

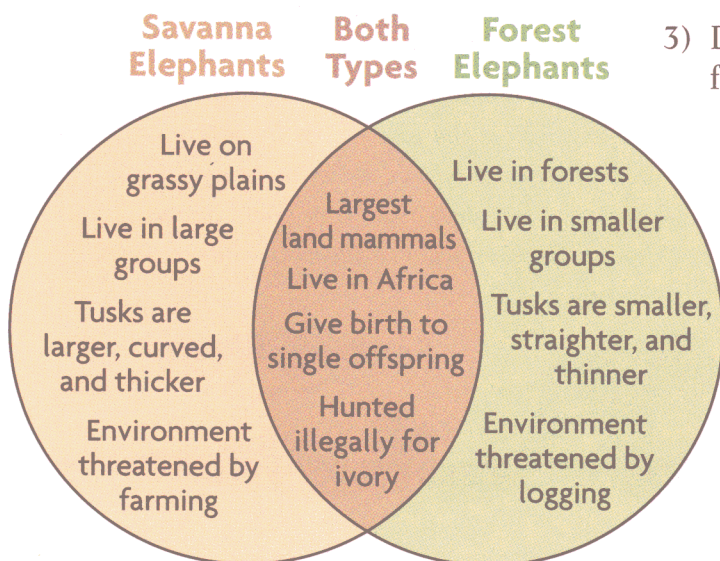
STEPS IN Writing a Comparison/Contrast

Use these steps to write a comparison/contrast.

1 Organize Information

Once you have gathered information about your subjects, you can organize it by using a graphic organizer such as a T-chart or a Venn diagram. With a T-chart, you sort through the similarities and differences in two separate columns. With a Venn diagram, you list the differences between two topics in the main regions of the two circles and the similarities in the overlapping region. The Venn diagram below puts information about two kinds of African elephants into categories.

Venn diagram



TIPS

- To let your reader know about similarities, use signal words such as **also**, **both**, **like**, **just as**, **in the same way**, and **similarly**.
- To let your reader know about differences, use signal words such as **in contrast**, **different from**, **unlike**, **whereas**, and **on the other hand**.

2 Decide on a Plan

Figure out how to present the differences and similarities. Use one of three approaches:

- 1) Describe how both topics are similar and then how they are different.
- 2) Discuss each topic in a separate paragraph. Then point out similarities and differences in another paragraph.
- 3) Discuss similarities and differences feature by feature.

3 Write Paragraphs

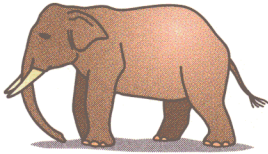
Introduce the two subjects at the beginning of your writing. Let the reader know you will be comparing and contrasting subjects. Begin each paragraph with a topic sentence. Help the reader follow your plan.

USE THIS SKILL

Write a Comparison/Contrast

Use the information listed below to write a comparison/contrast. Before writing, create either a T-chart or a Venn diagram to organize the information.

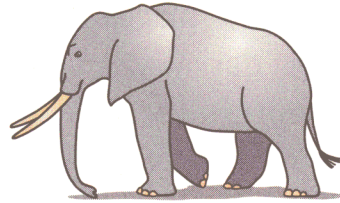
Asian



Asian Elephants

- Gray or brown skin
- Head is the highest part of the body
- Hind feet have four toenails
- Eat grasses, bark, roots, shrubs, and tree parts
- Always live near a water supply
- Use trunk for eating and drinking
- Females live in family groups
- Females give birth to one calf at a time
- Mothers care for young for years

African



African Elephants

- Gray skin
- Shoulders are the highest part of the body
- Hind feet have three toenails
- Eat grasses, fruit, bark, and leaves
- Always live near a water supply
- Use trunk for eating and drinking
- Females live in family groups
- Females give birth to one calf at a time
- Mothers care for young for years
- World's largest land animals

TEST TIP

When a test essay question asks you to compare and contrast something, take the time to organize your ideas. Think about and write ways the things are the same or different. Then use topic sentences to organize your response to the test questions.

Practicing Skill 24

HOW TO Write a Comparison/Contrast

Read about two kinds of sea turtles and use the information to write a comparison/contrast about them.

Loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*)

The loggerhead is the most common sea turtle in the United States. It is an air-breathing reptile. Like most turtles, it has an upper shell covered with hard scales. It is the only sea turtle species found in U.S. waters that is not listed as endangered, although it is considered threatened. Its upper shell is reddish-brown in color, and its lower shell can be either dull brown or yellow. Its unique body and large flippers make it well-suited for the long-distance ocean swimming for which sea turtles are known. Loggerheads lay 100–126 eggs at a time in four to seven nests each season. Most loggerhead nests are found off the Florida coast and on Masirah Island in the country Oman.

Green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*)

The endangered green turtle is green in color, as its name suggests. It is an air-breathing reptile. Green turtles nest mainly in Florida and in Costa Rica, laying an average of 115 eggs in three to five nests each season. Hard scales cover the green turtle's upper shell. It differs from other sea turtles because it has only a single pair of scales in front of its eyes instead of the two pairs common to other species. Like other sea turtles, the green turtle has a toothless, beaklike jaw, good underwater eyesight, and a keen sense of smell. Its large flippers and special body make it an excellent ocean swimmer.

Organizing Information

Create a Venn diagram, T-chart, or other type of graphic organizer to help you sort through similarities and differences of the two types of turtles described above. For help writing your comparison/contrast, follow the directions on the next page.

Drafting

Write a first draft of your comparison/contrast on a separate sheet of paper. Before you write, decide how you will organize your comparison/contrast. Choose one of the following approaches:

- ☐ Write one paragraph describing how the two types of turtles are similar and a second paragraph describing how they are different.
- ☐ Discuss each type of turtle in a separate paragraph, then point out similarities and differences in a third paragraph.
- ☐ Discuss similarities and differences between the turtles feature by feature.

Revising

Read through your first draft and think of ways to improve it. Answer the following questions, then write a second draft on a separate sheet of paper.

- ☐ Do the topic sentences in each paragraph show which approach I am using to organize my comparison/contrast?
- ☐ Have I included all the important details from the paragraphs on the previous page?
- ☐ Do I use signal words such as *also*, *both*, *like*, *just as*, *in the same way*, and *similarly* to let readers know about similarities?
- ☐ Do I use signal words such as *in contrast*, *different from*, *unlike*, *whereas*, and *on the other hand* to let readers know about differences?

Editing

Be sure to proofread your second draft and mark any changes you need to make. Be sure to check your spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.

Publishing

Carefully write a clean copy of your comparison/contrast on another sheet of paper. Make sure to include all your corrections and changes.