Joining Sentences to Show Comparison and Contrast

 George and Paul are twins. Below is a list of ways in which they are different.

**George                                                                Paul**

is talland slim                                                     has brown eyes and brown hair

likes to read science fiction                                 is tall and slim

runs three miles daily                                          still hasn't found a major

has brown eyes and brown hair                           likes to read poetry

works as a cartographer's  assistant 15 hours

per week                                                          hates to exercise

is an engineering major                                       works 20 hours per week as an usher in a theatre

The above information about the twins is not listed in any organized way. So after we gather information about two subjects (in this case, the twins), the next step toward comparing and contrasting them is to organize the lists according to related points; here are the twins' physical descriptions, interests, jobs, and college majors:

**George                                                                Paul**

has brown hair and brown eyes                           has brown hair and brown eyes

is tall and slim                                                     is tall and slim

likes to read science fiction                                  likes to read poetry

runs three miles daily                                          hates to exercise

works as a cartographer's assistant 15 hours       works 20 hours per week as an usher in a

    per week                                                                      theater

is an engineering major                                       still hasn't found a major

Exercise One  George and Paul

The sentences below express the similarities and differences between the twins George and Paul. In each sentence, circle the joining word(s) that show comparison or contrast and then list the words you've circled below.

1.     Both George and Paul have brown eyes and brown hair.

2.     George and Paul both are tall and slim.

3.     George likes to read science fiction, but Paul likes to read poetry.

4.     George runs three miles daily, yet Paul hates to exercise.

5.     While George works as a cartographer's assistant 15 hours per week, Paul works 20 hours per week as an usher in a theater.

6.     Although George is an engineering major, Paul still hasn't found a major.

**Comparison Words                                      Contrast Words**

In addition to showing the similarities and differences between people, we often compare and contrast behavior, cultures, theories, points of view on an issue, the positive and negative features of something, or the past with the present. The exercises in this unit give you practice in using coordinators and subordinators to compare and contrast activities, cultures, and a past and present condition. The following chart summarizes the words that show the logical relationships of comparison and contrast.

Summary of Comparison and Contrast Words

**Comparison                          Contrast**

COORDINATORS                and                                          but, yet

SUBORDINATORS              although

                                                even though

                                                though

                                                while

                                                whereas

TRANSITION WORDS        however

                                                on the other hand

Coordinators can join sentences and begin sentences. When they join sentences, place a comma before the coordinator.

Kim likes heavy metal, but Tom prefers classical music.

Kim likes heavy metal. But Tom prefers classical music.

Subordinators join dependent clauses to sentences. When the dependent clause comes first, place a comma after it; if the dependent clause follows the independent clause, don't use a comma.

While Kim likes prime rib, Tom prefers rice and vegetables.

Kim likes prime rib while Tom prefers rice and vegetables.

Transition words do not join sentences; you have to use a semicolon (;) to join the sentences or begin a new sentence with the transition word.

Kim and Tom have different tastes in music and food; however, they both like to dance.

Kim and Tom have different tastes in music and food. However, they both like to dance.

Exercise Two  Getting in Shape

Carl wants to begin a regular exercise program, but he can't decide between running and walking. To make a rational choice, he lists what he knows about each activity:

**Running                                                               Walking**

improves cardiovascular endurance                        can be done in an urban or rural area

hums 800 to 1000 calories per hour                       is relatively injury-free

can be done in an urban or rural area                      requires no special equipment

can cause shinsplints and muscle strain                  improves circulation and posture

requires no special equipment                                bums 300 calories per hour

**Step 1:**Organize the two lists according to related points:

**Running                                                                    Walking**

1.         can be done in a rural or urban area                 can be done in a rural or urban area

2.

3.

4.

5.

Step 2:            Using the coordinators *and, but,*and *yet,*and the subordinators *while, whereas, although,* ( or *even though),*write five sentences in which you compare and contrast running and walking, using the information you organized in step 1.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Exercise Three  The Nuer and the Bakhteri

In this exercise, you will compare and contrast two cultures—the Nuer and the Bakhteri. Here are random lists of information about the two cultures:

**The Nuer                                                               The Bakhteri**

are pastoral people                                                  men herd the sheep and goats

divide labor according to sex                                  live in Southern Iran

occupy a flat, grassy region                                    are pastoral people

use products from cattle for shelter and food         raise sheep and goats

live in the Sudan                                                     divide labor according to sex

raise dairy cattle                                                      occupy a mountainous area

women herd the cattle                                              use products from sheep and goats for shelter

    and food

**Step 1:**Complete the following lists by organizing the information according to related points.

**The Nuer                                                        The Bakhteri**

1.         are pastoral people                                           are pastoral people

2.         live in the Sudan                                              live in Southern Iran

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

Step 2:       Write sentences in which you join related similarities and differences using the coordinators and subordinators that show comparison and contrast. Follow the examples below.

1.         Both the Nuer and the Bakhteri are pastoral people.

2.         The Nuer live in the Sudan while the Bakhteri live in Southern Iran.

You should create five more sentences from your lists in step 1. Be sure to use a variety of coordinators and subordinators that show contrast.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

Exercise Four  The Netsilik and the Trobriands

Following the two steps you took in Exercises 2 and 3, compare and contrast two cultures-the Netsilik and the Trobriands. Organize the lists; then write six sentences using joining words that show comparison and contrast.

**The Netsilik                                     The Trobriands**

hunt seals and caribou                       live in villages all year

occupy a cold desert environment      value the extended family

live on the Arctic Coast                      are horticulturists whose primary crop is yams

migrate seasonally                             occupy warm coral islands

build houses of snow and ice             live on the Trobriand islands off the coast of New

Guinea

value the extended family                   build wooden houses clustered in small villages

**Step 1:**      Organize the lists.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

Step 2:        Combine related points into sentences using coordinators and subordinators.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

**Comparing the Present and the Past**

While attending her 10 year high school reunion, Jonita saw her old boyfriend Peter, whom she hadn't seen since graduation. She was surprised by the changes in him, and wrote a letter to her best friend describing the changes:

Peter has changed a great deal in the last ten years. Although Peter had curly red hair ten years ago, he now has almost no hair at all. While he once played basketball, now he just watches sports on TV. He hated to read in school, but now he reads all the time. In high school, he wanted to be an engineer, but today he teaches history at a junior college. Most importantly, in high school, he vowed to stay single forever, yet now he is a married man with two children.

When we compare and contrast the past with the present, we have to be careful of verb tenses so that the time is clear for our readers. Notice that Jonita uses the past tense forms of verbs to describe Peter's condition 10 years ago and present tense forms of verbs to describe the way he is now. Watch for time words that indicate which tense should be used:

***Time*                                  Past Tense*****Time*                        Present Tense**

*10 years ago*had curly red hair*now*has almost no hair

*once*played*now*watches

*in school*hated*now*reads

*in high school*wanted*today*teaches

*once*vowed*now*is

Exercise Five  The Middleton Boom

In the following paragraph, fill in each blank with the correct tense of the given verb. Notice that the topic sentence makes it clear that the paragraph will show the differences between Middleton in the past and Middleton now. (It helps to skim the entire passage before filling in the blanks.)

The town of Middleton has changed a great deal in thirty years. Thirty years ago, its population

            3,000, while now it                   43,000 . Many of the current residents now                in the

*be                                         be                                                                                work*

insurance business, a business that              not exist until 1970, when Pay Up Insurance Company

*do*

                  its headquarters there. Immediately the insurance business                       unemployed

*establish                                                                                                    attract*

workers from all over the state who in turn                      the need for new services. Before 1970,

*create*

Middleton                  no libraries, yet now it                 three, each adjacent to new high schools,

*have                                            have*

which              built within a three-year period from 1979 to 1982. Students graduating from middle

*be*

school formerly                to high school in a neighboring town, but now they                  school in

*go                                                                                          attend*

their home town.