COMPARE AND CONTRAST ESSAY

What is a cause and effect essay?
The goal of this type of essay is to highlight the important similarities and/or differences between two things. The most common mistake that students make with a compare and contrast essay is failing to explain the significance of these similarities and differences. There must always be some point to the essay. Possible points include clarifying something unknown or not well understood about the two things or showing that one thing is better than another. This point ought to be stated clearly in the thesis statement.

What makes a good cause and effect essay?
-Organization: The most defining aspect of a compare and contrast essay is its organization. There are two primary ways of organizing such an essay: block arrangement and point-by-point arrangement. When using block arrangement, the writer discusses all of the points regarding one thing first and then moves on to the second thing. In point-by-point, the writer focuses on one point that involves both things, discusses this point as it is demonstrated in each, and then moves on to a new point. Generally speaking block arrangement is best reserved for shorter essays. If a writer is going to compare two things at greater length, then the point-by-point arrangement helps prevent the reader from forgetting important information along the way. Below you will find examples of each kind of organization.¹

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Block Arrangement</th>
<th>Point-by-Point Arrangement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thesis: While PC’s include a wider range of software options, users are likely to find that Macs have more ease of use.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body Paragraph 1: PC</td>
<td>Body Paragraph 1: Software</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Software</td>
<td>a. PC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Ease of use</td>
<td>b. Mac</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body Paragraph 2: Mac</td>
<td>Body Paragraph 2: Ease of use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Software</td>
<td>a. PC</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the following pages you will find a template that can be used for a point-by-point compare and contrast essay

¹ Adapted from ITU’s Writing Center.
I. Introduction

Subject A ____________________________ Subject B ____________________________

Purpose for making comparison

Intro: background about topics/general ideas

Thesis Statement: Subject A plus Subject B plus Point 1, 2, and 3 plus significance of comparison

II. Body Paragraph #1

Topic Sentence: Subject A and Subject B plus the first reason for your thesis (Point 1)

Major Support #1: the first way Subject A relates to Point 1

Minor Support #1 and 2: specific examples of this support

Major Support #2: the first way Subject B relates to Point 1

Minor Support #1 and 2: specific examples of this support

Major Support #3: the second way Subject A relates to Point 1

Minor Support #1 and 2: specific examples of this support

Major Support #4: the second way Subject B relates to Point 1
Minor Support #1 and 2: specific examples of this support

Conclusion Sentence

III.  Body Paragraph #2

Topic Sentence: Subject A and Subject B plus the second reason for your thesis (Point 2)

Major Support #1: the first way Subject A relates to Point 2

Minor Support #1 and 2: specific examples of this support

Major Support #2: the first way Subject B relates to Point 2

Minor Support #1 and 2: specific examples of this support

Major Support #3: the second way Subject A relates to Point 2

Minor Support #1 and 2: specific examples of this support

Major Support #4: the second way Subject B relates to Point 2

Minor Support #1 and 2: specific examples of this support
Conclusion Sentence

IV. Body Paragraph #3

Topic Sentence: Subject A and Subject B plus the third reason for your thesis (Point 3)

Major Support #1: the first way Subject A relates to Point 3

Minor Support #1 and 2: specific examples of this support

Major Support #2: The first way Subject B relates to Point 3

Minor Support #1 and 2: specific examples of this support

Major Support #3: the second way Subject A relates to Point 3

Minor Support #1 and 2: specific examples of this support

Major Support #4: the second way Subject B relates to Point 3

Minor Support #1 and 2: specific examples of this support

Conclusion Sentence
V. **Conclusion**

Restatement of Thesis

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

Significance ("so what?")

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________