

Name: _____

Compare and Contrast Introduction Paragraph

This is the first paragraph of an compare and contrast composition. It includes a "hook", the two (or more) subjects being compared and contrasted, and the thesis statement sentence about the two subjects. After the "hook", the introduction needs to give enough general information about the two subjects to help the reader understand and care about the information being presented. Information about the two subjects is often provided to make the transition from the "hook" to the thesis statement.

The "Hook" or Attention Grabber

The "hook" is written in the first paragraph and usually begins the paragraph, because it draws the reader into the writer's position. There are many "hooks" or ways to interest the reader:

Anecdote

An anecdote is "a short account of a particular incident or event of an interesting or amusing nature, often biographical." An anecdote can be a very entertaining and effective opener. It must be short or the reader's interest may be lost before getting to the point. It might be used to illustrate the issue, situation, or problem being addressed, or it might illustrate the solution being suggested. It must always give purpose to the position and arguments.

An Interesting Fact or Statistic

An interesting fact about the topic can be another way to begin an expository composition, particularly if this nugget of information is so unusual that it can't be ignored by the reader. Make sure the fact is accurate and the source (mention it) of the fact is reliable.

A Quotation

A quotation can be an effective attention grabber, particularly if it is by an expert in the area of the topic.

Exaggerated Information

A statement that is overstated for its effect to capture the reader's interest. It must have relevance to the topic of the composition.

A Question

A question can engage and draw in the reader. A well-written question helps the reader begin to ponder and see value in reading about the topic of the composition.

--The Topic

After the hook, comes a sentence stating the topic, which is the two subjects being compared and contrasted about.

--The Thesis

Following the introduction of the topic can come a well-written thesis which will include: A concise statement that presents the writer's observation or position (opinion) about the two subjects being compared and contrasted. One way to start a compare and contrast thesis is by using words like *whereas, while, even though, and although* to suggest a contrasting element will follow. If you were comparing dogs and cats you might state: While some people love dogs, they may not have the time to take care of one and a cat might be a better pet option. This thesis statement does not merely say the writer is going to talk about cats and dogs but will compare and contrast cats and dogs from the *specific* point of view of choosing a pet.

--The Main Idea Categories

Finally, the introduction paragraph will include the three (or more) main idea categories that will be discussed when comparing and contrasting the two subjects in the body paragraphs. These will be in support of the thesis statement observation or position about the two subjects. The main idea categories must be relevant to the writer's thesis statement about their observations or position about the two subjects being compared and contrasted. In the dogs vs. cats thesis (choosing the right pet) related categories could be: training, grooming, and safety around small children.

The thesis statement and main ideas given in support of that statement will limit the degree to which the two subjects will be compared and contrasted and will define the overall organizational structure of the essay.

Conclusions for Essays

When you write an essay, your whole last paragraph needs to wrap up the essay and hand it to the reader as a finished package.

Here is a list of things that you might accomplish in your concluding paragraph. There are certainly other things that you can do, and you certainly don't want to do all these things. They're only suggestions:

- Include a brief summary of the paper's main points. (This should be closer to the beginning of the concluding paragraph.)
- Ask a provocative question.
- Use a quotation.
- Evoke a vivid image.
- Say why this is important or why you choose the topic.

The student essay below has lost its conclusion. Add a final paragraph that wraps it up.

What is it like to transition from elementary to middle school? That is a question many kids ask each year. Having experienced both, I can tell you that there are plenty of similarities as well as some very big differences between the two types of schools.

Elementary schools and middle schools have many traits in common. Typically, both are open five days a week for a set number of hours each day. Students sit at desks in classrooms and are expected to listen to and learn from their teachers. There is a set time for lunch. Each day, students are given homework assignments. Students take quizzes and tests. In all of these ways, middle school should feel somewhat familiar to new students.

However, there are some big changes that new middle school students should be aware of. In elementary school, students usually stay in the same classroom with one teacher for most of the day. That is not the case in middle school, where students typically have a different teacher for each subject. Students must move to a different classroom for each subject too. Since there is not one classroom in which to store supplies, middle schools often provide students with lockers. For many kids, getting a locker is a welcome rite of passage.

Your concluding paragraph:

Name: _____

Add commas as needed in the sentences below. If the sentence is correct as it is, write C on the line.

_____ The field was safe enough wasn't it?

_____ Write the editor of the *Atlantic* 8 Arlington Street Boston Massachusetts 02116.

_____ He replied "I have no idea what you mean."

_____ After a good washing and grooming the pup looked like a *new* dog.

_____ Because of their opposition to institutions that force creatures to live in captivity some people refuse to go to the zoo.

_____ Men who are bald are frequently the ones who are the most authoritative on the subject of baldness.

_____ Top hats which were once popular have been out of vogue for several years.

_____ As a celestial goddess she regulated the course of the heavenly bodies and controlled the alternating seasons.

_____ I hope that someday he will learn how to be polite.

_____ John Taylor, the man who wrote fifty books, admitted he had plagiarized all of them.

***Hand in the first draft of your comparison essay next week.
Write a point-by-point essay of five paragraphs.
Make sure you do some research so you have material for comparison.
Follow the format guidelines according to this website:
<http://www.shunn.net/format/story.html>
Make sure you double space.***