##### Purpose

Write an objective document that compares and contrasts two or more subjects against a set of fixed criteria to assist the reader in making a decision or choosing between the subjects.

##### Topic and Audience and POV – A Decision-Making Scenario (Pre-Writing Stage)

After picking your topic, use the pre-writing stage to refine your scenario.

1. **What is the topic?** Copy it from the topic list.
2. **Who is your audience?** Your audience is the person(s) needing to make a decision. (For this assignment, the audience is identified in the topic list.)
3. **Audience analysis:** What can you assume about your audience based on who they are? What do they already know about the topic? Terms/terminology, jargon? Background?
4. **What is the decision the audience needs to make?** Essentially, the audience has some reason to pick one of the subjects you'll identify. What is the reason that the audience needs to make this choice? For this assignment, the reason is stated in the topic list; it's not "choose between <the subjects>".
5. **What assumptions can you make about your audience** **that is making the decision?** For example, what is their education level? Will they understand common terminology that relates to the topic? What terminology will not be familiar and need to be defined? What common experiences can you assume everyone in your audience has had as it relates to the subjects? How can you translate those assumptions into your writing content or word choice, etc.?
6. **What are the possible subjects?** Or what are the various options within that topic for the audience to choose from? These subjects are what will be compared in your paper.
7. **What are the criteria?** The criteria identify the way you compare/contrast the subjects. They may address both similarities and/or differences. Always choose the criteria with the intention of helping the reader (audience) make their decision. That means that sometimes the reader needs to know that some information is the same for all the subjects.
8. With these answers, you're ready to create a **comparison summary table**. This type of table is organized with **columns** as Criteria first, then one per subject and **rows** for each of the **criteria**. As you get facts during your research, fill in each cell.
9. **RESEARCH:** Allow time for researching your topic. Keep track of this research for your *References* section.

Once you’ve completed this pre-writing stage, post your answers to a selected set of these questions to the canvas pre-writing assignment. *Not completing the pre-writing activity will result in a 20% deduction assessed on the final grade for Assignment #1.*

##### Organization Requirements

Use the intro – body – close C/C pattern organization.

**Introduction**

The introduction section must not start the comparison nor tell the audience what to do. Instead (1) acknowledge your audience, (2) acknowledge the decision to be made, (3) introduce your subjects, and (4) forecast the criteria, ideally, in the same order in which they will appear in your summary table (the memo body). Make this paragraph is very brief. Feel free to follow the sample paper structure.

**Body sections**

The body is the compare/contrast content. For this assignment, the body comparison is provided as a large specifications table, where you insert your comparison summary table as the text body -- rather than as paragraphs of text organized as whole-by-whole or part-by-part.

Creating a table is good practice and uses different thinking muscles. The table does not have to be about numbers, it can be ideas too.

* Integrate the table properly: use the word "Table", give it a number and title, and refer to the table smoothly in the text of your paper by number (e.g., "Table 1"), not location words ("below").
* Include the full reference to any sources in the last table cell. And identify which cells used which sources (use a superscript footnote or asterisk system). See the C/C Lecture Notes for details on citing sources in your tables.
* Recommendation: Use a documentary note system. See the **Citing Sources** reading homework for an understanding of this structure if you're not familiar with it. Do not make one up or use footnotes/endnotes or superscript/subscript forms.
* Review the C/C Lecture Notes and apply the "Formatting a Table in Word" instructions found at its end to your comparison table. You are expected to learn WORD as a formatting tool in this class. If you do not have Word, you can download the full Microsoft Office suite for free to any UWB student.

NOTE: Whenever you include a table of information, never duplicate that same information in a text paragraph. That makes the reader have to read information twice which would be very annoying, and requires the author to remember to update the material in both places.

**Conclusion**

The conclusion section brings the analysis back to the criteria that your audience needs to consider when making the decision. Do not reiterate or summarize the comparison content.

* The topic sentence after the heading summarizes the subjects and the criteria.
* Then only use "If/then" statements to help the reader make their decision. For ease of reading, make each "if" a bullet.

**Recommendation (optional)**

You can include an optional SUBJECTIVE personal Recommendation in the 1st person, in its own section, with its own heading. Make sure that this is a reflection, based on experience or understanding you have. Do not change the tone of the work and become chatty (e.g., "if I were you"). Do not summarize the body of the comparison as a recommendation.

NOTE: Do not use this section to generate word count for your assignment.

**References**

Include a References section to identify any information that you looked up to complete the assignment. See the following instructions for your references.

* Cite ANY source you looked up to get knowledge for your paper.
* Cite any class lectures as though they were a speech.
* Use both in-text citations (where information was borrowed) and the full references at the end (so the reader can find the original resource).
* For the table, use a documentary note system. For the References section, you can use the same documentary note system or use an author date system, if you have other sources that you didn't cite.
* Include the URL.
* Do not insert a page break before the References. Saving paper in this way is the custom for technical/business writing.
* Single space the entries.
* Put white space between the entries.
* Use hanging indents on the references.
  + To format hanging indents, select all the references, Right click, select Paragraph, Select Special -> Hanging. Then adjust the amount of space (usually .2 or .3 for documentary note system; .5 for author date system).
* NOTE: Even if you only have one reference, the heading is still plural (References)!
* Include the source(s) used for your summary table (body) in your References section.

##### Additional Assignment Requirements

* **POV:** Refer to the reader in the 2nd person ("you"). Do not use 1st person, except in the optional recommendation section.
* **OBJECTIVE:** Remember your analysis/evaluation must be OBJECTIVE; use facts not impressions.   
    
  Do not tell the reader what to do. Do not make conclusions for the reader in the body. Do not compare between the two subjects. The reader will make up their own minds as they read the comparison, and you will help them in the closing sections. Wait until the conclusion section to make conclusions.
* **Word choice**: Make sure that the words you use for your criteria are FACTS, (that is, OBJECTIVE), not IMPRESSIONS. Impressions are subjective; what you think might be "good" might not be considered "good" by your audience. So you cannot use any vague, subjective word/phrase as criteria, such as "features", "efficiency", "benefits", "advantages", "disadvantages, "pros", "cons", etc.
* **Future tense**: Avoid the use of "will", indicating the future.
* **Delivery**: Deliver your comparison as a memo. See the Lecture Notes on Memos and ask questions in class if you have any questions regarding the delivery requirements for this assignment.
* **Page Layout**: Include headings for all the major sections: Introduction, Comparison, Conclusion, Recommendation (if present), and References.

##### Length

550-600 words. Do not include the memo front matter and your references (in your table or end of document) in the word count.

At the bottom of your final page, add the following line: **[word count xxx]**

**NOTE:** This paper is not designed to be the be-all-end-all comparison for this topic. It's designed to demonstrate your ability to compare and contrast this topic within this word count. Thus you'll need to select and prioritize the criteria based on the decision up to the word count.

**NOTE**: If you included an optional **Recommendation** section, its length is a maximum of 50 words. Therefore, this section is not a place to generate word count. If you're low on word count, add another subject or add more criteria.

##### See turn-in instructions and due dates on Canvas.