

The Body of a Comparison Contrast Essay:

The **body** of your essay follows your introduction, and it is the part where you “prove” your thesis to the reader through explanations, analysis and evidence from the text. You need to put some thought into how to organize your body paragraphs so they reach your audience in an effective manner.

Below are two suggestions for how to organize the body of a **compare/contrast** essay.

The Block Method

For this method you discuss each character, one at a time. It looks something like this:

- Paragraph 1: You discuss one character and analyze her thoughts, decisions, etc.
- Paragraph 2: You discuss the other character, focusing on similar characteristics between/among the characters.
- Paragraph 3: You discuss how these characters are different, and you explain why this is.

Here is how you might organize an essay comparing and contrasting Cinderella and her step sisters:

Thesis:

Although Cinderella and her Step Sisters share the same goal—they want to marry Prince Charming—Cinderella distinguishes herself because she has to work hard to achieve what she wants. The sisters, on the other hand, expect everything to be given to them.

Paragraph 1: Describe the Step Sisters and use evidence from the text to show how demanding they are even though they don’t do any work; explain the significance of this.

Paragraph 2: Describe Cinderella and use evidence from the text to show how sweet, hardworking and motivated she is.

Paragraph 3: Explain to the reader why these differences prove that Cinderella is set apart because she isn’t spoiled. This is the heart of your argument!

The Point-by-Point Method

With this organization you analyze the **characteristics** of the characters one at a time. Each paragraph will need to discuss the characters being compared and contrasted.

Here is how you might organize the same essay about Cinderella:

Paragraph 1: Cinderella and her Step Sisters share a similar goal: they want to go to the ball. If there are any differences you also need to discuss them (for example, her sisters seem focused on marrying the Prince, whereas Cinderella seems more interested in just getting there. Explain why this is).

Paragraph 2: The differences between Cinderella and her Step Sisters are striking: Cinderella is sweet and hardworking compared to her lazy and mean-spirited Step Sisters. Explain why this evidence is significant and what it tells us about each character.

Paragraph 3: Cinderella's ultimate reward of the Prince proves that if parents do not expect anything from their children, they do not develop into the type of people who deserve a "happy ending." The Step Sisters tried to "win" by torturing Cinderella; what they didn't realize is that Cinderella's hard work and lesser status shaped her into a better person