

# 1. 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 (as in personal narratives) or with the best argument last (as in argumentative papers).

- Topic sentence; 3-4 points; concluding sentence(s)
- 7-14 sentences
- Don't use examples from BP1; each BP must be distinct!
- Middle / Better Argument

- Topic sentence; 3-4 points; concluding sentence(s)
- 7-14 sentences
- Don't use any examples from BP1 or BP2.
- 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.

## 2. The Standard but Complex (or “To What Extent”) In-Class Essay Outline: Useful when you partially or largely disagree with the question or prompt.

INTRO.  
PARA.



BP1  
Anti-Thesis



BP2  
Pro-Thesis



BP3  
Pro-Thesis



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
- Is the question/prompt incomplete? Not fully true?
- Start with a **concession** transition, and provide some contrary examples.
- This should be an **anti-thesis** argument.

Your BP's should be organized with your contrary argument first, and then at least two pro-thesis arguments 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>.

- Topic sentence; 3-4 points; concluding sentence(s)
- 7-14 sentences
- Start with a **contrast** transition.
- This should be a **pro-thesis** argument.

- Topic sentence; 3-4 points; concluding sentence(s)
- 7-14 sentences
- Consider starting with a transition like “In addition, ...”.
- Don't use any examples from BP2.
- This should be your *best* **pro-thesis** argument.

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

1. Restatement of topic and thesis
2. Summary of main points
3. Generalization: Why *is* the thesis generally true?

### 3. 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

Discuss both sides of the issue (i.e. both bicycles and cars).

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)

Discuss both sides of the issue (i.e. both bicycles and cars).

BP3  
Pro-Thesis

BP3 is optional if you have enough time and evidence. In our example above, we can easily split BP2 into two BP's: cost and health vs. speed and weather. Please ensure that there is a clear reason for splitting the pro-thesis argument into two. *Don't create two BP's that discuss the same topics or examples!*

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.

#### 4. 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 than automobiles.

Ex. 1 - the bicycle does not use fuel; the auto does Ex. 2 - the bicycle does not emit exhaust; the auto is a major emitter of carbon dioxide

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



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



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



CONCL.  
PARA.

Discuss both sides of the issue (i.e. both bicycles and cars).

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.

## 5. The Single-Issue Comparison or Assessment\* Essay:

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: 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 (e.g. automobiles).

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 (e.g. bicycles).

CONCL.  
PARA.

In the single-issue comparison essay, the actual comparison is usually left to the conclusion. As a result, this conclusion is generally quite long. 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 issue (e.g. a positive view of life).

## 6. 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!