

# A Brief Overview to Writing A Comparison/Contrast Essay

Similarities and Differences



# Definition

- Writing a comparison/contrast paper involves comparing and contrasting two subjects.
- A comparison shows how two things are alike.
- A contrast shows how two things are different.



# Choosing a Topic

- **When you choose a topic, be sure not to choose two totally unrelated subjects.**
- **You must start with subjects that have some basic similarities.**
  - two movies
  - two short stories
  - book and movie



# Brainstorm



- **Brainstorm everything you know about each subject and then go back and look for connections that show similarities and differences.**

<b>Points of Contrast/Comparison</b>	<b>Autumn</b>	<b>Spring</b>
<b>Temperature (--)</b>	<b>cooler</b>	<b>warmer</b>
<b>Changes (--)</b>	<b>leaves change</b>	<b>flowers bloom</b>
<b>Colors (+)</b>	<b>brilliant colors</b>	<b>brilliant colors</b>
<b>Location (--) (+)</b>	<b>precedes winter</b>	<b>precedes summer</b>
<b>Symbolism (--) (+)</b>	<b>death</b>	<b>birth</b>

# Develop a Thesis

- **The thesis statement will evolve from the brainstorming. Look at your list and ask yourself some questions.**
  - "Is there something important, significant, or interesting in the similarities and differences on my list?"
  - "What have I discovered about my two topics?"



# Develop a Thesis

■ After looking at the list, a thesis statement might be:

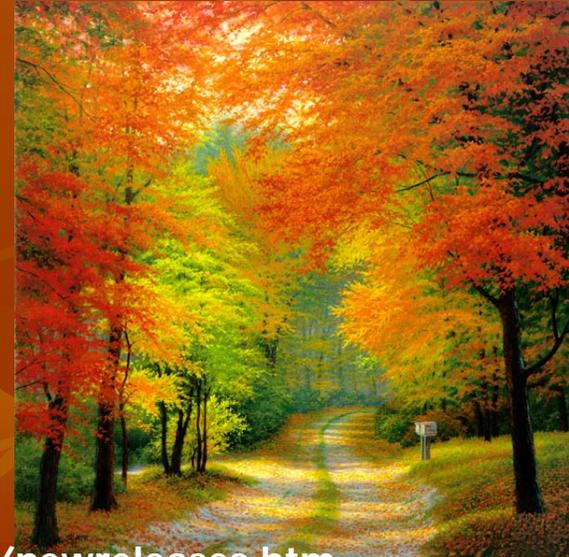
“Although there is exquisite beauty in the seasons of autumn and spring, there are also distinctions which allow each season to stand on its own.”



# Organizing the essay

- The introduction of your essay should mention both subjects in a strong and clearly defined thesis statement:

**“Although there is exquisite beauty in the seasons of autumn and spring, there are also distinctions which allow each season to stand on its own.”**



# Organizing the essay

- There are two primary ways to organize the body of your paper:
  - **the divided pattern**
  - **the alternating pattern.**



# Organizing the essay

## The Divided Pattern

Give all supporting details for one subject and then give all supporting details for the other subject.

- Paragraph 1: Introduction and Thesis statement
- Paragraph 2: Discuss and give supporting details for subject 1 (autumn )
- Paragraph 3: Discuss and give supporting details for subject 2 (spring)
- Paragraph 4: Concluding statement



# Organizing the essay

## The Alternating Pattern

Alternate the details from one side of the comparison or contrast to the other

- Paragraph 1: Introduction and thesis statement
- Paragraph 2: Discuss and give all the details of the similarities between both subjects (spring and autumn)
- Paragraph 3: Discuss and give all the details of the differences between both subjects (spring and autumn)
- Paragraph 4: Concluding statement



# Organizing the essay

## Concluding Statement

- **The conclusion of your paper should include final connections about the two subjects and then a restatement of your thesis.**

