

BLOCK & CHAIN STRUCTURE OUTLINE TEMPLATES

BLOCK STRUCTURE (Subject-by-Subject)

Best for: Shorter essays, clear contrasts, simpler comparisons

TEMPLATE 1: Basic Block Structure

- I. Introduction** - Hook - Background information - Thesis statement (mention both subjects)
 - II. Subject A** - Point 1 about Subject A - Point 2 about Subject A - Point 3 about Subject A
 - III. Subject B** - Point 1 about Subject B - Point 2 about Subject B - Point 3 about Subject B
 - IV. Conclusion** - Restate thesis - Summary of main differences/similarities - Final insight
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TEMPLATE 2: Extended Block Structure

- I. Introduction** - Hook - Context - Thesis statement
 - II. Subject A - Category 1** - Evidence - Analysis
 - III. Subject A - Category 2** - Evidence - Analysis
 - IV. Subject B - Category 1** - Evidence - Analysis
 - V. Subject B - Category 2** - Evidence - Analysis
 - VI. Conclusion** - Synthesis - Significance
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CHAIN STRUCTURE (Point-by-Point)

Best for: Longer essays, complex comparisons, detailed analysis

TEMPLATE 1: Basic Chain Structure

- I. Introduction** - Hook - Background information - Thesis statement (mention both subjects)
 - II. Point 1** - Subject A's aspect - Subject B's aspect - Comparison/contrast
 - III. Point 2** - Subject A's aspect - Subject B's aspect - Comparison/contrast
 - IV. Point 3** - Subject A's aspect - Subject B's aspect - Comparison/contrast
 - V. Conclusion** - Restate thesis - Summary of key findings - Final insight
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TEMPLATE 2: Detailed Chain Structure

- I. Introduction** - Hook - Context - Thesis with preview of points

- II. Criterion 1: [Name the criterion]** - Subject A evidence - Subject B evidence - Direct comparison - Analysis
- III. Criterion 2: [Name the criterion]** - Subject A evidence - Subject B evidence - Direct comparison - Analysis
- IV. Criterion 3: [Name the criterion]** - Subject A evidence - Subject B evidence - Direct comparison - Analysis
- V. Conclusion** - Synthesis of all comparisons - Which subject is better/more effective (if applicable) - Broader implications
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QUICK COMPARISON

Aspect	Block Structure	Chain Structure
Organization	All of A, then all of B	Alternates A & B for each point
Best for	Shorter essays (2-4 pages)	Longer essays (5+ pages)
Reader experience	Must remember A while reading B	Direct comparison at each point
Complexity	Simpler, clearer separation	More sophisticated analysis
Risk	Readers forget Subject A	Can feel repetitive

EXAMPLE APPLICATIONS

BLOCK STRUCTURE EXAMPLE: “Online vs. Traditional Classes”

- I. Introduction** - Hook about education evolution - Thesis: Online and traditional classes differ in flexibility, interaction, and cost
- II. Online Classes** - Flexibility (schedule, location) - Interaction (forums, video calls) - Cost (lower tuition, no commute)
- III. Traditional Classes** - Flexibility (fixed schedule, campus location) - Interaction (face-to-face, immediate feedback) - Cost (higher tuition, commuting expenses)
- IV. Conclusion** - Both have merits depending on student needs
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CHAIN STRUCTURE EXAMPLE: “Online vs. Traditional Classes”

- I. Introduction** - Hook about education evolution - Thesis: Online and traditional classes differ in flexibility, interaction, and cost
- II. Flexibility** - Online: Anytime, anywhere access - Traditional: Fixed schedule, campus required - Comparison: Online wins for working students
- III. Interaction** - Online: Forums, delayed responses - Traditional: Face-to-face, immediate feedback - Comparison: Traditional better for engagement
- IV. Cost** - Online: Lower tuition, no commute - Traditional: Higher fees, transportation - Comparison: Online more affordable
- V. Conclusion** - Choice depends on priorities
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CHOOSING YOUR STRUCTURE

Use BLOCK when: - Essay is under 1,000 words - Subjects are very different - You want clear, simple organization - Audience prefers straightforward comparisons

Use CHAIN when: - Essay is over 1,500 words - Making detailed, nuanced comparisons - You have 3+ comparison points - Emphasizing specific criteria matters

PRO TIP: You can combine structures—use block for major sections and chain within subsections for complex essays.