

The Standard In-Class Essay Outline:

Consider one major topic spread over 3 paragraphs or 3 separate examples, one per BP.

INTRO.
PARA.



BP1



BP2



BP3



CONCL.
PARA.

- 3-5 sentences
- Don't start with the thesis. Ease into the thesis with 2-3 topic sentences that ask a question, make a provocative statement, provide an observation or pose a problem related to the prompt.
- Include an outline statement that gives the readers an understanding of what they will read in the body paragraphs (BP's).

- Topic sentence; 3-4 points; concluding sentence(s)
- 7-14 sentences
- Beginning / Good Argument

Your BP's should be organized chronologically or with the best argument last.

- Topic sentence; 3-4 points; concluding sentence(s)
- 7-14 sentences
- Middle / Better Argument

- Topic sentence; 3-4 points; concluding sentence(s)
- 7-14 sentences
- End / Best Argument

1. Restatement of topic and thesis
2. Summary of main points
3. Generalization: Why *is* the thesis true? How *do* the BP's support the thesis?

For longer take-home and research essays, more paragraphs will likely be needed. Consider turning each BP point/example into a separate BP.

The Simple In-Class Compare and Contrast Essay Outline: The Similarities and Differences Between Automobiles and Bicycles

INTRO.
PARA.

Topic: Compare and contrast automobiles with bicycles.

Thesis: The **differences** between automobiles and bicycles **are more significant than their similarities**.
[This thesis can, of course, be reversed.]

BP1
Anti-Thesis

Intro Sentence: **To be sure**, cars and bicycles do share some similarities in terms of function and ownership.

Example 1 - both move you from A to B
Example 2 - both are private modes of transportation;
don't rely on public transit schedules or funding

Concluding Sentence: _____

BP2
Pro-Thesis

Intro Sentence: **Nevertheless**, these two transportation technologies have more significant differences when we consider issues such as speed, weather, cost and health.

Example 1 – cost (+ bicycle)
Example 2 – impact on health (+ bicycle)
Example 3 – speed (+ car)
Example 4 – weather dependencies (+ car)

Concluding Sentence: _____

BP3
Pro-Thesis

BP3 is optional if you have enough time and evidence. In our example above, we can easily split BP2 into four or more topics: cost and health vs. speed and weather. Please ensure that there is a clear topical reason for splitting the pro-thesis argument into two.

CONCL.
PARA.

1. Restatement of topic and thesis
2. Summary of main points
3. Generalization: Why *are* the differences between the automobile and bicycle more significant?

For longer take-home and research essays, more paragraphs will likely be needed. Consider turning each BP point/example into a separate BP.

The Complex (Topical) Compare and Contrast Essay Outline: The Similarities and Differences Between Automobiles and Bicycles

INTRO.
PARA.



Topic: Compare and contrast automobiles with bicycles.

Thesis: The **differences** between automobiles and bicycles **are more significant than their similarities**.

...or...

Thesis: Generally speaking, the automobile is a **more effective form of transportation** that the bicycle.

BP1



Intro Sentence: **It is true** that the bicycle is a more **environmentally sustainable** form of transportation.

Ex. 1 - the bicycle does not use fuel; the auto does

Ex. 2 - the bicycle does not emit exhaust

Ex. 3 - bicycles use fewer metals and other materials than the automobile

Concluding Sentence: _____

BP2



Intro Sentence: **Nevertheless**, the automobile can go **faster and farther** in a given period of time.

Ex. 1 - the bicycle can often match the automobile in urban settings

Ex. 2 - in suburban and rural settings, however, the automobile goes faster and farther

Ex. 3 - long distance travel

Concluding Sentence: _____

BP3



Intro Sentence: **Moreover**, the automobile can **carry more persons and cargo**.

Ex. 1 - the bicycle can carry one or two riders, sidebags, and perhaps a small trailer

Ex. 2 - even compact cars can carry four passengers and cargo, plus use a roof rack and/or trailer

Concluding Sentence: _____

CONCL.
PARA.

1. Restatement of topic and thesis
2. Summary of main points
3. Generalization: *Why is* the automobile a more effective form of transportation?

For longer take-home and research essays, more paragraphs will likely be needed. Consider turning each BP point/example into a separate BP.

The Simple In-Class Comparison or Assessment Essay: Single Issue Comparison or Evaluation

Other sample topics:

- Who presents a **more positive view of life**, Jeremy in “Life is Happiness” or Ms. Lee in “Poems of our time”?

- **Contrast the relationships** that the mother in “Life with my Mom” and Jenny Smith in “Motherhood and Life” **have with their children**.

INTRO.
PARA.

Topic: **Assess* the merits** of automobiles and bicycles as forms of transportation.

Thesis: Automobiles are a more effective means of transportation compared to bicycles. [*This thesis can, of course, be reversed.*]

BP1

Intro Sentence: **Admittedly**, in terms of cost, health and the environment, bicycles do offer some transportation advantages.**

Example 1 – cost effective

Example 2 – promote a healthy lifestyle

Example 3 – environmentally sustainable

This paragraph is written in a neutral, expository style about one of the topics/readings. No reference is made to the other topic/ reading.

BP2

Intro Sentence: **Despite** the benefits of the bicycle, the automobile generally offers more transportation advantages.**

Example 1 – speed and distance

Example 2 – weather dependencies

Example 3 – convenience

Example 4 – passengers and cargo capacity

This paragraph is written in a neutral, expository style about the other topic/reading. No reference is made to the first topic/ reading.

CONCL.
PARA.

In the simple comparison essay, the actual comparison is usually left to the conclusion. As a result, this conclusion is generally quite long. Moreover, evaluative language is expected at this point if the essay question asks for an assessment.

* Words similar to *assess* include *evaluate, analyze, examine, discuss* and *explain*.

** In *literary* comparisons, never re-tell the plot! Focus strictly on the comparison topic.

A Basic Pro-Con Essay Outline: Comparing Both Sides of One Topic or Issue

INTRO.
PARA.

Topic: **Examine** the strengths and weaknesses of the automobile as a form of transportation.

Thesis: Generally speaking, the automobile is an efficient and effective means of transportation. *[This thesis can, of course, be reversed.]*



BP1

Intro Sentence: **Of course**, in terms of cost, health and the environment, the automobile does possess certain disadvantages.*

Example 1 – vehicles can be very costly to buy and maintain
Example 2 – automobiles tend to support a sedentary lifestyle
Example 3 – vehicles are environmentally unsustainable

Concluding Sentence: _____



BP2

Intro Sentence: **Notwithstanding** these drawbacks, the automobile generally offers more advantages.*

Example 1 – speed and distance
Example 2 – weather dependencies
Example 3 – convenience
Example 4 – passengers and cargo capacity

For longer take-home and research essays, more paragraphs will likely be needed. Consider turning each BP point/example into a separate BP.

CONCL.
PARA.

In the pro/con essay, the actual comparison is usually left to the conclusion. This is where evaluative language is expected. Since this part can be quite large, you might want to consider splitting it up into two or more paragraphs.

* In your body paragraphs, avoid biased and evaluative language. The body paragraphs should be neutral. Also, avoid comparing your body topic to the other side; leave that for the conclusion!