

The Introduction

The introduction should entice readers into reading your essay, so make sure you start out strong. You may begin by mentioning one interesting fact about one of the subjects, or by asking a question that will be answered later in the paper.

An introduction should describe what the compare and contrast essay is about, so if you're discussing the similarities and differences between vacationing in a city and vacationing in the country, be sure you make that clear. One key thing to remember: don't say **"in my essay I will be talking about this and this"**. There are more interesting ways to lead into your topic. Instead of saying "I'll be discussing the similarities and differences between the life of the protagonist of the novel *Sold* by Patricia McCormack and my own life and experiences", you could say something like "What makes us who we are? How do our cultural backgrounds, our family, and our experiences combine to influence the person we become? Although the characters we meet in literature may seem very different than ourselves, upon further reflection we can see that we share similarities in what we hope to achieve in our lives" In the *Life of Pi* by _____ the main character has experiences that are very different from those of my life but ultimately I believe we share some basic similarities in what we hope to achieve in our lives. . This statement may also double as your thesis, which is your view or stance on the particular topic at hand.

The introduction will also introduce the general outline of your essay. Let's say the first paragraph is comparing and contrasting the people of the city and the country, the second paragraph is about the landscape and general aesthetic quality of the two, and the third paragraph is about what you can do for entertainment. You'll mention all of this, and mention them in the order the paragraphs will be presented in.

Paragraph Structure

The paragraphs that you write must follow a very specific structure. As mentioned before, you have to come up with the topic that you want to write about and then choose a topic sentence.

For example, say you wanted to write a paragraph about dogs. The first thing you would do is write a topic sentence, such as, "When it comes to animals, dogs are a great pet." Now you have a topic, which is not just dogs, but talking about what makes dogs a great pet.

After you've come up with your topic sentence, you will then have to write three to five sentences that help you explain your fact. For example, in the paragraph about dogs, you may want to write about the different things people do with dogs as their pet. The following sentences would be great for a paragraph about dogs.

- > Dogs can help both elderly people and children with their daily life.
- > Because dogs are so active, they can be great buddies for exercise.
- > There are many different dogs from the really big to the small ones.
- > You can train your dog yourself or send it to school in order to make it obedient.

The above four statements help explain why dogs are great pets. Separately they work as great sentences, but since they share a common topic in regards to dogs being pets, they can come together to make a paragraph.

After you're done with the sentences to expand on your topic, you have to come up with a conclusion. A simple conclusion for a paragraph helps restate the claim you made in your topic sentence.

- > Dogs are loyal and reliable animals that people have kept as pets for hundreds of years.

Now you've concluded the paragraph and all you have to do is bring it all together. This is how the paragraph would look once you linked all the statements.

"When it comes to animals, dogs are great pets. Dogs can help both elderly people and children with their daily life. Because dogs are so active, they can be great buddies for exercise. There are many different dogs from the really big to the small ones. You can train your dog yourself or send it to school in order to make it obedient. Dogs are loyal and reliable animals that people have had as pets for hundreds of years."

The above paragraph is a simple example of what a basic paragraph consists. You have the topic sentence to introduce the person to what you're talking about, and then you have the body of the paragraph, which features the facts and information you have about your topic. After that all you have to do is write a conclusion, which is just restating your topic and the paragraph is finished.

The Conclusion

The conclusion should wrap up the entire essay and not leave any loose ends. Whatever you told readers you were going to speak about throughout your essay, make sure you write a concise summary of it in your conclusion (and make sure you are referring back to something in the body of your essay). As a simple example, you could say something such as “although cities are full of hustle and bustle and the countryside is more relaxed, both are areas where people go to find inspiration for novels, paintings and screenplays”.

Once you have the framework of the essay, the rest of it will fall into place. The next time you're staring at a blank Word document, make take out that old fashioned pen and paper and start making that outline! You'll find that starting a compare and contrast essay is easier than you may have imagined.