# Making comparisons

Adapted from *Academic Writing for Graduate Students, 3rd ed.* Swales and Feak, 2012., pp. 316-319.

When writing up the results, you may want to include statements of comparison. Here is one such example.

Conversing on a cell phone produced significantly lower success rates than listening to music *(p*< 0.01).

This example is a fairly straightforward comparison. Sometimes, however, the comparisons can be more complex and thus require some careful attention. For instance, we can start with this sentence.

The median wage of a college graduate is *now higher than*the median wage of a high school graduate.

For stylistic reasons, we may then opt to not repeat *the median wage*and instead use *that.*

The median wage of a college graduate is *now higher than that*of a high school graduate.

To make matters more complex, we may know roughly how much higher the wage of college graduates is and then produce this sentence.

The median wage of a college graduate is *now more than 70 percent higher*than *that*of a high school graduate.

We can then include a hedging element.

The median wage of a college graduate is *now slightly more than*70 *percent higher*than *that*of a high school graduate.

Although the final sentence is rather complex, the basic form of this sentence looks something like this.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is (more than %) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*-er*(comparative adjective form) than that of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Another type of complex comparison involves *as much*\_\_\_\_\_ *as*and *as many* \_\_\_\_\_ *as*expressions, as in these examples.

China produces *four times as many engineers as*the United States does.

The nanoscale TBs impart *as much strengthening as*conventional high-angle GBs by blocking dislocation motion.

Here are a few more potentially useful ways to make comparisons.

* ***X times the \_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_ as \_\_\_\_***

Women typically require twice the dosage of morphine as men to achieve the same degree of pain relief.

Turfgrass is the main cultivated crop in Florida with nearly four times the acreage as the next largest crop, citrus.

* ***more/less than X times the \_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_ as \_\_\_\_***

The paired metal chlorides yield more than three times the amount of product as the CuCI2 catalyst (Fig. 2).

Greece consumes more than double/more than two times the amount of cheese as Denmark.

* ***more/less than X times the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

The alkaline phosphatase level is usually less than two times the upper limit of normal.

The guarana seed contains more than two times the caffeine of a coffee bean.

* ***more than X times \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ -er than the \_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_***

Each year, the average probability of dying from motor vehicle accidents in France was more than 12 times higher than the risk of drowning.

Although any country can implement smoke-free laws, the proportion of high-income countries with smoke-free restaurants (12 of 41 or 29%) is more than three times higher than the proportion of low- and middle-income countries with similar measures (12 of 139 or 9%).

* ***more than X times \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ -er than that of \_\_\_\_\_\_***

The density of water is more than 800 times greater than that of air.

The potency of this compound is more than 1000 times greater than that of previously reported inhibitors of the enzyme.

Here are some other ways that authors can signal similarity/equivalence and difference/non-equivalence.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Sentence connectors | Since the six phases of emergency measures were implemented, S02 concentrations have dropped a significant 33% to 80μg/m3*; however,*PM10 concentrations decreased just 8% to 162μg/m3. |
| Subordinators | Analyses showed that 70.5% of students had access to both a desktop and a laptop computer*, while*only 0.6 % of students (n = 11) had access to neither. |
| Phrase linkers | *In contrast to*the false positives, the false negative rate improves when the distance threshold increases. |
| Conjunctions | The results of some observers were poor*, but* thoseof others were satisfactory (Table 5). |
| *More likely than/less likely than* | *Women*are *more likely than*men to have given the most "pro neighborhood" answer, and men *more likely than*women to have given the most “pro transportation” answer. |
| *Like* | Theresults shown in Figure 8 are very much *like*those of Experiment 5. |
| *Alike* | During the study period, real household income rose in both cities and suburbs *alike,*but moreso among suburban households. |
| *Similar to/the same as* | The observation of smaller magnetization and coercivity at low thickness *is similar to* results obtained for the Fe3O4 thin films. |
| Verbs such as *compared with*/*compared to*. | Women had a mean score of 3.89, *compared with*a mean for men of 4.76. |

**TASK SIXTEEN**

Complete the alternative formulations. Make some complex statements similar to those in the examples discussed in the Language Focus section.

1. Group A produced 15% fewer errors than Group B but required one-third more time to complete the task.

Group B \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Thailand exported 8.8 million metric tons of rice, while India exported 2.2 million metric tons.

The amount of rice exported by Thailand was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Sweden consumed 328,000 barrels of oil daily. In contrast, Spain consumed 1,482,000 barrels of oil each day.

The number of barrels of oil consumed by Spain was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. The 1958 tsunami that occurred in Lituya Bay, Alaska, reached a height of 524 meters, but there were only two recorded casualties. However, the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, which reached 100 meters, killed over 230,000 people in fourteen countries.

The height of the Litnya Bay tsunami was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

The death toll of the Indian Ocean tsunami was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**To consider in another team’s text:**

Is the table or figure professional-looking and easy to read?

Is the table or figure *labelled* and *mentioned in the text?*

Is the figure explained and interesting information highlighted?

Does the caption have sufficient detail?

Is there anything that should be moved to Discussion instead?

Are the paragraphs well organised?

* + One thought, one paragraph?
  + Topic sentence(s) followed by supporting detail?
  + Is there good flow between sentence?

Is the academic style appropriate?

* + Avoid contractions
  + Avoid *a lot of*, *huge*, *enormous*
  + Write *precisely* and *concisely*