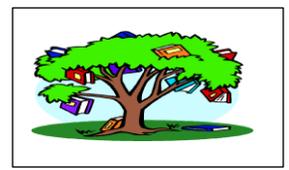


Toward Better Literacy: Reference Outlines



The Compare and Contrast Essay

Unlike most other essay types, which tend to focus on a single subject, this type of essay involves at least two subjects to be compared and/or contrasted. Strictly speaking, to **compare** two items, people, places, or situations is to discuss their similarities, and to **contrast** them is to focus on their differences. For the strongest effect, both techniques should be used together.

Purpose: to inform readers about the similarities and differences between two subjects

Perspective: third-person (*he, she, it, one, they...*)

Organization: in order of importance, with each point leading logically into the next

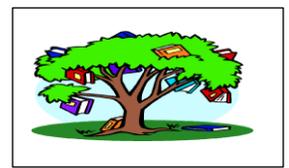
Common Structure:

1. **Introduction:**
 - a. Attention-getter focusing the reader on the category of the subjects to be compared?
 - b. Necessary background information
 - c. Quick overview of the first subject
 - d. Quick overview of the second subject
 - e. **Thesis:** broad comparison of the two subjects
2. **Body (each paragraph):**
 - a. **Topic sentence:** one particular aspect of the comparison
 - b. Supporting details showing similarity
 - c. Supporting details showing contrast
 - d. Significance of this comparison
 - e. Transition to the next aspect
3. **Conclusion:**
 - a. Concise summary of the main point emphasized
 - b. Overall significance of this comparison

Notes:

- In your introduction, indicate why the comparison is being made. What is the point you want to make?
- Both subjects being compared should fall under a single broad category.
- Your essay can be organized:
 - **Point by point:** with both subjects compared and contrasted in each paragraph
 - **Subject by subject:** one paragraph describing each subject and a third comparing and contrasting the two
- Avoid unclear or indistinct points of comparison.
- Save value judgments for your conclusion.

Toward Better Literacy: Reference Outlines



Sample Essay done “Point by Point”

Business is for woodchucks, and sporting is for ducks. Woodchucks and ducks are so different, but both get the job done; they both are important creatures in nature. In the human world, business is just like a game, and to be sure, sport is like a business. What makes making money and making goals so much fun, and yet so trying? The attitudes, methods and outcomes in business and sport show what an interesting place America is.

“America loves a winner, and will not tolerate a loser.” Everyone loves to win, and sometimes the rules are “fudged” to ensure success. Enron and Worldcom found ways to win at any cost, and some teams in sports cheat with their eyes on the rulebook. But our sins find us out, and everyone reaps what he sows. Sport and business give themselves to pride and aggression, but it is sportsmanship in sport and ethics in business that ensures a good game and a fair profit.

Sneaky moves and clever strategy are all part of fair play. Business comes up with a new product, and sport finds the gifted athlete. Business markets its services with humor and attractiveness, and team owners put out the lights, camera and paraphernalia. Both are governed by boards, both look to innovate, and in the best companies and the best teams, everyone looks to have fun and feel good in the end!

When all is said and done, the score line and the bottom line tell the right story, if attitudes are right and methods are clever. The sports page and the business page all are loaded with stories and figures of results. Victors may become losers, and losers may turn out to be winners. Business can be harmful to an economy, and a sport can be a boon.

For all their similarities and differences, business and sport both contribute to the American scene in intriguing ways. Much study and reflection is done on both, with talking heads analyzing results and predicting outcomes ad infinitum. Yet with all the talk, it is better by far to get in the game.