**Compare and Contrast Paragraph**

In a compare and contrast paragraph, you write about the similarities and differences between two or more people, places, things, or ideas.

**First, craft a Topic Sentence - In one sentence, tell the reader the focus of your paragraph**

Decide to what extent you will stress the similarities between your subjects and to what extent you will stress their differences.

Create a topic sentence that reflects that decision.

**Example** (for a paragraph comparing the Canadian cities of Vancouver and Halifax:)

*While there are some similarities between Vancouver and Halifax, there are also some differences, particularly in weather and population.*

Or

*Although Vancouver and Halifax are similar in some respects, they are quite different in terms of climate and size.*

Or

*Vancouver and Halifax are similar in many ways, but they have one major difference: weather.*

**Using the following words and phrases helps to clarify similarities and differences when writing a good compare and contrast paragraph:**

**Helper Words:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Similarities** | **Differences** |
| [is similar to](http://www2.actden.com/writ_den/tips/paragrap/compare.htm#S1) | On [the other hand](http://www2.actden.com/writ_den/tips/paragrap/compare.htm#D1) |
| [both](http://www2.actden.com/writ_den/tips/paragrap/compare.htm#S2) | [however](http://www2.actden.com/writ_den/tips/paragrap/compare.htm#D2) |
| [also](http://www2.actden.com/writ_den/tips/paragrap/compare.htm#S3) | [but](http://www2.actden.com/writ_den/tips/paragrap/compare.htm#D3) |
| [too](http://www2.actden.com/writ_den/tips/paragrap/compare.htm#S4) | [in contrast](http://www2.actden.com/writ_den/tips/paragrap/compare.htm#D4) |
| [as well](http://www2.actden.com/writ_den/tips/paragrap/compare.htm#S5) | [differs from](http://www2.actden.com/writ_den/tips/paragrap/compare.htm#D5) |
|  | [while](http://www2.actden.com/writ_den/tips/paragrap/compare.htm#D6) |
|  | [unlike](http://www2.actden.com/writ_den/tips/paragrap/compare.htm#D7) |

**Similarities**

**is similar to** (Example:) Spring weather in Vancouver **is similar to** spring weather in Halifax.

**Both (**Example:) **Both** Vancouver and Halifax have rain in the spring.

**Also (**Example:) Halifax **also** has a rainy spring season.

**Too**  **(**Example:) Halifax has a rainy spring season, **too**.

**as well**  **(**Example:) **As well**, Halifax has a very rainy spring season.

**Differences**

**on the other hand**  **(**Example:) **On the other hand**, winter is much colder in Halifax.

**however**  **(**Example:) **However**, winter is much colder in Halifax.

**but**  **(**Example:) Vancouver has a mild winter, **but** Halifax has a cold one.

**in contrast to**  **(**Example:) **In contrast to** Vancouver, Halifax has a cold winter.

**differs from**  **(**Example:) Halifax **differs from** Vancouver by having a cold winter.

**while**  **(**Example:) **While** Vancouver has a mild winter, Halifax has a cold winter

**Here is an example of a Comparison-Contrast paragraph like you are going to write:**

**High School and College**

Even though high school and college are both places of learning, they differ in at least three ways. The first difference between high school and college is their social atmospheres. In high school the building is usually smaller, so most students know each other. In addition, students in high school have the same six-hour 7:40 to 2:30 day, which helps them to know one another better. At college people are constantly coming and going, rarely seeing the same person twice in one day. The second difference between high school and college is their policies about homework. In high school, homework is usually assigned. Knowing they have to submit assignments in algebra or history makes students keep up with these subjects. In college most homework consists of just studying**;** very little of it is written and turned in. If students do their homework, it is to their advantage**;** if they do not, the teachers will not force them to. The student is only wasting his own money if he neglects his course work. The third and last difference between high school and college is their attendance policies. In high school, students must attend class or their parents will be called. In college, students may skip classes if they choose and refer to the syllabus to get missed assignments or tests. It is the student’s responsibility to make work up. In spite of these differences between high school and college, they both serve the same purpose — to prepare an individual for the real world.