

UNIT 20**Lesson: *Comparison Paragraphs*****20.1 Introduction**

A **comparison paragraph** discusses similarities or differences between items, concepts, or beliefs. Numerous items can be compared. However, for a single paragraph, selecting only two items to compare is best. The paragraph may either inform or persuade and is developed in the following sequence.

20.2 Preliminary Considerations**A. *Topic***

A comparison paragraph requires two preliminary decisions about the topic:

- (1) Decide what to compare.
- (2) Determine the criteria for comparison.

B. *Audience*

Identifying the audience is critical. The criteria for comparison and the preferred option will often differ depending on the readers' needs. For example, if comparing music systems, the writer must make certain assumptions about the desires of the potential audience. An older person may prefer the ability to play cassette tapes as well as CDs and have little need for programmability or connection to computers or other devices. On the other hand, today's teenager might have little interest in playing cassette tapes, preferring instead a unit with extra power, an equalizer, programmability, and the ability to connect to many devices.. Hence, the criteria and preferences in this instance will depend on whether the target audience will be older adults or teenagers. In the same way, give thought to what your readers will want to know.

C. *Purpose*

Comparison paragraphs generally end with a conclusion drawn by the writer. However, the degree of persuasion will vary from composition to composition. For example, you may simply inform and report observations, thereby pointing to a conclusion. At other times, you may build a case for the conclusion and challenge the reader to accept the position or take action. Thus, audience and situation dictates the amount of persuasion to use.

A comparison paragraph evaluates similarities or differences.

20.3 Planning

Illustration 20A shows how a simple comparison chart can be a helpful tool for planning a comparison paragraph.

20A - Comparison Chart

Target audience:	Teen who wants a stereo system for his room		
Criterion	System A	System B	Conclusion
Sound:	3-way bass reflex Big sound Equalizer with 7 presets	2-way bass reflex Clear and bright Bass & treble controls Bass boost	A is slightly better than B.
Features:	AM/FM radio, 5 CD changer, iPod dock, USB & MP3 input, Video output Programmable play function	AM/FM radio 5 CD changer iPod dock USB & MP3 input	A has more sophisticated features. B is adequate.
Size:	Taller and wider than available shelf space	Good fit for shelf space	B is better size.
Cost:	\$235.00	\$155.00	B fits budget.
Overall conclusion:	System B is better choice based on size and price.		

20.4 Topic Sentence

Establishment of a comparison forms the basis for the topic sentence. If the paragraph is purely informational, this topic sentence simply states that two things are to be compared. On the other hand, if you intend to persuade, the topic sentence goes further and contends that one is better than the other.

Comparison established:

- *When choosing between System A and System B, a number of features should be considered.*
- *Both System A and System B seem to be strong products worth considering.*

Position established:

- *System B prevails over System A when evaluated on a number of features.*
- *When considering System A and System B, one clearly has superior features.*

20.5 Supporting Information and Concluding Sentence

For this type of paragraph, you may choose between two development options. Based on the 20A *Comparison Chart*, Illustration 20B demonstrates both development options. The *Criterion Comparison Outline* discusses in turn each criterion as it pertains to the items. Conversely, the *Item Comparison Outline* discusses each item, covering all criteria about the first item before moving to the next. Regardless of the option you select, always present the supporting details in the same order and discuss the overall preferred item last. Finally, summarize your reasons for preferring one of the items in the concluding sentence.

20B - Sample Stereo System Comparison Planning Outlines

<u>Criterion Comparison Outline</u>	<u>Item Comparison Outline</u>
<p>Topic Sentence: <i>After evaluating a number of features, Jeff chose System B over System A.</i></p> <p>A. <i>Quality sound</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>System A</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>3-way bass reflex speakers</i> b. <i>Big with balanced fidelity</i> c. <i>Adjustable equalizer with 7 presets.</i> 2. <i>System B</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>2-way bass reflex speakers</i> b. <i>Clear, bright sound</i> c. <i>Bass and treble controls, bass boost</i> d. <i>Almost equal to System A</i> <p>B. <i>Other features</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>System A</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>AM/FM, five CD changer, iPod dock, USB and MP3 ports, video output.</i> b. <i>Programming feature for CD changer and to create playlists.</i> 2. <i>System B</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>iPod dock, USB port, three CD changer, AM/FM</i> b. <i>Lacks programming and video output features</i> <p>C. <i>Price and size</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>System A</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>Large size for shelf space</i> b. <i>\$235 price over budget.</i> 2. <i>System B</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>Smaller size better fit to shelf space</i> b. <i>\$155 price within budget.</i> <p>Concluding Sentence: <i>Jeff selected System B for its desirable features in a suitable size and price.</i></p>	<p>Topic Sentence: <i>After evaluating a number of features, Jeff chose System B over System A.</i></p> <p>A. <i>System A</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Attracted to sound</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>3-way bass reflex speakers</i> b. <i>Big with balanced fidelity.</i> c. <i>Adjustable equalizer with 7 presets</i> 2. <i>Other exciting features</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>AM/FM radio, five CD changer, iPod dock, USB and MP3 ports, video output</i> b. <i>Programming feature</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) <i>Controls CD changer</i> (2) <i>Builds playlists</i> 3. <i>Drawbacks</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>Cost: \$235.00</i> b. <i>Size: large for shelf space</i> <p>B. <i>System B</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Clear, bright sound</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>2-way bass reflex speakers</i> b. <i>Bass and treble controls</i> c. <i>Bass boost switch</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) <i>Near System A sound</i> 2. <i>Includes other desirable features</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>iPod dock, USB port, three CD changer, AM/FM radio</i> b. <i>Will not miss programmability or video output</i> 3. <i>Better suited</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>\$155 price fit budget</i> b. <i>Shorter and slimmer</i> <p>Concluding sentence: <i>Jeff selected System B for its desirable features in a suitable size and price.</i></p>

Comparison Development Options:

- **By item**
- **By criterion**

Presentation:

- **Organize supporting details in the same order.**
- **Discuss the overall preferred item last.**

The concluding sentence summarizes the reasons for preferring one option over the others.

20C - Sample Comparison Paragraph by Criteria

After evaluating a number of features, Jeff selected the Blaring Barrett Bookshelf Blaster over the Supersonic Square Sound System. First, Jeff compared sound between the two models. The Supersonic's three-way bass reflex speaker system emitted a big sound with balanced musical fidelity. He could further enhance the sound to his liking by switching between seven presets on the built in equalizer. The Blaring Barrett on the other hand produced a clear bright sound from its two-way bass reflex speakers. Tone could be altered with bass and treble controls and a bass boost switch. After a bit of experimentation, Jeff had this model sounding almost like the Supersonic. Next, Jeff took stock of other exciting features. The Supersonic offered a five compact disc (CD) changer, an iPod dock, USB and MP3 inputs, and a video output. It also included a sophisticated programming feature that controlled the CD changer and allowed the listener to build play lists from external input devices. Comparably, the Blaring Barrett unit included fewer features, yet retained the most desirable. Jeff could dock his iPod, play music from an external memory device attached to the USB port, use the three CD changer, or listen to the AM/FM radio. He did not feel that he would miss the programmability or the video output features. Finally, Jeff considered size and price. As pleased as he was with the performance and features of the Supersonic, Jeff had to admit that price and size were problematic. At \$235, this unit stretched his budget. It also seemed a little too tall and bulky for the available shelf space in his room. In contrast, the \$155 dollar price on the Blaring Barrett model suited Jeff's budget. Furthermore, its shorter and slimmer dimensions seemed a better choice for his room. After carefully comparing the features of both systems, Jeff could clearly communicate the reasons for his choice. He selected the Blaring Barrett Bookshelf Blaster over the Supersonic Square Sound System because it included the most desired features in a unit of proper size and at a better price.

20D - Sample Comparison Paragraph by Item

After evaluating a number of features, Jeff selected the Blaring Barrett Bookshelf Blaster over the Supersonic Square Sound System. As Jeff noted aspects of the Supersonic, the sound first attracted him. The Supersonic's three-way bass reflex speaker system emitted a big sound with balanced musical fidelity. He could further enhance the sound to his liking by switching between seven presets on the built in equalizer. Besides the usual AM/FM radio, Jeff took notice of other exciting features. The Supersonic offered a five compact disc (CD) changer, an iPod dock, USB and MP3 inputs, and a video output. It also included a sophisticated programming feature that controlled the CD changer and allowed the listener to build play lists from external input devices. As pleased as he was with the performance and features of the Supersonic, Jeff had to admit that price and size were problematic. At \$235, this unit stretched his budget. It also seemed a little too tall and bulky for the available shelf space in his room. Next, Jeff weighed his options with the Blaring Barrett Bookshelf Blaster. The clear bright sound from its two-way bass reflex speakers could be altered with bass and treble tone controls and a bass boost switch. After a bit of experimentation, Jeff had this model sounding almost like the Supersonic. Other desirable features also seemed adequate. He could dock his iPod, play music from an external memory device attached to the USB port, use the three CD changer, or listen to the AM/FM radio. He did not feel that he would miss the programmability or the video output features, and the \$155 dollar price suited Jeff's budget. Furthermore, its shorter and slimmer size seemed a better choice for his room. After carefully considering the features of both systems, Jeff could clearly communicate the reasons for his choice. He selected the Blaring Barrett Bookshelf Blaster over the Supersonic Square Sound System because it included the most desired features in a unit of proper size and at a better price.

20.6 Literary Device - Alliteration

The repetition of sounds in writing, known as **alliteration**, will be the literary device for this lesson. Even when reading silently, readers have an “internal ear” that delights in pleasing patterns. When writing prose, avoid overuse of this strategy. Frequent use can cause writing from being taken seriously. Periodic and strategic use, however, creates interest and adds a pleasant flow. Numerous examples of alliteration fill the paragraphs in 20C and 20D. Here are a few samples:

- *After evaluating a number of features, Jeff selected the Blaring Barrett Bookshelf Blaster over the Supersonic Square Sound System.*
- *The Supersonic's three-way bass reflex speaker system...*
- *After carefully considering the features of both systems, Jeff could clearly communicate...*

**Alliteration:
Repetition
of sounds
in writing.**

UNIT 20

Comparison Paragraphs

Daily Assignments

Exercise 1

A. Reading Assignment:

Study the Unit 20 Lesson on comparison paragraphs thoroughly.

B. Lesson Exercise:

Answer the following questions in complete sentences:

1. Once a writer has decided what to compare in a comparison paragraph, what is the next step?
2. What are the two development options for a comparison composition?
3. What is alliteration?

C. Writing Exercise:

1. *Create a comparison chart like the one on page 136, and use it to brainstorm a comparison paragraph on a topic approved by your instructor. Write your brainstorming list neatly, in a manner that is suitable for submission with your final draft.*

Purpose: inform or persuade

Audience: peers

Topic suggestions: two restaurants, two different brands of a product, your city with another city.

2. *Do research as needed for supporting information. Gather bibliographic information, general notes on the topic, and prepare quotations, summaries, or paraphrases to offer in support of your position as described in the Unit 10 Lesson. You will need at least one source, and no more than two, for this unit's paragraph.*
3. *Write a topic sentence and create a planning outline for this comparison paragraph. The planning outline will also be submitted to your instructor with your final draft.*

Exercise 2

A. Style Drill:

Identify the two style points used in the following sentence.

Running down the hill, he chased his hat, which was blowing away in the wind.

B. Writing Exercise:

Draft the entire comparison paragraph which you planned in Exercise 1. Insert proper citations for any research evidence included. This unit's literary device, alliteration, is to be included in the paragraph and may be added any time between now and Exercise 4. If you find it necessary, revise your planning outline and create a new copy for submission. Otherwise, complete this first draft of your paragraph so that you can mark corrections on it tomorrow. This corrected copy will be submitted with your final draft in Exercise 5.

Exercise 3

A. Formality Drill:

Using the formality and grammar rules explained in Unit 2, rewrite the sentence below in proper form:

He put a lot of effort into the run.

B. Writing Exercise:

- 1. Now begin to edit your paragraph draft from Exercise 2, marking corrections and changes on your rough draft. Consult the paragraph checklist to insure that you are following set guidelines.*
- 2. Add three different style points.*
- 3. Create another copy of this revision for submission in Exercise 5.*

Exercise 4

A. Style Drill:

Identify the style point used in the following sentence.

Above the clouds thrust majestic Mount Hood.

B. Writing Exercise:

- 1. Go over your paragraph and correct all spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors.*
- 2. This unit's literary device, alliteration, must be added to the paragraph by now. Again, if you cannot fit the device into the assignment, write two sample sentences, each including this week's literary device, and submit them with your paragraph.*
- 3. Make other improvements in words and phrases that may come to mind.*
- 4. Prepare a revised draft of your paragraph.*

Exercise 5

A. Formality Drill:

Using the formality and grammar rules explained in Unit 2, rewrite the sentence below in proper form:

You must consider the situation carefully.

B. Writing Exercise:

1. *The final opportunity to polish your paragraph has come. Read the paragraph aloud slowly and listen for problem areas. Now, have someone else read it to you so that you can listen and be certain that the product is well-written.*
2. *Using the Paragraph Checklist, review your paragraph. Check off each guideline in the upper section when you have verified that you have followed it. In the lower section, mark the style points you have used. On your final draft, identify these style points by writing the corresponding number from the checklist directly above each one, and label the literary device.*
3. *Make certain that the text includes appropriate parenthetical references in text, and that the "Works Cited" page is complete.*
4. *Make certain that the assignment is double-spaced, has one inch margins, has page numbering if needed, and that it includes the proper heading required by your instructor. Along with name and date, the heading should include paragraph type, paragraph purpose, and intended audience.*
5. *Submit your work to the instructor:*
 - a. *Final draft paragraph*
 - b. *"Works Cited" page, as applicable*
 - c. *Literary device, if written separately*
 - d. *Paragraph checklist*
 - e. *All drafts*
 - f. *Topic sentence & planning outline*
 - g. *Comparison chart*