

Topics to Choose from for Compare/Contrast Essay

The following topics are appropriate starting points for this assignment. You may choose one of these topics or develop an idea of your own. The example comparison points listed under each topic are **possible areas to explore—not a required list**. You will decide which points create the most meaningful comparison for your essay.

If you have any doubt whether the topic you have in mind is a viable option for the assignment, ask the instructor via email.

1. **Compare yourself to a friend or family member.**
Consider ways that you and the other person are meaningfully similar or different. You might explore personality, personal style, educational or career paths, interests and hobbies, values, political or social views, lifestyle, relationships, goals, or approaches to challenges and decisions.
2. **Compare one family member to another family member.**
Choose two relatives whose similarities or differences give you something meaningful to examine. You might consider personality, upbringing, relationships, family roles, careers, education, values, lifestyles, interests, priorities, or approaches to work and family.
3. **Compare one friend to another friend.**
Consider two friends you know well enough to discuss in some depth. You might explore their personalities, communication styles, interests, values, social lives, goals, decision-making, relationships, lifestyles, or the different roles they play in your life.
4. **Compare two schools you have attended.**
These might be two colleges, two high schools, or two other comparable schools. You could examine academic expectations, teaching styles, campus culture, student populations, resources, extracurricular opportunities, social experiences, rules and policies, or the overall learning environment.
5. **Compare your high school experience with your college experience.**
Rather than simply listing obvious differences between high school and college, focus on how the two experiences have affected you. You might consider academic expectations, independence, relationships with instructors, social life, responsibilities, time management, learning environment, or opportunities for personal growth.
6. **Compare two cities, two states, or two countries where you have lived.**
Stay within the same category: **city to city, state to state, or country to country**. Do not compare a city to a state or a state to a country. Possible areas to examine include culture, cost of living, lifestyle, employment opportunities,

transportation, social life, diversity, climate, community, pace of life, or your own experiences living in each place.

7. **Compare one workplace to another workplace where you have worked.**

Think beyond differences in the actual jobs you performed. You might compare workplace culture, management styles, coworkers, communication, expectations, workload, flexibility, opportunities for advancement, employee treatment, work-life balance, or your overall experience in each workplace.

8. **Compare two apartment complexes or other residential properties where you have lived.**

Consider what made the experiences of living in the two places similar or different. You might examine location, management, neighbors and community, amenities, cost, maintenance, safety, convenience, privacy, rules, quality of life, or how well each property met your needs.

9. **Compare two restaurants that are similar in type.**

Choose restaurants that have a logical basis for comparison—for example, two Mexican restaurants, two coffee shops, two burger restaurants, or two casual dining restaurants. You might examine food quality and variety, service, atmosphere, pricing, authenticity, consistency, convenience, customer experience, or what type of customer each restaurant serves best.

10. **Compare two movies in the same genre or category.**

For example, you might compare two romantic comedies, horror movies, action movies, animated films, documentaries, or superhero movies. Possible areas to explore include characters, themes, storytelling, humor, emotional impact, representation, cinematography, messages, treatment of similar issues, or the different ways the films appeal to their audiences.

11. **Compare two jobs or types of work you have done.**

Focus on the experience of doing the work rather than simply listing different job duties. You might consider required skills, level of responsibility, interaction with others, independence, stress, physical or mental demands, scheduling, satisfaction, challenges, or what you learned from each type of work.

12. **Compare two ways of learning or taking classes.**

For example, you might compare online and in-person classes if you have significant experience with both. You could examine interaction with instructors and classmates, independence, flexibility, time management, participation, motivation, learning environment, access to help, or how each approach affects your learning.

13. **Compare two neighborhoods or communities where you have lived.**

Choose two communities you know well enough to discuss from experience. You might consider the people and sense of community, safety, accessibility, diversity, businesses and services, transportation, social environment, walkability, noise, activities, or how living in each community affected your daily life.

14. **Compare two significant experiences that were similar in some way.**

Choose experiences that have a logical connection—for example, starting two different jobs, taking two major trips, participating in two important events, or

going through similar transitions at different points in your life. You might examine your expectations, circumstances, challenges, reactions, relationships with others, outcomes, or how you changed between the two experiences.

15. Compare two approaches to accomplishing the same goal.

Choose two approaches that you have enough experience with to discuss meaningfully. For example, you might compare two approaches to exercising, studying, managing money, communicating, organizing your time, or completing a particular type of task. Consider effectiveness, difficulty, flexibility, time commitment, advantages and disadvantages, sustainability, or how each approach affects the outcome.