

SAMPLE WRITING PROCESS: CONTRAST PARAGRAPH/ESSAY

Contrast paragraphs ask you to write about the differences between two things (cities, foods, etc.). Thus, they are the opposite of compare paragraphs, which ask you to find the similarities between two things. However, their styles are quite similar – when brainstorming for a contrast essay, it helps to first brainstorm the characteristics of each of the two things which you are contrasting, and then see what the differences between them are.

For example:

Topic sentence: Ankara and Istanbul are very different cities.

Brainstorming:

Ankara

centre of government

capital of Turkish republic

population 5 million
Empire

quiet

organised

dull

continental climate

made capital by Ataturk

parliament

many universities

Kizilay

Istanbul

population 12 million

Bosphorus

capital of Byzantium and of Ottoman

historical

touristy

nightlife

centre of business and culture

noisy

chaotic

maritime climate

Taksim

Possible Plan / Outline:

Supporting idea 1: different roles

Details: Istanbul – centre of culture/business

Ankara – centre of government

Supporting idea 2: different histories

Details: Istanbul – capital of Byzantium and the Ottoman empire

Ankara – small town before, then made capital by Ataturk

Supporting idea 3: different styles

Details: Istanbul – noisy, chaotic

Ankara – quiet, organised, a bit dull

Paragraph:

While Istanbul and Ankara are the two biggest and most important cities in Turkey, they are very different in many respects. First of all, the two cities' roles are different. Ankara is the capital of Turkey, and is home to the country's parliament, high court and most of its government buildings. Istanbul, on the other hand, is Turkey's cultural and financial centre. Most of the country's biggest cultural events, such as conferences, concerts and exhibitions are held here. It is also the seat of many national and international companies' Turkish headquarters. Secondly, Istanbul and Ankara have also had very different histories. Before Ataturk designated it the capital of the newly founded Turkish republic in 1923, Ankara was a small, dusty central Anatolian town of little significance. On the other hand, Istanbul was founded by Emperor Constantine in 330 as the capital of the Byzantine Empire, and, after that empires' fall in 1453, continued as the capital of the Ottoman Empire until 1922. Finally, the cities' styles are also very different, and this difference is a direct result of their different roles and histories. Ankara is green, leafy, quiet, organised, and will not hold a casual visitor's attention for very long. In contrast, Istanbul is noisy, chaotic, an intriguing mix of the old and new. To sum up, Istanbul differs from Ankara in many respects such as role, history and style.

Turning This Paragraph into an Essay

“Istanbul is like....., while Ankara is like” This saying illustrates many Turkish people's feelings when it comes to these two cities. While they are Turkey's two biggest and most important cities, in many respects Ankara and Istanbul could not be more different. Ankara and Istanbul differ from each other regarding their role, history and style.

Ankara and Istanbul have very different roles. Ankara is the capital city of Turkey. It is home to the *Meclis* (the country's parliament), government house, the high court and most ministries. As a result, it is also the place where most of the country's politicians, parliamentarians and civil servants live. Istanbul, on the other hand, is Turkey's cultural and economic centre. Most significant museums, theatres and cultural centres are located here, as are the Turkish headquarters of a lot of national and international companies. Also, most of the country's biggest cultural events, such as conferences, concerts and exhibitions are held here.

The two cities also have very different histories. Before Ataturk designated it the capital of the newly founded Turkish republic in 1923, Ankara was a small, dusty central Anatolian town of little significance. It has since grown enormously, and today has a population of about 5 million people. Istanbul's history goes back much further. It was founded in 330 by Emperor Constantine as the capital of the Byzantine Empire, and remained in this position for over a thousand years. After it was conquered by Sultan Mehmet in 1453, it became the capital of the Ottoman Empire, and remained so until the founding of the Turkish Republic. Thus, it is a historically very important place, and traces of its illustrious past can be found throughout the city.

The final difference between Ankara and Istanbul is a direct result of their respective roles and histories. The two cities have very different styles. Ankara is green, leafy, quiet and very orderly. It can be a very pleasant place to live, but will not hold a casual visitor's attention for very long. In contrast, Istanbul is brash, noisy, chaotic, constantly moving and changing. It is also an intriguing mix of old and new, with ancient churches nestled next to modern skyscrapers and the archeological remains of ships from the Byzantine era discovered during digs for the city's metro system.

To sum up, Ankara and Istanbul are very different cities, in terms of their function, history and style. However, it is in these two cities that the country's future is and will continue to be shaped for a long time to come.