

Organizing a Comparative Essay

Method 1

You can discuss each half of the comparison in every paragraph. For example, begin with a paragraph comparing the two situations; each paragraph thereafter should compare a single aspect of both situations until you have completed comparing all the various points. The advantage of this structure is it continually keeps the comparison in the mind of the reader, as well as forces you to pay equal attention to each side of the argument.

EG: Lemons & Apples

Para 1 Color of Lemons/Color of Apples

Para 2 Vitamins found in Lemons/Vitamins found in Apples

Para 3 Health benefits of Lemons/Health benefits of Apples

And so on

Method 2

You can alternate between the two subjects paragraph by paragraph. That is, the first paragraph of the main body of your essay begins with one side of the argument. The next paragraph deals with the other, and so on. You keep repeating this process looking at another point in the comparison until you reach your conclusion. This method allows you to discuss points in greater detail, but be sure to keep alternating and ensure you continue discussing similar aspects of each argument.

EG: Lemons & Apples

Para 1 Color of Lemons

Para 2 Color of Apples

Para 3 Vitamins found in Lemons

Para 4 Vitamins found in Apples

Para 5 Health benefits of Lemons

Para 6 Health benefits of Apples

And so on

Method 3

In the first half of the main body of the essay, you can argue one side of the comparison throughout as many paragraphs as you wish. When you have finished with that side of the comparison, switch and discuss the other side of the comparison. This method is by far the most dangerous, as your comparison can become one sided, without giving equal time to both. The other problem with this is that you may discuss different features in the second half than you did in the first half. If this occurs, the comparison falls apart as you are not comparing the same features of the two arguments.

EG: Lemons & Apples

Para 1 Color of Lemons

Para 2 Vitamins found in Lemons

Para 3 Health benefits of Lemons

Para 4 Color of Apples

Para 5 Vitamins found in Apples

Para 6 Health benefits of Apples

And so on