Comparing Bootstrap 3 to Bootstrap 5 involves numerous changes across almost every aspect of the framework. Here's a detailed breakdown of the differences for key elements between Bootstrap 3 and Bootstrap 5:

**Grid System**

**Bootstrap 3**

* Uses a 12-column grid system with classes like .col-xs-\*, .col-sm-\*, .col-md-\*, and .col-lg-\*.
* Uses floats for layout.
* Responsive utilities like .visible-\* and .hidden-\*.

**Bootstrap 5**

* Uses a 12-column grid system with classes like .col-\*, .col-sm-\*, .col-md-\*, .col-lg-\*, .col-xl-\*, and .col-xxl-\*.
* Uses Flexbox for layout, providing more flexibility and alignment options.
* Enhanced utility classes like .d-none, .d-sm-block, etc., for better responsive control.
* Added more responsive breakpoints, including .col-xxl-\*.

**Typography**

**Bootstrap 3**

* Basic typography with classes like .lead, .text-left, .text-center, .text-right, .text-justify.
* Limited global typography styles.

**Bootstrap 5**

* Improved global typography styles.
* New utility classes for text alignment and transformation, like .text-start, .text-end, .text-lowercase, .text-uppercase.
* Enhanced control over typography with SASS variables.

**Forms**

**Bootstrap 3**

* Basic form controls with .form-control class.
* Form layouts with .form-group, .form-inline, .form-horizontal.

**Bootstrap 5**

* Overhauled form controls for better styling and consistency.
* New form layout classes like .row, .col, and .col-form-label.
* Enhanced form validation with custom validation styles.
* Improved form components, including floating labels and input groups.

**Components**

**Navbar**

**Bootstrap 3**

* .navbar, .navbar-default, .navbar-inverse.
* .navbar-toggle for collapsible navbar.

**Bootstrap 5**

* .navbar, .navbar-light, .navbar-dark.
* .navbar-toggler for collapsible navbar with Flexbox.
* Enhanced responsiveness and customization options.

**Cards vs Panels, Wells, Thumbnails**

**Bootstrap 3**

* Uses panels (.panel), wells (.well), and thumbnails (.thumbnail).

**Bootstrap 5**

* Replaced panels, wells, and thumbnails with a unified .card component.
* .card provides a flexible and extensible container for content.

**Buttons**

**Bootstrap 3**

* Button classes like .btn, .btn-default, .btn-primary, etc.

**Bootstrap 5**

* Updated button classes like .btn, .btn-primary, .btn-secondary, .btn-success, etc.
* Improved button styles and new utility classes for button spacing and sizing.

**Modals**

**Bootstrap 3**

* .modal, .modal-dialog, .modal-content.

**Bootstrap 5**

* .modal, .modal-dialog, .modal-content with additional features.
* Improved accessibility and better control over modal sizes and scroll behavior.

**Utilities**

**Bootstrap 3**

* Utility classes for visibility, text alignment, floats, etc.
* .visible-\*, .hidden-\* for responsive utilities.

**Bootstrap 5**

* Expanded utility API with classes for display, margin, padding, text, color, etc.
* Enhanced responsive utilities like .d-none, .d-sm-block, .m-0, .p-0, etc.

**JavaScript**

**Bootstrap 3**

* Relies heavily on jQuery for interactive components like modals, tooltips, popovers, etc.

**Bootstrap 5**

* Removed jQuery dependency, rewritten in vanilla JavaScript.
* Improved and modernized JavaScript plugins for better performance and flexibility.

**Browser Support**

**Bootstrap 3**

* Supports IE8+ with some limitations.

**Bootstrap 5**

* Dropped support for Internet Explorer entirely.
* Focus on modern browsers with better performance and new features.

**Icons**

**Bootstrap 3**

* No default icon library included, often used with Glyphicons.

**Bootstrap 5**

* Introduced Bootstrap Icons, a dedicated and comprehensive icon set.

**Customization**

**Bootstrap 3**

* Customization through LESS variables.

**Bootstrap 5**

* Customization through SASS variables with improved theming capabilities.
* Enhanced customization options and better integration with modern build tools.

This comparison highlights the significant evolution of Bootstrap from version 3 to version 5, emphasizing modern design practices, improved usability, and better performance.