Comparison and Contrast Essay

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Title V Project

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Introduction

This module is intended for students enrolled in writing courses at the university undergraduate level, specifically for those who need to write essays as a requirement for their classes. The module will serve as a resourceful guideline to write effective comparison and contrast essays.

The module includes a complete series of activities and exercises that will guide and help students, step by step, in the process of comparing and contrasting two elements in a standard format essay. It is highly recommended for the students to have at least some basic knowledge of essay structure and components before working with this module in order to understand the concepts better.

The module consists of three main parts, which are sub-divided in smaller units. Each unit will work with the separate parts of the essay while providing hands-on practice and exercises for the benefit of the students. At the same time, it will provide other valuable resources and internet links for the students to compliment their learning. Finally, the module provides a diagnostic writing activity and a final writing activity for the students to assess their learning and comprehension of the material given.
General Objective:

Upon completion of this module, the students will write a complete comparison and contrast essay following the specific guidelines provided.

Specific Objectives:

By working with this module, the students will:

a. Provide an appropriate definition for the comparison and contrast essay.

b. Identify adequate opening statements for introductory paragraphs in a comparison and contrast essay.

c. Write an appropriate thesis statement using parallel structures adequately in an introductory paragraph.

d. Write appropriate topic sentences using proper transitional expressions to begin body paragraphs.

e. Write well-supported body paragraphs using the “point-by-point” format of a comparison and contrast essay.

f. Identify adequate concluding statements to end comparison and contrast essays.
How can you use this module?

Welcome to the fascinating world of writing essays! In this module you will be working with the skills of writing an **effective comparison and contrast essay**. The module by itself will not make you a better writer or an expert in English grammar structures. It focuses on providing you essential skills and details that will allow you to organize and outline your ideas while writing an essay – specifically, the comparison and contrast type of essay.

As you should know from previous experiences, an essay consists of three main components – the introduction, the body, and the conclusion. For this reason, the module is divided into separate parts, and each one focusing on a particular component of the essay. This way, you can follow the directions, guidelines, and practical exercises to complete each part step-by-step. At the end of each block of instructions, some practical exercises and/or activities will follow. You must be certain to understand each part and complete all the practical exercises before moving into another part.

By the end of the module, you should be able to put all the parts together for the final product – a complete well-written comparison and contrast essay.

NOTES

- Make sure to use and/or consult all other sources suggested in the module to complement your writing skills (internet links, documents, references, and others). This is very important in order to achieve better results!
- Make sure to complete the diagnostic writing activity and the post writing activity to evaluate your learning experience while using this module.
Diagnostic Writing Activity

Before you proceed with the activities in this module, you need to explore your knowledge of this topic by completing the following diagnostic exercise. This is very useful because at the end, you will have a similar test that will allow you to compare the skills and competence you have acquired on the subject while completing this module.

Part I.

General Knowledge of Essay Structures and Content (TRUE OR FALSE)

Directions:
In the space provided, write a (T), if you consider the statement TRUE (correct), or an (F), if you consider the statement to be FALSE (incorrect).

1. ___ A standard academic essay basically consists of three main parts. These are: the introduction, the body, and the conclusion.

2. ___ A comparison and contrast essay is used to describe differences or similarities.

3. ___ Two important sentences in the introduction are the opening statement and the thesis statement.

4. ___ An introduction serves three main functions: to identify the general topic, catch the reader’s attention, and state the thesis.

5. ___ The thesis statement is just like the title of the essay.

6. ___ A thesis statement is the stand you take; an opinion you must support.

7. ___ In the introductory paragraph of a comparison and contrast essay, your thesis should identify the two items being compared or contrasted and your opinion about them should be presented.

8. ___ The point-by-point comparative format does not allow you to compare two items effectively.

9. ___ The parallel structures in your thesis statement must present the points and the sequence they will follow in the body paragraphs.

10. ___ In a comparison and contrast essay, the conclusion must do the same job that it does in all essays: it sums up the main points and reinforces the thesis.

REMINDER: Please, look at the correct answers on page 28
Part II.

Writing a Comparison and Contrast Essay

Directions: Based on the following supportive evidence (provided in chart D-1), write a standard comparison and contrast essay. Compare your essay with the model essay provided on pages 33-34.

CHART D-1

Title: ___________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Restaurant</th>
<th>Prices ($)</th>
<th>Services</th>
<th>Facilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Linda’s Rest.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salads</td>
<td>$3.50</td>
<td>opens from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.</td>
<td>clean bathrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandwiches</td>
<td>$4.00</td>
<td>drive–in service</td>
<td>12 tables / 48 chairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soup</td>
<td>$3.00</td>
<td>carry-out</td>
<td>20 parking spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinks</td>
<td>$1.50</td>
<td>home delivery</td>
<td>playground for kids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desserts</td>
<td>$2.00</td>
<td>three cashiers in rush hours</td>
<td>air conditioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>José’s Rest.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salads</td>
<td>$4.50</td>
<td>opens from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.</td>
<td>clean bathrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandwiches</td>
<td>$4.50</td>
<td>drive–in service</td>
<td>8 tables/32 chairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soup</td>
<td>$3.50</td>
<td>NO home delivery</td>
<td>10 parking spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinks</td>
<td>$2.00</td>
<td>2 cashiers in rush hours</td>
<td>NO playground for kids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desserts</td>
<td>$3.00</td>
<td></td>
<td>ceiling fans only</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(YOU MAY USE ADDITIONAL PAPERS IF YOU NEED TO) By the end of the module, you will be referred back to this essay. (Do not make any changes to it!)
Part III.

General Review: The Essay

A. General structure of a standard essay

An essay, (defined by the American Heritage Dictionary), is a short literary composition on a single subject. An essay, (academic standard), typically consists of an introductory paragraph, (introduction), three supporting paragraphs, (body), and a concluding paragraph, (conclusion). All five paragraphs must be connected to discuss one single subject. Writing an essay forces you to sort out and organize your ideas, and think them through clearly. Essay writing, in short, will give you practice in the process of clear and logical reasoning.

To understand more about the structure of a standard Five Paragraph Essay, please look at the following references:


- Internet www.geocities.com/SoHo/Atrium/1437/index.html
  a. writing an effective essay (transitions)
  b. essay slide show
  c. essay structure


B. Comparison and Contrast Essay Structure / Definition

- A comparison and contrast essay examines the similarities (compares) and/or differences (contrasts) between two things in order to make a point. Here are a few examples of comparison and contrast ideas:
  a. Compare / contrast two jobs
  b. Compare / contrast two colleges
  c. Compare / contrast two cars
In all cases the similarities and differences lead to a convincing conclusion. This is an important feature in a comparison and contrast essay. It is not simply a list of similarities and differences; it establishes an opinion about two items and compares and contrasts them to support that opinion. This type of essay is one of the most common forms of writing because it is a common thought process. We use it every day whenever we make decisions.

**Practical Exercise # 1**

Now that you know more about the comparison and contrast essay, select the most appropriate definition for a comparison and contrast essay.

1. The purpose of a comparison and contrast essay is to examine…
   a. the similarities (compare) between two things in order to make a point about them.
   b. the differences (contrast) between two things in order to make a point about them.
   c. the similarities (compare) and/or differences (contrast) between two things in order to make a point.
   d. the similarities (contrast) and/or differences (compare) between two things in order to make a point.

Don’t forget to verify your answer on page 29.
Part IV.

A. Opening Statements

In this part you will learn more about how to begin your essay. In standard academic essays, introductory paragraphs usually consist of four or five sentences. The first sentence in the introductory paragraph is called the OPENING STATEMENT. It is a very important sentence because, after the title, it is the first contact the readers have with the essay itself. This sentence is viewed as an invitation. You need to capture the readers’ attention and invite them to read the essay. Your opening statement usually determines if the readers will be interested in reading the rest of the essay. In this sentence, you should use catchy words, humorous remarks, exclamations, irony, and/or savvy expressions to spark the readers’ interest and curiosity into reading what you wrote. To help you understand the principles of an opening statement better, let’s look at the following examples. Typically, there are six (6) different types of opening statements that you can use to your advantage. These are:

• General to specific

Begin with a broad, general statement of your topic and narrow it down to your thesis statement. Broad general statements ease the reader into your thesis statement by providing a background for it. Look at the following example!

The Best Puerto Rican Singers

Puerto Rico has many famous singers. All of these singers have succeeded in their respective musical genre such as: salsa, ballads, pop-music, and others through the years. Some of them are already famous and acclaimed internationally. But when it comes down to select the top singers of the island, there is no competition. The three best singers of Puerto Rico are Ednita Nazario, Chayanne, and Gilbertito Santarosa.
• Quotations

A quotation can grab your reader’s attention. Quoting a respected person can add credibility to your argument. Sometimes, though, a quotation will simply add a bit of interest to your opening. Using a quotation in your introductory paragraph lets you add someone else’s voice to your own.

**Helping Your Country**

Former U.S. President J.F. Kennedy once said: “It is not what the country can do for you, but what you can do for your country.” Most of the people around us are always complaining about the problems in their community and the country in general. However, they do little to help or to provide alternatives for those problems. If you want to help, there are many things you could do! Cleaning your neighborhood, participating in civil organizations, and acting as a role model are just some examples of how you can help your country.

• Question

A question easily sparks the readers’ attention and curiosity by inviting them to read the essay to find possible answers to the question. By using this type of technique, you may simply want the reader to think about possible answers, or you may plan to answer the questions yourself later in the paper.

**Stressful Waiting Rooms**

Do you remember the last time you visited a dentist? Ouch! Yes, indeed it was a torture chamber resembling ancient medieval times. But if you remember well, the worst part of the visit was the waiting room itself. There are many waiting rooms that can really fill your existence with distress and anguish. If you are in need of experiencing a lot of stress and anxiety lately, all you have to do is visit your local dentist office, the emergency room at a hospital, or a court hearing session at your nearest judicial center.

• Opposite (Irony)

This approach works because your readers will be surprised, and then intrigued, by the contrast between the opening idea and the thesis statement that follows it.

**Back to School**

When I decided to return to school at age thirty five, I wasn’t at all worried about my ability to do the work. After all, I was a grown woman who had raised a family, not a confused teenager fresh out of high school. But when I started classes, I realized that those “confused teenagers” sitting around me were in much better shape for college than I was. They still had all their classroom skills in bright, shiny condition, while mine had grown rusty from disuse. I had totally forgotten how to do research in a library, how to write a report, and even how to speak up in class discussions.
• Short anecdote/brief story

Stories are naturally interesting. They appeal to a reader’s curiosity. In your introduction, an anecdote will grab the reader’s attention right away. The story should be brief and related to your main idea. The incident can be something that happened to you, to someone else, or something you have heard about or read about in a newspaper.

Fighting at Schools

I remember my first fight at school. It was a terrible experience and so were the consequences. I had to fight one of my best friends just because both of us wanted to grab a ball while playing baseball. At the end, everybody laughed and enjoyed the fight, while we were being punished. Fighting at schools is not a good business. The physical and emotional damage, the loss of school privileges, and the loss of one’s reputation are some of the negative consequences of fighting at school.

• Warning! (Importance of topic)

If you can convince your readers that the subject in some way applies to them, or is something they should know more about; they will want to keep reading.

Accidents on the Roads of Puerto Rico

Turn that cell-phone off and concentrate on your driving, please! Nowadays, most of the accidents are caused by negligent drivers who are usually talking on their cell-phones. These people never take a second to think about the possible consequences of their actions. But the handy cell-phones alone are not the only source of reckless driving in Puerto Rico. Along with the talking on cell-phones, not obeying traffic laws and compulsive speeding are the three major contributors to the many accidents on this island.

NOTES:

1. Opening statements usually stand out by the use of exclamation marks (!) to emphasize their intentions.

2. In a comparison and contrast essay, you can use any of the opening techniques discussed previously.

3. Sometimes, you may combine two techniques in one for your convenience.
PRACTICAL EXERCISE 2

Now that you know more about opening statements, go on to work with the following exercise. Remember this is the very first step in your paragraph, so you must be very creative!

A. Directions: Read the following statements written for comparison and contrast essays and select the most appropriate opening statement from the list of options given according to the technique and the title of the essay presented.

1. Title: Nothing is Better than a Mercedes
   Opening technique: GENERAL TO SPECIFIC
   a. Do you own a Mercedes Benz car?
   b. I want a Mercedes Benz with all the luxury!
   c. Mercedes Benz vehicles are famous and recognized worldwide!

2. Title: Basketball is the King of Sports
   Opening technique: QUOTATIONS
   a. “I really love this game!” It’s the classic NBA slogan to promote basketball around the world.
   b. If you don’t like basketball, you’re missing the fun!
   c. The famous chant goes like this: “Take me out to the ball game.” Everybody sings along during the seventh inning.

3. Title: Love
   Opening technique: QUESTION
   a. Have you ever kissed somebody? Have you ever been kissed?
   b. What is love? How do we know that we are really in love?
   c. Love is the most beautiful feeling that human beings can possess.
   d. I remember the first time I fell in love with my girlfriend!
4. Title: The Best Moments of my Life
   Opening technique: ANECDOTE/ BRIEF STORY

   a. I want to enjoy my life as much as I can by having good moments.
   b. The best moments of my life have been very special for me.
   c. When I was in high school, I had the greatest times of my life.
   d. You have to enjoy the good moments that life offers you!

   Verify your answers on page 29.

   Now you know how to begin your essay.
   It’s time to gain total control of it!

   B. Thesis Statement

   (THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF THE ESSAY!)

   In a typical introductory paragraph, you need an average of (4) four to (5) five sentences. After your first sentence (opening statement), you must provide about two or three additional sentences to explain and elaborate in further details your opening statement (look at the examples used for opening statements). These sentences will begin to connect your opening with the introduction and they will lead the connection to the most important part of the essay –the thesis statement, which will be the last sentence of your introductory paragraph.
   Let’s look at the following example!
Example of introductory paragraph

**Challenges in Life**

“*May the force be with you*” was George Lucas’ famous expression for his Jedi Knights in the classic movie, *Star Wars*. He was more than right when you think about those words in order to face everyday life. Nowadays, life brings us so many challenges that we need all the Jedi’s force to deal with them. Challenges are everywhere and they all come to you at different stages of your life. Taking the College Board Exam, going through a job interview, or simply entering college for the first time are some real challenges in which you, definitely, need the force to be with you.

- Notice that the author used the *quotation opening technique* to capture the readers’ attention.
- He continued the introduction with three other sentences to connect the opening with the thesis statement and even with the title itself.

The **thesis statement** is then, the controlling idea (main idea) of the entire essay. It is, therefore, the sentence that summarizes (controls) the direction and the content of the essay. At the same time, this sentence links the introduction with the body of the essay.

**NOTES:**

- In the comparison and contrast essay, you must provide your **OPINION** in your thesis statement. You have to take a stand and sustain it throughout the essay.
- The thesis statement provides control, stability, and direction to the body of the essay. This direction and control is achieved by **PARALLEL STRUCTURES**.
- The thesis statement is not the title of the essay!
- The thesis statement is not a personal announcement – *In this essay I am going to compare*, *my essay is about*... **Never use these expressions in a formal essay!**
Parallelism -parallel grammatical structures

Words in a pair or a series should have a parallel structure. By balancing the items in a pair or in a series (3 items), so that they have the same kind of structure, you will make the sentence clearer and easier to read. Notice how the parallel sentences that follow read more smoothly than the non-parallel ones.

Examples of thesis statements with parallel structures

1. (thesis statement –all nouns)
   (PAR) Japanese cars are better than their American counterparts because of their durability, variety, and comfort.
   (NON-PAR) …because of their durability, variety, and they are more comfortable.

2. (thesis statement -verbs –infinitives to + basic form of verb)
   (PAR) Christmas vacations are my favorite holidays because I love to go shopping around the stores, decorate the house with Christmas ornaments, and visit my relatives and friends at their houses. (It is not necessary to repeat to in all three occasions.)
   (NON-PAR) …and I love visiting my relatives and friends at their houses.

3. (thesis statement -all adjectives)
   (PAR) I like to take classes with Prof. Pérez; she’s by far more knowledgeable, patient, and dedicated than all others.
   (NON-PAR) …and dedicates most of her free time to help her students.

4. (verbs with phrases / same verb tense)
   (PAR) Last year we had the best vacation ever because we traveled to many places, ate at many different restaurants, and stayed at different hotels.
   (NON-PAR) …and it was fun to stay at different hotels every day.
PRACTICAL EXERCISE 3-A

(thesis statements with parallel structures)

Directions: Correct the following examples to form parallel structures

1. The new computer games entertain, educate, and are amazing.

2. The novelty shop sells hand buzzers, plastic fangs, and insects that are fake.

3. Adam convinced most of the audience because he argued logically, calmly, and was reasonable.

4. Steven prefers books that are short, scary, and filled with suspense.

5. Aunt Darlene’s hobbies include reading cookbooks devoted to spicy food, learning folk dances from other countries and to paint cat faces on medium sized socks.

Please, verify and compare your answers with the ones on page 30.

Now that you know how to write effective and accurate sentences with parallel structures you will see what an important role they play in the essay!
Thesis statements are extremely important because they will organize and outline the ideas for your **BODY PARAGRAPHS**. The three parallel structures will serve as the basis for your three paragraphs in the body. This way, the first item of the parallel structure will be the topic in the first paragraph, the second item will be the topic in the second paragraph, and the third item will be the topic in the third and last paragraph of the body. In any given essay writing, once you write an effective thesis statement, the body of the paragraph will fall into place automatically… in the thesis statement you plan the order and sequence of your essay.

Now, let’s take a look at the following example of a thesis statement!

- **The Caribe Hilton Hotel is better than the Ritz Carlton because of the location, the prices, and the service.**

  Notice the (3) parallel structures (the location, the prices, the service) (all nouns)
  Notice the opinion of the writer (preference of Caribe Hilton over Ritz Carlton)

This sentence will link directly to the three body paragraphs in this way:

- paragraph 1 (you will only compare/contrast the **location** of both hotels)
- paragraph 2 (you will only compare/contrast the **prices** of both hotels)
- paragraph 3 (you will only compare/contrast the **service** of both hotels)

**PRACTICAL EXERCISE 3-B**

Directions: Use the information given in the chart below and write a coherent, parallel thesis statement for a comparison and contrast type essay. Provide a title for your hypothetical essay!

Compare your answer with the one on page 30.
I'm thinking about buying a car here in Puerto Rico, but I haven't decided yet. I'm looking at two models –the sport cars and the 4x4 SUV's. Sport cars are fast, but in Puerto Rico there isn’t much space to accelerate anyway. Besides the road conditions are pretty bad. They are bumpy and rough. Most of the countryside is made up of hills where you need a lot of power to get there. Sport cars are a little comfortable, but the 4x4’s are more comfortable than the sport cars. They take more cargo space than sport cars too.

It rains a lot in Puerto Rico! The 4x4’s are higher and can cross over puddles and dirt roads with less difficulty than sport cars. The latest 4x4 SUV’s also bring most of the luxury that sport cars bring. For example, they all come equipped with CD players, sunroofs, power windows, power locks, and just about everything you can imagine. I think I’ve already made my decision. Can you help me?

Title: _______________________________

Thesis statement _________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________

(verify your answer on page 30)

Part V.

Topic Sentences with Transitional Expressions

Now that you understand more about the introductory paragraphs, it’s time to move on to the next step –the body paragraphs. Since you already know how to plan and organize your body paragraphs, you know what the topic is going to be for each one… it will be the (3) three points already expressed in the thesis statement!
Once again, if you are going to begin a new paragraph, you need to start it the right way. The first sentence of each body paragraph is called the **TOPIC SENTENCE**. This sentence serves as an introduction to the paragraph and establishes its purpose. Look at these examples.

1. The Caribe Hilton Hotel is located in a much better place than its competitor, the Ritz Carlton.
2. The Caribe Hilton offers better price rates at all times.
3. You will receive a far better service at the Caribe Hilton Hotel than at the Ritz Carlton.

Although these sentences look like the perfect examples of topic sentences for each paragraph, they are missing an essential part. These parts are called **TRANSITIONAL EXPRESSIONS**. Transitional expressions are essential because they are the ones that will connect one paragraph to the other providing coherence and a smooth shift between them.

Coherence between paragraphs and sentences allows the ideas and points to be presented in a very organized pattern for the reader. Transitional markers connect one point to the other while preparing the reader for what is to come next. For example, when a writer uses the transitional word *consequently*, the readers become aware that a result or a consequence is coming up. If the writer uses the expression *on the contrary*, the readers will expect a contradiction; or if the writer places the word *finally*, the reader knows that the end of the work is around the corner.

Transitional expressions will add a touch of professionalism, class, and organization to your writing while creating coherence and smoothing out your flow of ideas.

**NOTE:** Although you can use transitional expressions everywhere in your essay, they are imperative (A MUST) in your topic sentences at the beginning of paragraphs. **YOU MUST CONNECT ONE PARAGRAPH TO THE OTHER!**
Now, let’s look at the same sentences with the addition of transitional expressions.

a. **First of all**, the Caribe Hilton Hotel is located in a much better place than its competitor, the Ritz Carlton.

b. **In addition to its location**, the Caribe Hilton offers better price rates at all times.

c. **Besides the location and the price rates**, you will receive a far better service at the Caribe Hilton Hotel than at the Ritz Carlton.

**Here is a list of the most common transitional expressions!**

**Transitions for comparison and contrast**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Like</th>
<th>Unlike</th>
<th>However</th>
<th>On the Contrary</th>
<th>On the other hand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Also</td>
<td>But</td>
<td>Different from</td>
<td>Likewise</td>
<td>In addition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similarly</td>
<td>In contrast</td>
<td>Similar to</td>
<td>Besides</td>
<td>Nevertheless</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Transitions for sequence**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First</th>
<th>First of all</th>
<th>Second</th>
<th>Third</th>
<th>Next</th>
<th>Then</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>After that</td>
<td>Last</td>
<td>Finally</td>
<td>To begin with</td>
<td>In conclusion</td>
<td>Last but not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>least</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Transitions for introducing examples (MOST NEEDED TO BEGIN PARAGRAPHS!)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For example</th>
<th>An additional example</th>
<th>A good example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For instance</td>
<td>To illustrate</td>
<td>First of all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An example of</td>
<td>Take for example</td>
<td>To begin with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The most significant example</td>
<td>Another example</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Transitions for cause and effect**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Because of</th>
<th>As a result</th>
<th>Caused by</th>
<th>Resulted in</th>
<th>For</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Therefore</td>
<td>Consequently</td>
<td>For this reason</td>
<td>Since</td>
<td>Thus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Transitions to enumerate or to include more information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Also</th>
<th>Besides</th>
<th>Furthermore</th>
<th>Moreover</th>
<th>In addition</th>
<th>Besides that</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
PRACTICAL EXERCISE 4

Directions: Look at the example of a thesis statement below (comparison and contrast essay).

Video rentals are more convenient than going to the theater because you save money, feel more comfortable, and waste less time.

Now, read the examples of topic sentences for the body paragraphs, and re-write them (complete sentences) choosing the most appropriate transitional expression from the alternatives given.

1. (paragraph 1) _______ when you rent a video to watch at home, you can save a lot of money.
   a. On the contrary,
   b. Furthermore,
   c. To begin with,

(answer)_________________________________________________________________

2. (paragraph 2) _______ at the theater you cannot feel the comfort and relaxation that you can feel at your house.
   a. On the other hand,
   b. As a result,
   c. Another example,

(answer)_________________________________________________________________

3. (paragraph 3) _______ when you watch a movie at home, you don’t have to waste too much time like when you go to the theater.
   a. After that,
   b. Nevertheless,
   c. Finally,

(answer)_________________________________________________________________

Please, verify your answers on page 30.
So far, you have learned about introductions, opening statements, thesis statements, parallel structures, topic sentences, and transitional expressions. It’s time to move on to the core of the essay—the body.

Part VI.

Point By Point Format

There are two methods of developing body paragraphs in a comparison or contrast essay. Details (supportive evidence / examples) can be presented in a one-side-at-a-time format or in a point-by-point format. In this module, we will look at the second format—point-by-point.

In this format you will compare and contrast one single aspect of the two items in one paragraph. You need to mention the two items in the paragraph, and present the differences or similarities between them in regards to this particular point.

For example, if we use the topic of video rentals vs. theaters, in the first paragraph we could talk exclusively about the money that you can save or the differences between renting videos or going to the theaters in terms of prices. YOU MUST include only evidence or details related to money.

Then, in the 2nd paragraph, we could cover the aspect of being comfortable vs. not comfortable in both places. Finally, the last body paragraph could address the time factor for both activities.

The additional sentences in each body paragraph will provide the evidence or the support needed to back up the topic sentence and the general thesis. These sentences are concrete examples that will illustrate your point to the readers. For example, to illustrate paragraph one (saving money), you can mention the price of the video rental vs. the price of the tickets at the theater; when you rent a movie, everybody can watch it for the same price, at the theater, you pay for separate tickets, popcorn and other snacks, gasoline, and other expenses.
In a typical standard essay, a body paragraph usually consists of five sentences. Here is an outline (blueprint), of how your essay should look like so far.

**POINT–BY-POINT FORMAT**

**Title: _____________________**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td>opening statement (6 possible ways)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4-5 sentences)</td>
<td>additional sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>additional sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>additional sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>thesis statement (with parallel structures (3) points)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>body paragraph</strong></td>
<td>(transitional expression) topic sentence (point 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5 sentences)</td>
<td>additional sentence (evidence/example)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>additional sentence (evidence/example)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>additional sentence (evidence/example)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>additional sentence (evidence/example)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>body paragraph</strong></td>
<td>(trans. exp./ connect the 1st par.)  topic sentence  (point 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5 sentences)</td>
<td>additional sentence (evidence/example)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>additional sentence (evidence/example)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>additional sentence (evidence/example)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>additional sentence (evidence/example)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>body paragraph</strong></td>
<td>(trans. exp./ connect the 2nd par.)  topic sentence (point 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5 sentences)</td>
<td>additional sentence (evidence/example)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>additional sentence (evidence/example)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>additional sentence (evidence/example)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>additional sentence (evidence/example)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>conclusion</strong></td>
<td>re-state the thesis statement (rephrase)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3-4 sentences)</td>
<td>additional sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>concluding statement (4 ways)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Let’s look at the following examples of body paragraphs to see how you compare and contrast two items using the point-by-point format. We will use the previous information about video rentals and movie going.

a. Paragraph 1 (point 1 – saving money)

First of all, when you rent a video to watch at home, you can save a lot of money. Video rentals usually cost around $3.99, while a single ticket at the theater is $5.00. Everybody can sit down and enjoy the movie at home for the same price, but at the theater everybody has to pay for their own ticket, including kids, who have to pay $3.50 each. Four people would end up paying approximately $17.00 to watch a single movie. Once inside the theater, then you have to afford all the expensive snacks like pop-corn, nachos, and sodas which are usually priced twice as much as they cost outside. Just a bottle of water will cost you $2.00. Last but not least, you have to consider the expenses of gasoline, clothing, cosmetics, and other miscellaneous that are much needed for one single visit to your local theater!

Notes: Notice the use of a topic sentence with a transitional expression. The only topic being contrasted is money. Both items (video rentals / theater movie going) are mentioned. Notice the additional usage of other transitional expressions to add smoothness and create cohesion. You can use conjunctions (and, but, etc.) to connect two sentences into one. The paragraph has six sentences.

- Use correct grammatical structures while writing supportive evidence in the body paragraphs. (MINIMIZE CARELESS ERRORS)
- Please consult the following internet site for a quick review on grammar skills such as (parts of speech, verb tenses, punctuation, capitalization rules, and others): www.englishclub.net.
- In this web-site, look at the grammar and grammar rules information window.
- Use dictionaries to avoid careless spelling errors.
PRACTICAL EXERCISE 5

Directions: Go back and look at the other two points being compared / contrasted with the *video rentals vs. theaters* topic. Write paragraphs 2 and 3 (point-by-point format) for each point presented following the given example.

Paragraph 2

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Paragraph 3

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________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Compare your paragraphs with the models presented on pages 30-31.

You are just about to finish! You already have your introduction and your three body paragraphs worked out. It’s time to wrap up your essay with an effective conclusion.
Part VII.

Concluding Paragraph

A concluding paragraph is your chance to remind the reader of your thesis. Also, the conclusion brings the paper to a natural and graceful end, sometimes leaving the reader with a final thought on the subject.

FOUR (4) COMMON METHODS OF CONCLUSION

• **Summary and final thought :**
  Paraphrase your thesis statement and remind the readers about your main points. This is the most common method used. **Do not** use the exact wording you used before. Look at the following example.

  **The Advantages of Video Rentals**

  Watching movies at home, definitely, has several advantages over going to the theater. This way you don’t spend so much money, you can use your time more effectively, and you can enjoy the comfort of your house. There’s nothing better than staying at home on a rainy day while enjoying a good movie on your TV screen.

• **Thought provoking question or short series of questions :**
  Like we have said earlier, a question always grabs the reader’s attention. It is a direct appeal to your reader to think further about what you have written. A question should follow logically from the points you have already made in the paper. A question must deal with one of these areas:

  a. why the subject of your paper is important
  b. what might happen in the future
  c. what should be done about this subject
  d. which choice should be made

  Look at the following example!

  **Helping Your Country**

  You can help your country by contributing in many ways. Are you going to sit around waiting for the government to do everything? What will happen in the future, when the government can no longer sustain your needs? What will happen to your children and their future generations? Do they have to pay for your laziness? Stand up and do something!
• **Recommendations:**

  A recommendation suggests what should be done about a situation or problem.

  **Women Exploitation on TV**

  Nowadays, women are being more exploited than ever on TV commercials and other propaganda. These commercials are denigrating the feminine figure to the extremes. It’s time for women and society in general to stop this pattern of abuse. Consumers should boycott companies and products whose advertising continues to exploit women in such way.

• **Predictions:**

  A prediction states what will happen in the future.

  **Animal Cruelty**

  If people stopped to think before acquiring pets, there would be fewer instances of cruelty to animals. Many times, it is the people who adopt pets without considering the expenses and responsibility involved who mistreat and neglect their animals. Pets are living creatures. If people continue being negligent and irresponsible with their pets, animal cruelty will exist forever!

**PRACTICAL EXERCISE 6**

Directions: Read the three concluding paragraphs that follow. Then, in the space provided, identify the kind of conclusion used in each case (final thought, question, prediction, or recommendation).

1. A pet cannot be thrown onto a trash heap when it is no longer wanted or tossed into a closet if it begins to bore its owner. A pet, like us, is a living thing that needs physical care, affection, and respect. Would-be owners, therefore, should think seriously about their responsibilities before they acquire a pet.

   ______________________________

2. Neither letters, phone calls, nor conversations guarantee perfect communication. With all our sophisticated skills, we human beings often communicate less effectively than howling wolves or chattering monkeys. Even if we were able to read each other’s mind, we’d probably still find some way to foul up the message.

   ______________________________
3. Although our looks, talents, and accomplishments were constantly compared, Shelley and I have somehow managed not to turn into deadly enemies. Feeling like the outcast of the family, in fact, helped me to develop a drive to succeed and a sense of humor. In our sibling rivalry, we both managed to win.

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Verify answers on page 31.

**Congratulations!** You have finished this module! You have concluded with all the main parts of a standard academic essay (5 paragraphs). Now, the only part left is to provide a title to your essay. A title is usually a very brief summary of what your paper is about. It is often no more than several words; it even could be a single word (Love, Honesty), or a short phrase (Animal Cruelty, TV Shows). You may find it easy to write the title after you have completed your paper. There are no specific rules for this part. After all, an essay is your product; so you have all the rights to title it yourself!

**Title:** ______________________

**FINAL TEST**

It’s time for you to put all your knowledge to practice. Go back to the diagnostic activity and look at exercise 2. That’s right… the first essay you wrote about Linda’s and José’s Restaurants. Now, using the same information, re-write the essay applying all the new concepts you have learned about comparison and contrast essays (openings, thesis statements with parallel structures, approximate number of sentences for introductions, topic sentences, transitional expressions, body paragraphs with point-by-point format, number of sentences for body paragraphs and effective ways of concluding). Good Luck!

Don’t forget to compare your essay with the model provided on page 25. How does it compare to your original version (diagnostic)? Does it look a lot more organized?

**Congratulations! Good job!**
You are now officially licensed to write effective comparison and contrast essays!

ANSWERS (PRACTICAL EXERCISES)

1. Diagnostic Test

Part I True or false
1. T
2. F
3. T
4. T
5. F
6. T
7. T
8. F
9. T
10. T

Part II. (pre-post writing activity)
A Model Essay (remember—openings and closings may vary in each case)

Two Restaurants

Have you eaten at Linda’s Restaurant lately? If you haven’t, you have missed all the great improvements that she has added to her beautiful and inviting restaurant. I used to be a regular customer at José’s Restaurant down the corner. But after discovering all of the new secrets at Linda’s, I said: No way José! The more affordable prices, the great service, and the improved facilities are some of the reasons why I prefer Linda’s restaurant over José’s.

First of all, you feel more relaxed eating at Linda’s because of the reasonable prices. For example, salads cost $3.50 and sandwiches are at a low $4.00. On the other hand, both of these items cost $4.50 at José’s Restaurant. At Linda’s, you can eat soup for just $3.00, but you have to pay $3.50 at José’s for the same soup. Last but not least, drinks and desserts cost $1.50 and $2.00 at Linda’s, whereas at José’s they go up to $2.00 and $3.00 respectively.
In addition to the lower prices, Linda’s Restaurant offers a better service. For instance, it opens from 7 a.m to 9 p.m. giving its customers two extra hours that they cannot have at José’s. Although both restaurants have a convenient drive-in service, Linda has added a home delivery service to satisfy her customers at their homes. During rush hours, Linda has three cashiers working to speed up the line but José has only two, which usually slows down the line and makes the customers become impatient.

Finally, the improved facilities at Linda’s Restaurant make the place more comfortable than José’s. To begin with, when you get there, you have 20 parking spaces available at Linda’s, different from the only 10 limited spaces at José’s. Once inside the restaurant, there is a lot more space and room because Linda has expanded the place to accommodate 12 tables with 48 chairs, while José has kept his 8 tables and 32 chairs. Linda also bought a brand new central air conditioner that provides absolute coolness to her restaurant. On the contrary, José still has his traditional ceiling fans, which sometimes become an annoyance to the customers. To top it off, Linda constructed a colorful playground for kids, which has become her customers’ favorite attraction. Now, they can eat and relax while their children play. At José’s Restaurant, the kids look out the window trying to see the colorful playground at the other side of the street.

In conclusion, Linda’s Restaurant has considerable advantages over José’s. Little by little, all of José’s customers are going to run away and jump into Linda’s air conditioned facilities the way I did. If José doesn’t do anything to improve his restaurant in the near future, he is going to be out of business!

NOTES:
- opening technique –question to capture the reader’s attention (yours may vary)
- (3) additional sentences to elaborate and link the thesis statement
- an opinion is presented in the thesis (preference over one restaurant)
- parallel structures used (prices, service, facilities)
- topic sentences with transitional expressions at the beginning of each paragraph
- body paragraphs full of examples and supporting evidence (from chart)
- point by point format in each body paragraph
- conclusion (3 sentences) prediction (yours may vary)

Practical Exercise No. 1 (definition)

1. C

Practical Exercise No. 2 (opening statements)

1. C
2. A
3. B
4. C
Practical Exercise No. 3-A (parallel structures)

1. The new computer games entertain, educate, and amaze.
2. The novelty shop sells hand buzzers, plastic fangs, and fake insects.
3. Adam convinced most of the audience because he argued logically, calmly, and reasonably.
4. Steven prefers books that are short, scary, and suspenseful.
5. Aunt Darlene’s hobbies include reading cookbooks devoted to spicy food, learning folk dances from other countries, and painting cat faces on medium sized socks.

Practical Exercise No. 3-B (thesis statements)

Title: The Advantages of the 4x4 SUV’s in Puerto Rico

Thesis statement: The 4x4 SUV’s are more convenient in Puerto Rico because they are more powerful, practical, and comfortable.

Practical Exercise No. 4 (topic sentences)

1. To begin with, when you rent a video…
2. On the other hand, at the theater…
3. Finally, when you watch a movie…

Practical Exercise No. 5 (point by point format)

Paragraph 2

On the other hand, at the theater you can’t feel the comfort and relaxation that you can feel at home. Although the seats inside the theater seem to be quite comfortable, nothing feels better than your own bed, where you can be all cuddled up in a blanket. At home you have your own bathroom and your own refrigerator to get all the snacks you want at any time. In addition to these commodities, at home you feel more pleasant because you don’t feel the pressure of strangers around you who can obstruct your view or tell to turn off your cell-phone. At a theater, you must dress up appropriately while at home you can wear the clothes you want. Besides, with the power of your remote control, you can enjoy the movie and your favorite scenes as many times as you want. At home you can be as relaxed as you can be!
Finally, when you watch a movie at home, you don’t have to waste too much time like when you go to the theater. To begin with, there’s always a video store closer to your house than a theater. Dressing up, getting ready and driving to the theater usually consume two hours of your leisure time. Upon arriving to the place, you have to wander around until you find a good parking space. Once you make it into the theater, you have to wait tolerantly in line to get your tickets and then, another line to get your snacks. At home, you don’t have to make any lines whatsoever! When you finally sit down to watch the movie, then, you must endure, at least, a good half hour of unwanted commercials and announcements before the movie comes up. At home, your speedy remote control can fix that problem saving you a lot of time and patience!

Practical Exercise No. 6 (concluding statements)

1. recommendation
2. prediction
3. final thought
Bibliography