cost and safety. Unlike backpacking, staying in hotels requires a lot more money. Hotels are one of the most comfortable ways of traveling, but only if you have enough money. By staying at a hotel people will spend much more money than they would spend in a hostel. **In addition**, a hotel provides a higher level of security to the traveler. Hotels require specific security details **such as** flight, credit cards or passport numbers to ensure the correct identification of their customers.

In brief, there are differences in cost and safety between backpacking and staying in hotels. The world is a much smaller place than it used to be, many people have the opportunity to travel and they have many ways in which to travel. People should consider their budget and take responsibility for their own safety and go out and see the world.

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The sample shows essay
specific vocabulary

Block Arrangement

Contrast between Backpacking or Staying in Hotels

Traveling is a hobby which many people now enjoy. It is a hobby which is becoming **more and more** popular as opportunities for travel become greater. These days there are several ways to travel around the world; two of **the most** common are backpacking and staying in hotels. There are two main **differences between** backpacking and staying in hotels; cost and safety.

First, backpacking is quite **different from** staying in hotels regarding costs and safety. To begin with, backpacking has been popular for many years with young people who do not have a lot of money to spend on traveling. By backpacking people can save a lot of money and see many **more** places **than** if they spent the same money staying in a hotel. Furthermore, as backpackers will need to sleep in a hostel or outside in a tent while backpacking, there will always be an issue of safety and security because backpackers sleep in **the same** area **as** other people, many of whom they do not know.

Second, staying in hotels, **on the other hand**, **differs from** backpacking in terms of cost and safety. **Unlike** backpacking, staying in hotels requires **a lot more** money. Hotels are one of **the most** comfortable ways of traveling, **but** only if you have enough money. By staying at a hotel people will spend **much more** money **than** they would spend in a hostel. In addition, a hotel provides a higher level of security to the traveler. Hotels require specific security details such as flight, credit cards or passport numbers to ensure the correct identification of their customers.

In brief, there are **differences in** cost and safety **between** backpacking and staying in hotels. The world is a much smaller place **than** it used to be, many people have the opportunity to travel and they have many ways in which to travel. People should consider their budget and take responsibility for their own safety and go out and see the world.

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