

GRAMMAR FOR WRITING

COMPARISON AND CONTRAST LANGUAGE

Transitions to show comparison and contrast

The ability to compare similar ideas or to contrast different ideas is an important skill in academic writing. This is especially true when writers are asked to discuss a subject before giving an opinion. Use a comma after transition words and phrases when they begin a sentence.

Comparison

*Similarly, ... In the same way, ...
Likewise, ...*

Contrast

*However, ... In contrast, ...
Conversely, ... On the other hand, ...*

*Students in face-to-face courses see tutors often. **Similarly**, students in distance-learning courses contact their tutors in online forums often.
Universities charge high tuition fees for academic subjects. **However**, colleges charge much less for vocational courses.*

- 1 Complete the sentences with a transition word or phrase from the box. More than one answer may be possible.

conversely in contrast in the same way similarly

- 1 If your native language is Swedish, then learning Danish is not very difficult. _____, Mandarin will be challenging to learn.
 - 2 Algebra is a Maths subject which many students learn in secondary school. _____, Geometry is commonly taught at secondary school level.
 - 3 The most common second language for British students to learn is French. _____, the most common second language for French students to study is English.
 - 4 Language learning requires memorizing and practising vocabulary. _____, Maths involves memorizing and practising formulas.
- 2 Complete the sentences with your own ideas to compare or contrast.
- 1 Academic subjects such as Law lead to high-paying careers. In contrast, _____
 - 2 Medicine involves both academic and professionally related aspects. Similarly, _____
 - 3 Theoretical courses tend not to prepare students for the real world. Conversely, _____
 - 4 Vocational training can be learned by taking special courses. Likewise, _____

Adverb clauses of contrast

Adverb clauses of contrast are used mainly to contrast two things or ideas. You can show contrast in the topic sentence of a paragraph or in the thesis statement of an essay by using an adverb clause. An adverb clause has a subject and a verb, but it is not a complete sentence. It begins with the words *while* or *whereas*. In sentences expressing contrast, *while* and *whereas* have the same meaning.

While/Whereas teachers and parents both have a child's interests at heart, they are different because they may not have the same expectations of the child.

The main difference between teachers and parents is that teachers are paid, *while/whereas parents are not.*

An adverb clause of contrast can come before or after the main clause. If it comes first, it is followed by a comma. In academic writing, it is more common for adverb clauses of contrast to appear second. Unlike other adverb clauses, a comma can come before an adverb clause of contrast when it appears second to emphasize contrast.

A language teacher in a classroom may be able to correct a student's grammar or pronunciation in the moment, *while/whereas a distance-learning teacher may need to provide written or recorded feedback to be delivered later.*

While/Whereas a distance-learning teacher may need to provide written or recorded feedback to be delivered later, a language teacher in a classroom may be able to correct a student's grammar or pronunciation in the moment.

- 3 Combine the sentences using adverb clauses of contrast with *while* or *whereas*. For some items, more than one answer is possible.
 - 1 Academic courses focus on subjects like Maths, Science and Literature. Vocational courses focus on practical skills.

 - 2 A university is a very large institution which offers undergraduate and graduate degrees. A college is a smaller institution which typically offers only undergraduate degrees.

 - 3 Academic courses are theoretical. Vocational subjects are not.

 - 4 More men tend to graduate with degrees in Maths or Science. More women tend to graduate with degrees in languages or Literature.

4 Circle the sentence which uses the adverb clause correctly. Pay attention to sentence structure and punctuation.

- 1 a Biology is a science subject whereas, History is a humanities subject.
b Biology is a science subject, whereas History is a humanities subject.
- 2 a While taking a pre-university foundation year in the UK is common for international students. It is not common in the US.
b While taking a pre-university foundation year in the UK is common for international students, it is not common in the US.
- 3 a While certain teachers prefer to provide written comments on students' writing, others prefer to hold face-to-face conferences.
b Certain teachers prefer to provide written comments on students' writing. While others prefer to hold face-to-face conferences.

5 Add appropriate punctuation to these sentences.

- 1 Some professions only require a Bachelor's Degree while others require a graduate degree.
- 2 Whereas Japanese students can get a bachelor's degree in Law Canadian students cannot.
- 3 While Business is considered a university subject that will lead to job offers Philosophy is usually not.

6 Complete the sentences with an appropriate ending.

- 1 While some students choose to go to university, _____

_____.
- 2 Engineering study requires good mathematics skills, whereas _____

_____.
- 3 Some universities require students to study both STEM and humanities subjects, whereas _____

_____.