



Tikrit University

College of Education for Women

English Department

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Lecturer: Athraa Abd Al-Salam Muhi

athraa.abdalsalam@tu.edu.iq

Comparison and Contrast Paragraphs

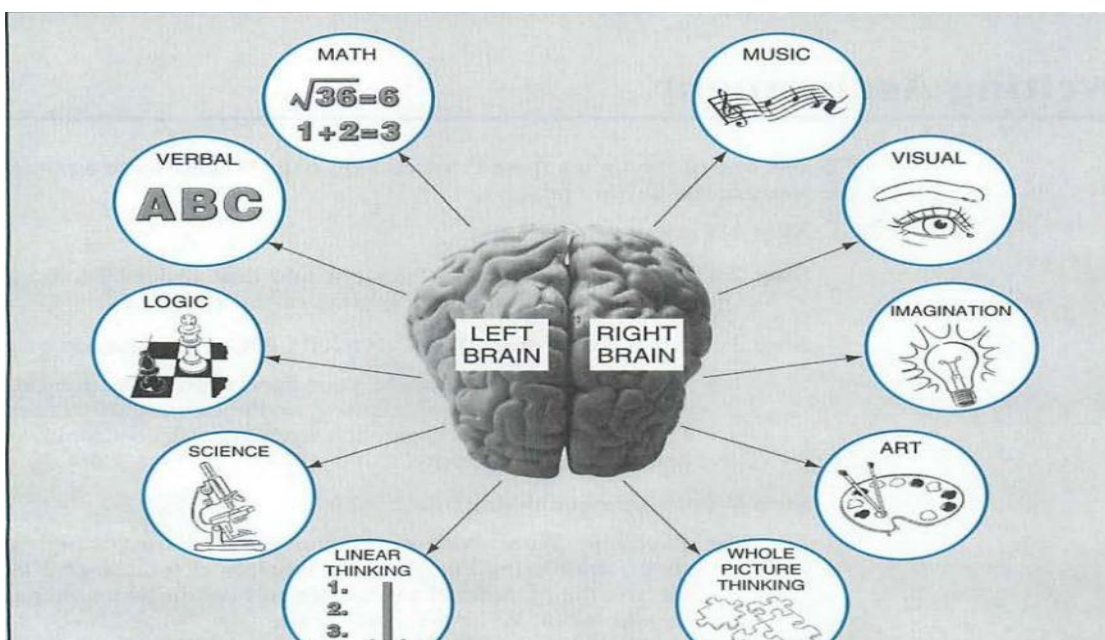
Comparison and Contrast Paragraphs

Comparison and contrast is a technique that we use every day. For example, we compare and contrast courses and teachers when we decide which classes to take. We compare and contrast products and prices when we shop. An employer compares and contrasts applicants for jobs, and a job applicant compares and contrasts job offers. In college classes, you will often have to compare and contrast. For example, in a history class, you might be asked to compare and contrast two historical figures or two events. In a literature class, you might have to compare two poems or two characters in a play. Knowing how to write comparison/contrast paragraphs is a very useful skill. When we compare two (or more) things, we tell what is similar about them.

When we contrast things, we tell what is different about them. Usually, the emphasis is on the differences, but sometimes a paragraph describes both similarities and differences. As you read the model paragraphs, decide which one emphasizes differences and which one describes both similarities and differences.

Right Brain / Left Brain

The left and right sides of your brain process information in different ways. The left side is logical, rational, linear, and verbal. The right side, on the other hand, processes information intuitively, emotionally, creatively, and visually. Left brains think in words, whereas right brains think in pictures. People who depend more on the left side of their brain are list makers and analysts. They are detailed, careful, and organized. In contrast, right-brained people are visual, intuitive, and sensual. When a left-brained person has to make an important decision, he or she makes a mental list of all the factors involved and arrives at a decision only after careful analysis. When a right-brained person has to make the same decision, on the other hand, he or she is more likely to base it on intuition and feelings. For example, a left-brained automobile shopper will consider a car's cost, fuel efficiency, and resale value, whereas a right-brained shopper bases a decision on how shiny the chrome is, how soft the seats are, and how smoothly the car drives. Of course, no one is 100 percent left-brained or 100 percent right-brained. Although one side may be stronger, both sides normally work together.



There are two ways to organize a comparison/contrast paragraph.

One way is called block organization, and the other way is called point-by-point organization.

In **block organization**, you group all the similarities together in one block and all the differences together in one block. Both model paragraphs use block organization .

All similarities

All differences

In **point-by-point organization**, you write about similarities and differences by subtopic. For example, if you are comparing and contrasting several wireless telephone plans, you might compare and contrast them on these subtopics:

cost of telephone

(similarities and differences)

monthly rate

(similarities and differences)

length of contract

(similarities and differences)

reliability of service

(similarities and differences)

Contrast Signals

1. Sentence connectors connect two independent clauses.

Most baby animals can walk within a few hours of birth.

In contrast/On the other hand/However, a human baby needs about 12 months to learn this skill.

2. Use but when the ideas are exact opposites.

The language center is on the left side of the brains of right-handed people, but it is on the right side of left-handed and ambidextrous• people.

2a. Use yet when one idea is a surprising or unexpected continuation of the other idea. It is also possible to use but.

The left side of the brain controls logic and reasoning, yet it also controls language.

3. Use while and whereas when the ideas are exact opposites. While and whereas can begin either clause. Always use a comma even when the independent clause comes first. This is an exception to the usual rule.

I have brown eyes, while/whereas my brother's eyes are green.

While/whereas I have brown eyes, my brother's eyes are green.

3a. Use although, even though, or though when one idea is a surprising or unexpected continuation of the other idea. Although, even though, and though can sometimes (but not always) begin either clause.

My grandfather is the wisest man in our town although/even though/though he never finished high school.

Although/even though/though he never finished high school, my grandfather is the wisest man in our town.

4. From and unlike are both prepositions. Put a noun or noun phrase after them. Differently is an adverb. It describes the verbs think and Learn.

The way left-brained people think and learn is different from the way right-brained people do.

Unlike left-brainers, right-brainers often know the answer to a math problem without knowing how they got it.

Left-brained people think and learn differently from the way right-brained people do.

5. Differ is a verb. Left-brain and right-brain people differ in the way they think and learn.