

Contrast

by Adrian Doff

Level: Intermediate and above

Time: 20 minutes

Aim: – To talk about contrasts, and how people and things are different.
– To contrast opposing ideas.
– To say how things are different from what people believe or expect.

There are three ways of using this worksheet:

- Give the worksheet to students to work through independently, and then in the next lesson go through the exercises and deal with any points that arise.
- Use the worksheet for an active classroom lesson. The notes below give ideas for doing this.
- Do not give the worksheet out in class but use it as the basis for your own lesson, getting ideas and phrases from the students and presenting language on the board (use the notes below to help you). Then give out the worksheet at the end, and ask students to do the exercises for homework.

Warm-up

Warm-up: Establishing the concept

Tell the class about, e.g. two people, buildings or towns which are very different. Include in your description a phrase with 'contrast' from the worksheet.

Then write the word 'contrast' on the board, and ask students how you used the word in what you said. Use this to focus on phrases with 'contrast'.

Give out the worksheet.

Worksheet

Language focus

1. Read through the example contexts, and ask a few questions to check comprehension:
 - A. Are CD sales rising or falling? Why?
 - B. Do you think healthcare is better in Britain or in Germany? Why?
 - C. Who do you think is better, the new manager or the previous manager? Why?
 - D. Do you think the company is in a better position than last year or a worse one? Why do you think so?
2. **in contrast (to), by contrast, as opposed to.** Read the examples and point out that:
 - they all mean the same; they are alternative ways to express the idea of contrast.
 - we can say *in contrast* or *by contrast* – these mean the same. We usually say *in contrast to*, rather than *by contrast to*.
 - *as opposed to* is a fixed phrase (we can't say just *as opposed*).

To practise, look again at the contexts at the top of the Worksheet, and see if students can express them using one of the other phrases in the table, e.g.:

CD sales, *in contrast to* mobile music sales, have decreased.

In contrast to Germany and France, Britain only spent 7.6 per cent...

The previous manager was... The new manager, *by contrast*, is...

Last year, the CEO gave an upbeat speech. This year, *by contrast*, he struck a cautious tone.

If you like, you could ask them to rewrite one of the texts, then read it out to the class.

3. **on the contrary.** Read the examples, and check that students understand what they are about by asking a few questions (answers in brackets), e.g.:

Read through the table, and ask students to explain them or give examples:

1. Is the government raising taxes? (No, they are lowering them.)
What is tax evasion? (= you don't pay tax when you should, you *evade* tax)
What is a tax dodger? (= someone who evades tax, who 'dodges' paying tax)
2. How do you think the company might exploit people? (by paying them low wages, giving bad working conditions, long hours, etc.)

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How might they provide development? (by building schools or hospitals for workers, giving clean water, building roads, etc.)

If you like, make the balance of ideas clear by writing an outline on the board:

More money → A. by raising tax rates

B. by making tax evasion more difficult

Intertabak → A. exploits people

B. provides development

Establish that *on the contrary* has the idea of 'not A, but B'.

To practise, you could give a few simple statements, and ask students to add a second sentence beginning 'On the contrary', e.g.:

He isn't doing well at school. ...

The company isn't making a profit. ...

The world isn't becoming a safer place. ...

4. **contrary to:** Point out that:

- *contrary to* means 'the opposite of' or 'quite different from'
- we usually use it in set phrases with the meaning 'different from what people think or expect'

Read through the phrases in the box, and 'gloss' their meaning:

contrary to expectations = this is different from what people expected

contrary to popular belief = it is the opposite of what most people believe

contrary to popular opinion = it's different from what many people think

Read the examples, and for each one ask students to say what they think most people believe or expected.

Possible answers:

1. Some people think mobile phones are dangerous because they make your head hotter.
2. Most people believe that the two companies started talks much later.
3. People didn't expect her to be very successful.

Practice

1. Talk or write:

Students write sentences. Then ask them to read out what they have written.

Alternative: Give students a few moments to think about one of the topics, and possibly make a few notes. Then ask them in turn to tell you about them.

Larger classes: Do this as pairwork, then ask a few students what their partner told them.

2. Exercise:

Do the exercises together round the class; or let students do it alone or in pairs, then go through it together.

Answers:

- a) On the contrary
- b) Contrary to
- c) in contrast to / unlike / as opposed to
- d) as opposed to / in contrast to
- e) In / By contrast

Other language areas you could explore:

1. expressions with 'different' and 'difference'

- *different from, the difference between... and..., differences between*
- *rather/quite/completely/slightly different (from)*

2. like' and 'unlike'

- *Like his brother, he...; Unlike his brother, he...*
- *He's like/unlike his brother in many ways.*

3. expressions with 'opposite'

- *the (complete) opposite of*
- *What is the opposite of...?*

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A
Under-25s are spending £107 million on mobile music in the UK each year. **In contrast**, CD single sales have fallen 30 to 50% during the same period.

B
Germany spent 10.6 per cent of gross domestic product on healthcare last year, and France spent 9.5%. Britain, **by contrast**, only spent 7.6%.

C
The new manager is quiet and a good listener, **as opposed to** the previous manager, whom many considered rather arrogant.

D
The CEO struck a cautious tone in yesterday's speech, **in contrast to** the upbeat speech he gave at last year's shareholders' meeting.

in contrast (to), by contrast, as opposed to

These have a similar meaning. **In contrast** or **by contrast** can be used to begin a new idea:

... in contrast to ...	France spent 9.5 per cent, in contrast to Britain, which only spent 7.6 per cent.
... as opposed to ...	France spent 9.5 per cent, as opposed to Britain, which only spent 7.6 per cent.
In/by contrast ,...	France spent 9.5 per cent. In/By contrast , Britain only spent 7.6 per cent.
..., in/by contrast ,...	France spent 9.5 per cent. Britain, in/by contrast , only spent 7.6 per cent.

We use these expressions to say how things or people are **different**. Compare these sentences:

- The new manager is a good listener, **in contrast to** the previous manager.
- The new manager is quite **different from** the previous one.
- The new manager is a good listener, **unlike** the previous manager.

on the contrary


We use **on the contrary** to show the balance between two ideas (= not X, but Y – the opposite is true):

The government hopes to raise more money from taxation. This is not because they are raising tax rates: on the contrary , they are lowering them. But the government plans to make tax evasion more difficult, by reorganising the tax-collecting system and making it easier to spot tax dodgers.	John Bolt, CEO of Intertabak, said yesterday: It isn't true, as many people claim, that our company exploits people in the countries where we operate. On the contrary , we play a vital role in providing development to the poorest countries.
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contrary to

contrary to is often used in particular phrases:

<p>contrary to expectations contrary to popular belief contrary to popular opinion contrary to what many people think</p>	<p>Contrary to popular belief, there is no evidence that mobile phones make your head hotter. And he reveals, contrary to what most people believe, that Vodafone and Mannesmann were in talks as early as 1995.</p> <p>Contrary to expectations, the new minister quickly established herself internationally and gained the respect of other world leaders.</p>
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Talk or write 

1. Think of two people in your company who are very different. Describe them both, using phrases from this worksheet.
2. Think of something that many people believe, but which you don't agree with. Write sentences about it, using phrases from this worksheet.

Exercise

Fill the gaps with a suitable phrase from this worksheet.

- a) I don't think the new store is a failure. _____, it seems to be doing good business.
- b) _____ what many people think, New York is now one of the safest cities in the USA.
- c) Tariq al Tayib, _____ his brother Hassan, doesn't often appear in public.
- d) Our new collection emphasises bright colours, _____ the greys and browns of last year's clothes.
- e) Last week, The News Show was watched by just 1,000 people a day. _____ the BBC News at Ten attracted over nine million viewers.

