

Comparing and contrasting

A

Prepositional expressions

Note the items in bold in these titles of journal articles and also note the prepositions.

| expression | notes |
|---|--|
| Problems in pain measurement: a comparison between verbal and visual rating scales | Between is used when two different things are being compared. Of is used when different examples of the same thing are being compared. |
| A comparison of different methods and approaches to homeschooling | |
| Mobility in the EU in comparison with the US | With and to are both used nowadays with similar meanings in these expressions. American English generally prefers <i>compared with</i> . |
| The effects of risk on private investment: Africa compared with other developing areas | |
| An exploration of the average driver's speed compared to driver safety and driving skill | |
| Reduced rate of disease development after HIV-2 infection as compared to HIV-1 | This expression indicates that there is indeed a difference between the things which are compared. |
| Some psycho-physical analogies between speech and music | Comparisons between things which have similar features; often used to help explain a principle or idea. |
| Differences and similarities between mothers and teachers as informants on child behaviour | Between is used with <i>difference</i> when different groups of people or things are compared. In is used when different aspects of one thing are compared (here 'ethical perceptions'). |
| Differences in ethical standards between male and female managers: myth or reality? | |
| Children's understanding of the distinction between real and apparent emotion | A distinction is a difference between two similar things. |
| Is globalisation today really different from globalisation a hundred years ago? | <i>Different to</i> is also used in UK academic usage, but <i>different from</i> is much more frequent. <i>Different than</i> is often found in US English. |

B

Useful linking expressions for comparison and contrast

44% of the male subjects responded negatively. Similarly, 44% of the female subjects said they had never voted in any election. [*likewise* could also be used here]

There is a **contrast between** fiction and reality.

Older teenagers were found to be more likely than younger teenagers to purchase music CDs.

Conversely, younger teenagers purchased more video games. [in an opposite way]

Unlike Scotland, Irish mortality rates were relatively low for such a poor country.

Verb endings in some languages can show present, past or future tense, **whereas** in English, verb endings can only show present or past. [*while* could also be used here; note the comma]

A recent study suggested that building a network of good friends, **rather than** maintaining close family ties, helps people live longer into old age.

On the one hand, critics accuse the police of not protecting the public from crime. **On the other hand**, people also complained that the police were too oppressive. [used to compare two different facts or two opposite ways of thinking about a situation]

In the north, the rains are plentiful. In the south **the reverse is true** and drought is common.



Remember to say **the same as** NOT *the same that* or *the same than*. Say **similar to** NOT *similar as*.

Don't confuse **on the other hand** (see above) with **in contrast**. *In contrast* expresses a marked opposition between two ideas: *Chan sharply condemned the diplomatic moves. In contrast, his deputy, Tiong, saw them as an attempt to create political stability.*

Exercises

44.1 Complete these sentences about comparing and contrasting.

- 1 The study looked at the different life chances of working-class children
..... to those of middle-class children.
- 2 The results showed a marked (three possible answers) between the two groups of plants being tested.
- 3 The title of her paper was: 'Retail price differences in large supermarkets: organic foods to non-organic foods'.
- 4 My project was a of different styles of industrial architecture in the late 20th century.
- 5 The result of the second experiment was very different that of the first.
- 6 It would be interesting to do a between the musical skills of teenage girls and those of teenage boys.
- 7 The physicist drew an between the big bang and throwing a stone into a pond.
- 8 Gronsky believes cold fusion will soon be achieved in the laboratory.
....., his colleague Ladrass believes cold fusion is simply theoretically impossible.

44.2 Rewrite the sentences using an expression which includes the word in brackets instead of the underlined words.

- 1 The two groups were not the same as each other. (DIFFERENT)
- 2 The two groups of children were different. (CONTRAST noun)
- 3 The three liquids had many things in common with one another. (SIMILAR)
- 4 The data revealed that the informants' responses were different. (DIFFERENCES)
- 5 The title of her paper was: 'A comparison of male attitudes towards prison sentencing and female attitudes'. (COMPARED)
- 6 In a similar way to the manner in which the economy of the north is booming, the south is also enjoying an economic upturn. (SIMILARLY)

44.3 Use linking expressions based on the word(s) in brackets to rewrite these pairs of sentences as one sentence. Make any other changes necessary.

- 1 The south of the country has little in the way of forests. The north of the country is covered with thick forests. (UNLIKE)
- 2 A questionnaire is good. In this case, face-to-face interviews are better. (RATHER)
- 3 Asian languages such as Vietnamese are quite difficult for learners whose first language is a European one. The opposite is also true. (CONVERSELY)
- 4 Oil is plentiful at the present time. It will run out one day. (HAND)
- 5 Boys tend to prefer aggressive solutions to problems. Girls, on the other hand, prefer more indirect approaches. (WHEREAS)
- 6 In the post-war period, public transportation enjoyed a boom. Nowadays, it is little used. (REVERSE)

44.4 Are these statements true or false? Circle T or F. Use a dictionary if necessary. If the statement is false, explain why.



- 1 If two things are mutually exclusive, one makes the other impossible. T F
- 2 If two methods of doing something are compatible, they cannot both be used. T F
- 3 If two things are equated, they are said to be similar or the same. T F
- 4 If there are parallels between two phenomena, they are very different from each other. T F
- 5 If there is an overlap between two things, they share some properties. T F