

## Effective Thesis Statements for Compare & Contrast Essays

Adapted from “The Comparative Essay” (University of Toronto)  
and “How to Write a Thesis Statement for a Contrast/Paper” (Brunswick Schools)

Just as with any global statement, the thesis statement should represent the content of your entire paper. In your Compare and Contrast essay, you will identify similarities and differences that exist between different texts. However, your thesis statement should communicate more than an acknowledgement that similarities and differences exist.

- There are many similarities and differences between apples and oranges.
- There are many similarities and differences between the Greek Theatre Ephesus and the Hollywood Bowl.

Begin with the following sentence templates. Brainstorm other sentence templates as needed.

- Although \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.
- While both \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.
- While \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_, but \_\_\_\_\_.
- Even though \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.
- Despite \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

After you identify the major similarities and differences, decide whether your thesis statement should emphasize the similarities or the differences. If, for example, you would like to emphasize the differences, mention them in the main clause or the end of the thesis statement.

### Emphasizing differences over similarities

- Oranges and apples are similar in that they are both fruits, but they differ in color, texture, and nutritional value.
- While apples are a central part of American folklore, oranges are actually more central to the United States economy.
- While Callaghan's "All the Years of Her Life" and Mistry's "Of White Hairs and Cricket" both follow the conventions of the coming-of-age narrative, Callaghan's story adheres more closely to these conventions by allowing its central protagonist to mature. In Mistry's story, by contrast, no real growth occurs.
- Although Faber and Granger are similar in their quest for enlightenment and individuality, each man responds differently to the oppressive society Bradbury creates.

### Emphasizing similarities over differences

- Although Mildred and Clarisse differ in their attitudes toward life and their effect on Montag, both women must eventually face the reality of a world consumed by ignorance.
- Although Darwin and Lamarck came to different conclusions about whether acquired traits can be inherited, they shared the key distinction of recognizing that species evolve over time.
- Though the specialized building systems of the Hollywood Bowl is more technologically advanced than that of the Greek Theatre Ephesus, the evolution of the structures share a common development in the context of the culture and society that produced them. The outcome of this development can be experienced by visiting the Hollywood Bowl, where one feels connected to earlier structures such as the Ephesus Theatre.

## English (Ritiau)

### Comparative Analysis Tips

#### Sample Strong Comparative Thesis Statements

1. Differences outweigh similarities:

a) While Callaghan's "All the Years of her Life" and Mistry's "Of White Hairs and Cricket" both follow the conventions of the coming-of-age narrative, Callaghan's story adheres more closely to these conventions by allowing its central protagonist to mature. Contrastingly, no real sense of growth occurs in Mistry's story.

b) Whereas Camus perceives ideology as secondary to the need to address a specific historical moment of colonialism, Fanon perceives a revolutionary ideology as the impetus to reshape Algeria's history in a direction toward independence.

2. Similarities outweigh differences:

a) Although Darwin and Lamarck came to different conclusions about whether acquired traits can be inherited, they shared the key distinction of recognizing that species evolve over time.

#### Sample Outline

1. Introduction
2. Body Paragraph 1: first point of comparison
  - Discuss how Text A addresses your first point of comparison. Include direct evidence and close analyses of evidence from Text A.
  - Transition
  - Discuss how Text B addresses your first point of comparison. Include direct evidence and close analyses of evidence from Text B.
3. Body Paragraph 2: second point of comparison
  - Discuss how Text A addresses your second point of comparison. Include direct evidence and close analyses of evidence from Text A.
  - Transition
  - Discuss how Text B addresses your second point of comparison. Include direct evidence and close analyses of evidence from Text B.
4. Body Paragraph 3: final point of comparison
  - Discuss how Text A addresses your final point of comparison. Include direct evidence and close analyses of evidence from Text A.
  - Transition
  - Discuss how Text B addresses your final point of comparison. Include direct evidence and close analyses of evidence from Text B.
5. Conclusion: Reiterate thesis statement and consider some of the following questions:
  - a) What is your overall evaluation of the two works?
  - b) Which writer seems more reliable, persuasive, accurate?
  - c) Is one writer more emotionally engaged in the topic? Does this engagement make the argument he/she advances less or more convincing?
  - d) Does one writer's set of conclusions seem more logical? Remember that the two sources are quite separate until