

14B

2. List similarities and differences in your subjects, making sure you discuss the same topics for subject A and subject B.
3. Decide if your subjects share more similarities or differences. You will want to emphasize either similarities or differences so that you leave a clear impression with your reader.



### Pitfalls

1. **Avoid obvious comparisons.** It's not very interesting to hear what we already know, so try examining similarities or differences that aren't obvious to the reader.
2. **Avoid incomplete comparisons.** A comparison that does not discuss the same elements for both subjects (A and B) would confuse the reader. For example, if you were contrasting two jobs and discussed the pay, hours, and responsibilities of one job and the hours, responsibilities, and benefits of the second job, the reader would wonder why you didn't discuss the pay and benefits of both jobs.
3. **Avoid confusing comparisons.** A comparison that evenly balances the similarities and differences in two subjects or a comparison that balances positive and negative elements of two subjects can confuse the reader. The writer should emphasize either the similarities or the differences in two subjects and emphasize either the positive or the negative elements of the subjects. For example, if you are contrasting two teachers and you include an equal number of similarities and differences, the reader may wonder if the teachers are more alike or more different. If you include both positive and negative qualities of each teacher, the reader will be confused about whether you feel the teachers are good or bad.

### Writing Assignment

Select one of the topics below to develop as a paragraph or an essay.

1. Choose two TV shows, magazines, or movies that you know well and compare or contrast them. If you select two items of the same type (two soap operas, two sports magazines), you would probably want to focus on differences. Comparisons are most effective with two items the reader would expect to be different, such as two different types of movies or TV shows.
2. Choose two entertainers, athletes, or leaders and compare/contrast them. You might want to use contrast to show that one provides a good example and the other does not. You might want to use comparison to show how two people who the reader would expect to be different have similar behaviors, attitudes, mannerisms, and so forth.