

Mosaics Chap 12: Compare/Contrast Writing

Using Chapter 19 on Comparison and Contrast writing in your *Models for Writers* text as your guide for this assignment, write a **thesis-driven** comparative essay of **at least 4 full pages**. You may choose your own topic and your own research readings to compare as long as you model the comparative strategies we've learned about this unit from the assigned chapter readings.

Write an essay comparing similar and/or different aspects of two comparable readings on the same subject. You will choose the subject and you will research the readings from print or online sources. Your goal, after choosing the subject focus and your two comparable readings, is to make a single, important point about how each of the two readings are written – focus on the manner in which each piece handles the same subject. Ask yourself which reading handles your subject better, and why that is: what specific strategies do you see each writer using to tackle the same subject, which set of strategies or ways of writing about the subject seem more successful to you, and why?

Remember to provide detailed examples to illustrate your points in each new paragraph dealing with one reading or the other. You'll also need to choose a comparative structure and stick to it throughout the entire essay: use either the **subject block** or the **point-by-point** method to lay out your analysis. Remember to *show* your readers what you wish to illustrate rather than just telling them about it: use well-organized examples in your body paragraphs to support your thesis argument. Put your thesis statement, the sentence that states what you wish to say about you're the readings and the subject you're examining, in your introductory paragraph so that we will know *exactly* what you wish to communicate with the examples you provide.

Please Note: You will need to do outside research to help you with this essay, and you must not write about yourself or about your own personal experiences this time. The writing task here is to produce a piece of well-controlled **academic writing** that makes conclusions about something external to you and then shows us examples and illustrations that support those conclusions. Write only in 3rd person voice (he/she, him/her, it, they/them, the text, the author, [someone's name], etc.) and use present tense verbs consistently throughout your work to discuss your subject and the readings you're comparing.

Please **proofread** your work carefully to ensure that all of your verbs are in the same tense, all contractions and slang speech are eliminated, and sentences are complete and combined correctly and error free. Do not use 1st person (I, me) or 2nd person (you, your) speech in this essay. Keep your attention focused on the examples you include in your discussion.

Follow the steps explained on pages 483-487 and briefly outlined below. Remember to leave plenty of time for both the prewriting and drafting stages as well as the revision and proofreading stages of your writing process. I want only focused, error-free work for this assignment.

1. Decide what **thesis point** you wish to make with your comparison, and state it up front in your thesis statement at the end of your opening paragraph. Remember that you are not doing a "blank" or neutral comparison here: your comparison needs to have a **clear purpose** – it needs to take a subjective position on the effectiveness of the writing in one piece or the other and then defend that position with detailed illustration and explanations. This purpose must be made absolutely clear in your thesis statement. Make your readers actually *want* to continue reading about your subject by making sure they know precisely where you stand.
2. **Choose items** to compare and contrast that will make your thesis point most effectively. A good comparative analysis will feature subjects with *multiple* similarities and also some important differences to discuss. Your task is to look over your own ideas generated in prewriting work and choose only the 3 or 4 best points for making your comparison clearly and strongly.
3. Use as many **specific details and examples** as possible to expand your comparison. The most common way to developing a comparison/contrast essay is to use description and example – strategies you already know from earlier essays. Generate as many details and examples as you can for each of your subjects. Don't be afraid to quote your sources directly, using quotation marks and proper citation entries for all direct and paraphrased references. Try to think of both obvious *and* less obvious points of comparison to discuss in your analysis. You want your details and examples to actually *draw your readers into your essay*, to make them care about what you are examining.
4. **Develop** your comparison in a balanced way by covering the same topics for each subject. Give equal coverage to both subjects, no matter what your ultimate conclusions about them are. Spend the same amount of time on each point: if you describe one subject in great detail then describe the other in great detail also. Provide a similar number of examples for both subjects. Be fair in your discussion, not biased toward or against one subject or the other.
5. Choose an **organizational structure**. Use either a block or point-by-point approach to organize your discussion around the points you make. See your text for a detailed explanation of these two methods of analysis.