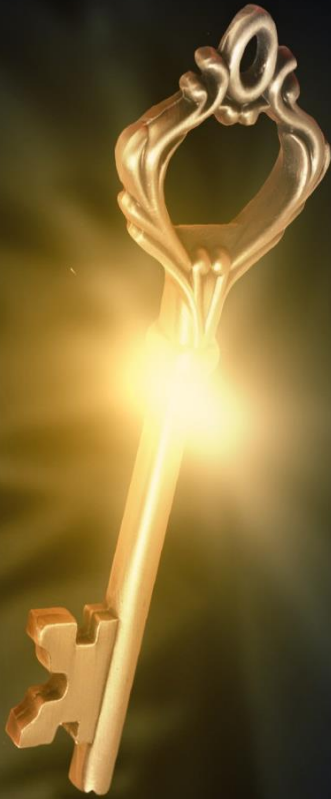


UNLOCK THE SECRETS OF COMPARE-AND-CONTRAST WRITING



Easy-to-use, systematic steps for
junior and senior high students
to learn these essential skills



Writing with
Sharon Watson

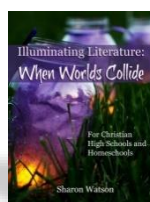
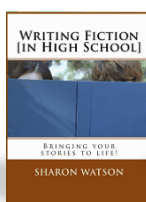
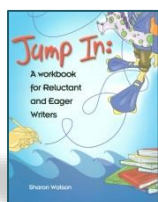


Meet the author **Sharon Watson**

Sharon Watson is the author of *Jump In*, Apologia's easy-to-use middle school writing curriculum, which appears in Cathy Duffy's *102 Top Picks for Homeschool Curriculum*. She was forced to retire from homeschooling after 18 years when she ran out of her own children but still teaches writing and literature courses in her local area. Her popular course *The Power in Your Hands: Writing Nonfiction in High School* is based on her sought-after writing classes and is the sequel to *Jump In*.

Let her **practical textbooks** teach writing and literature for you:

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Some of the material for this eBook is taken from [*The Power in Your Hands: Writing Nonfiction in High School*](#) and [*Writing Fiction \[in High School\]*](#).

Special thanks to Esther, Alyson, Andrew, and Reuben for the use of their essays in this eBook. Also, special thanks to [SchoolhouseTeachers.com](#) for first posting a version of these lessons on their site.

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Dear Student,

Welcome to a ten-week course on compare-and-contrast writing! You already know how to compare and contrast when shopping for shoes or mobile devices, deciding on a college or a job, choosing that first car to buy, and so forth. Now, this course will teach you how to compare and contrast in writing.

The skill of compare-and-contrast writing is useful in **nonfiction** settings like essays and reports, and it also comes in handy in **fiction** writing. You'll get practice in both of these in this course.

Here is what you'll learn in the complete edition of this course:

Lesson One: *How to write a loooong compare-and-contrast sentence*

Lesson Two: *One sure-fire—and colorful—trick to help you organize*

Lesson Three: *A big mistake in compare-and-contrast writing*

Lesson Four: *How to make organizing easier*

Lesson Five: *Dovetailing for fiction writing*

Lesson Six: *Compare-and-contrast description in fiction writing.*

Lesson Seven: *The block method of compare-and-contrast essay writing*

Lesson Eight: *The feature method of compare-and-contrast essay writing*

Lesson Nine: *The similarities/differences method of compare-and-contrast essay writing*

Lesson Ten: *How to decide on your method*

The best way to work through these lessons is to do them in order. Each lesson builds on the former one, adding new compare-and-contrast skills each week.

When you are given a compare-and-contrast assignment, do you feel nauseated?

Tremble no more. It's time to unlock some secrets.

Table of Contents

Lesson 1: A Sentence	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Explore the concept of compare-and-contrast thinking.....	5
<input type="checkbox"/> Study a lengthy sentence by H. G. Wells.	9
<input type="checkbox"/> Persuade someone with a focused compare-and-contrast sentence.	10
Lesson 2: A Paragraph.....	13
<input type="checkbox"/> Read about two world leaders.	13
<input type="checkbox"/> List similarities and differences.	15
<input type="checkbox"/> Use colors to see the pattern.	16
<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer one thing over another in a paragraph.....	17
Lesson 3: Ping-Pongs	19
<input type="checkbox"/> Cross the International Date Line with Mark Twain.	19
<input type="checkbox"/> Learn about Ping-Pongs.	21
<input type="checkbox"/> Write very badly.....	22
Lesson 4: Organization Options.....	23
<input type="checkbox"/> A quick review.....	23
<input type="checkbox"/> Using a new tool to organize your material.	24
<input type="checkbox"/> Write a compare-and-contrast paragraph.	26
Lesson 5: Fiction and Dovetailing.....	27
<input type="checkbox"/> Learn what dovetailing is.	27
<input type="checkbox"/> Shiver in the cemetery with Pip.....	29
<input type="checkbox"/> Write your own dovetail passage.....	30
Lesson 6: Description in Fiction	31
<input type="checkbox"/> Read of apricots, cabins, and tombs.....	31
<input type="checkbox"/> Write your own compare-and-contrast description.	34
Lesson 7: The Block Method	35
<input type="checkbox"/> Read an example of the block method.	35
<input type="checkbox"/> Analyze the example.	39
<input type="checkbox"/> Write a compare-and-contrast essay using the block method.	41
Lesson 8: The Feature Method.....	43
<input type="checkbox"/> Read an example of the feature method.	43
<input type="checkbox"/> Analyze the example.	46
<input type="checkbox"/> Write a compare-and-contrast essay using the feature method.....	49

Lesson 9: Similarities and Differences	52
<input type="checkbox"/> Read about two houses.	52
<input type="checkbox"/> Analyze the example.	54
<input type="checkbox"/> Read about some scary stories.....	55
<input type="checkbox"/> Analyze the example.	57
<input type="checkbox"/> Write a compare-and-contrast essay using the similarities/differences method.....	58
Lesson 10: Your Choice of Methods	61
<input type="checkbox"/> Review three major methods.	61
<input type="checkbox"/> Decide on the topics and method for your essay.....	64
<input type="checkbox"/> Write a compare-and-contrast essay of your choice.	65
Answers	67
Don't miss these helpful resources!.....	77

This SAMPLE contains Lesson One. The Table of Contents here and on the previous page shows all the lessons in the complete eBook [*Unlock the Secrets of Compare-and-Contrast Writing*](#).

Lesson 1: A Sentence

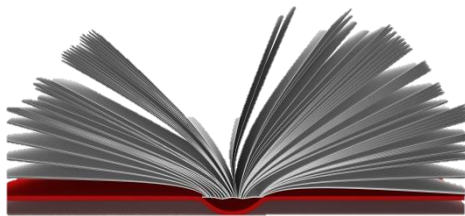
Here's what you'll be doing in this lesson:

- ☐ *Exploring the concept of compare-and-contrast thinking*
- ☐ *Studying a lengthy sentence by H. G. Wells*
- ☐ *Persuading someone by writing a focused compare-and-contrast sentence*

You can check each box after you've finished the corresponding section, either in the list above or in each section below, if you like.

☐ *Explore the concept of compare-and-contrast thinking.*

You already know how to compare and contrast—in your head, that is. You read a book. Then you watch the movie. Automatically you begin to compare the two versions of the same story. How are the two similar? Where are they different? How is the movie better or worse than the book? Which do you prefer? You've been comparing and contrasting for years.



Book



or



Movie

The skill of comparing is finding the **similarities**. The skill of contrasting is finding the **differences**.

But the compare-and-contrast tool isn't just for school. Movie critics use it when they compare two recent movies that feature the same actor or when they

contrast one director's work with another's. Remakes are always compared with their originals, and so are sequels.

Historians naturally compare leaders with each other. When discussing a war, historians will review the strengths and weaknesses of two generals or will show the differing effects of two battles. Comparing and contrasting an event gives it meaning.

Comparing and contrasting is already one of your life skills. Perhaps you are thinking about your future—career, college, marriage, or “wait and see.” This involves examining the advantages and disadvantages of all your choices, like these:

- College A has smaller class sizes.
- College B allows freshmen to have cars on campus.
- College C has a more interesting male/female ratio.



When you weigh your options, you are comparing and contrasting.

Someday, you might be sitting in a meeting when the boss tells you to get the information on mobile-device plans for company-wide use. You will call mobile-device companies; collect data on rates, minutes, features, contracts, and so forth; and put the information on a handy chart or in a report for your boss to examine. You will have done the work of comparing and contrasting so the boss can make an informed decision.

Two tiny, infinitesimal, minuscule facts:

- *Compare and contrast* is sometimes called *comparison and contrast*.
- If *compare and contrast* is used as an adjective, as in *compare-and-contrast essays*, hyphenate the words. If *compare and contrast* is not used as an adjective, no hyphens are needed.

Now it's your turn: 1.1

You've been comparing and contrasting things for years. Here are few decisions, large and small, you might have weighed recently:

- ✓ *What to wear to a special event*
- ✓ *Which fast food restaurant to go to*
- ✓ *What to eat once you got there*
- ✓ *Which school course to take*
- ✓ *Which route to take while driving*
- ✓ *Which article of clothing to buy*
- ✓ *Which organization to send a donation to*
- ✓ *Which activity to participate in*
- ✓ *Which present to give a family member*
- ✓ *Which puppy to buy*
- ✓ *Which mobile device to buy*



Underline one of the decisions above you've made recently. If none of these decisions was on your radar, choose a recent or large decision you've made in which there were at least two options and write it in the space below:

There's more to do on the next page.

Next, fill in the boxes below with the features, qualities, colors, calories, and so forth that you compared before you made your decision. For instance, when deciding on a tent for your next hiking trip, were they both lightweight (similarity) but one had better zippers (a difference)?

Similarities**Differences**

What tipped the scales for you? What made you choose one thing over the other?
Write it below:

□ Study a lengthy sentence by H. G. Wells.

You may know H. G. Wells as the writer of *The Time Machine* and *The War of the Worlds*. He's also the author of *Select Conversations with an Uncle* published in 1895 in which a young-adult nephew and his 50-ish uncle schmooze and discuss life issues.

When the uncle announces his engagement, the young nephew reacts with the following sentence, contrasting the seemingly happy state of bachelorhood with the sordid and depressing state of marriage. Here are some words you'll run into in this sentence: "Rate-payer" means taxpayer; "pew tenant" means renting a pew at the local church and attending there; "paterfamilias" means the male head of a family.

It seemed so dreadful to me that the cheerful, talkative man beside me, my own father's little brother, a traveler in distant countries, and a most innocent man, and with all the inveterate habits of thirty years' honorable bachelorhood and all the mellowness of life upon him, should, without consulting me, have taken the first irrevocable step toward becoming a rate-payer, a pew tenant, paterfamilias, a fighter with schoolmasters, and the serf of a butler, that I scarcely knew what to say adequate to the occasion.

Now it's your turn: 1.2

Use the paragraph by Wells to fill in the lists below. The first ones are done:

Write the positive images here

Little brother (connotes protection)

Write the negative images here

irrevocable (connotes negative idea of "can't get out of")

Doesn't Wells make it seem unfair that such a cheerfully innocent man would be tied down to such a seemingly nasty life? It's easy to see that Wells boosts the idea of bachelorhood with wonderful words and images, while he loads down the idea of marriage with terribly confining images.

❑ *Persuade someone with a focused compare-and-contrast sentence.*

Here is Wells' 86-word sentence again, this time with highlight colors to show where he piles images to support bachelorhood and then attack marriage. Yellow represents the part of the sentence concerned with bachelorhood; gray represent the marriage section:

It seemed so dreadful to me that the cheerful, talkative man beside me, my own father's little brother, a traveler in distant countries, and a most innocent man, and with all the inveterate habits of thirty years' honorable bachelorhood and all the mellowness of life upon him, should, without consulting me, have taken the first irrevocable step toward becoming a rate-payer, a pew tenant, paterfamilias, a fighter with schoolmasters, and the serf of a butler, that I scarcely knew what to say adequate to the occasion.

Wells puts marriage last because his negative feelings for marriage are stronger than his positive feelings for bachelorhood. In other words, in a compare-and-contrast statement, you will put the most important idea last. Putting it last emphasizes it in the minds of the readers.

By the way, this trick of using colors to highlight your separate topics works very well. It shows you where you have put your information and how clear your writing is. You'll use this trick in lesson 2.

Now it's your turn: 1.3

Give the opposing view to Wells' sentence. In the boxes below, write negative words and images for choosing to stay single and positive words and images for marriage. Make them super slanted, just like H. G. Wells does.

Note: Yes, I know there are legitimate reasons to choose to remain single. In this exercise, though, you are writing against the state of singleness and for the state of marriage.

Choosing to stay single: **negative** words and images

Marriage: **positive** words and images

Now it's your turn: 1.4

Write a sentence to express the exact opposite of H. G. Wells' opinions on bachelorhood and marriage. In other words, you are going to be *against* staying single and *for* marriage. Use the negative words and images you compiled for choosing to stay single and the positive words and images you compiled for choosing to be married. You are writing to persuade a reader to see your point.

After you have written your lengthy sentence, run a highlighter over the staying-single issue and a highlighter of another color over the getting-married issue. You can underline your sections with two different colors of pens instead, if you wish. Then ask yourself these questions:



- ☐ Is the staying-single idea in its own section of my sentence?
- ☐ Is the getting-married idea in a different section of my sentence?
- ☐ Did I use negatively loaded words and images for the issue of choosing to stay single?
- ☐ Did I use positively loaded words and images for the issue of marrying?
- ☐ Am I trying to persuade a reader to agree with my sentence?

Extra: Do you want to make a stronger statement *against* staying single or a stronger statement *for* getting married? Whichever idea is stronger in your mind, write about it last.

- ☐ Did I end my lengthy sentence with the idea I feel the strongest about?

Next up in lesson two: two famous world leaders!

End of Lesson One.