**Compare and Contrast**

**Using “Monkey’s Paw”, “The Videotape” or “The Cask of Amontillado”, compare how two the authors use literary structure to create suspense in the plots.**

**Writing a Compare and Contrast Paragraph**

Below are some general notes and guidelines for writing a compare and contrast essay:

* A **comparison** essay notes either *similarities*, or *similarities and differences*
* A **contrast** essay notes only *differences*
* The **same points** should be discussed for both subjects; however, it is not necessary to give both subjects the same amount of development

**IMPORTANT: Transition or Connector Words**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Transition words that show comparison (similarities)** | | |
| · *In addition*  · *Similarly*  · *Likewise* | · *Correspondingly*  · *Just as*  · *Same as* | · *Compared to*  · *As well as*  · *At the same time* |
| **Transition words that show contrast (differences)** | | |
| · *However*  · *Even though*  · *Unlike* | · *On the contrary*  · *In contrast*  · *Conversely* | · *On the other hand*  · *Although*  · *Meanwhile* |

**For this essay you only need to include 3 body paragraphs and a thesis (in place of the entire introduction and conclusion). Remember to restate your thesis at the end using different wording.**

How to write a comparison/ contrast thesis

Things to Remember

1) Note the key words in this essay prompt: compare and contrast. This means you must write a thesis that expresses what the stories had in common and where they were different. In short, your thesis must address the comparison.

2) Your thesis (and essay) should stay within the parameters of the question or prompt. .

3) Next, your thesis should state an opinion. Be bold. Do not merely restate the question or one of its assumptions. To argue a point, you must first of all have one. The following is not an acceptable thesis; it simply restates information given by the prompt:

“Story A” and “Story B” were similar and different.

4) Your thesis should contain the categories that you will use in the essay as evidence. Do not do this:

Bad

“Story A” and “Story B” were similar in some ways but different in others.

The above sentence is vague, wimpy, and is really just a restatement of an assumption in the prompt. It is a fluttering of loose ends needing to be nailed down onto concrete categories. Now look at this one.

Better

“Story A” and “Story B” were similar in suspense but different in structure.

This thesis is getting there. It at least declares in general categories how the paths of Christianity and Judaism diverged. It has broken down (analyzed) these things into categories that lend themselves to a well-defined essay. But it could be better. Note the difference between the above thesis and the one below:

Best

While both “Story A” and “Story B” are both effectively employ the use of suspense, they have diverged in their use of literary elements to achieve this purpose.

**Essay Scoring Guide**

### 9=100, 8=94, 7=90, 6=86, 5=80, 4=77, 3=70, 2=60, 1=50

**9** Excellent use of thoughtfully chosen, apt, and specific-to-the-text evidence: concrete details, references and quotes (10 or more). Response to the prompt is a convincing, insightful, perceptive commentary and interpretation, free of plot summary. Personal style is evident in pleasing sentence variety, vocabulary (precise and fresh diction); sentence structure is sophisticated; it has finesse, creativity without going too far. Ideas are expressed with clarity and skill; the paper addresses the what, the how, the why. Well-organized with careful development, excellent thesis, smooth transitions, sound sentence structure, uses literary present tense, no passive voice, no to-be verbs. The conclusion is an epiphany; the reader understands something perhaps never before considered. Virtually no errors exist in spelling, grammar usage, and mechanics.

**8** All of the above, but perhaps the style of the student paper is not as evident. There are at least 8 or 9 quotes.

**7** This paper has a few minor problems, fewer examples and quotes, but at least 6 or 7. It is less insightful, less developed than an 8/9; it may miss the why of the question. The conclusion is effective. The paper is still well- written, developed and analyzed. There is good control over sentence structure, diction and mechanics.

**6** This is a safe paper, carefully done, but it needs more. It uses at least 5 quotes. More than a 5, less than a 7.

**5** Superficial, obvious, vague details and quotes (4) from the text, but they are used correctly; commentary is generic, but there is some analysis. The conclusion is only adequate. The paper slips into passive voice or uses to-be verbs. No serious errors in spelling, grammar, usage, mechanics.

**4** The supporting evidence of this paper is weak paraphrasing, vague and inaccurate. The analysis and commentary are misguided and unclear. There is plot summary instead of analysis. The writer uses a vague and predictable introductory paragraph and/or a repetitive and weak conclusion. Ideas drift off the topic or prompt. The answer restates the question. This paper lacks transitions. There is repetitive diction and/or awkward diction/vocabulary. The writer uses passive voice and to-be verbs excessively. The writer uses the past tense instead of the literary present. The writer does not imbed quotes. The paper is not 2 pages written or 3 pages typed.

**3** This paper has weaker writing skills than a 4. It has less organization, more misinterpretations, inadequate development, serious omissions. Quotes are missing. The student uses contractions and/or a chatty, non-academic tone. The writer uses a negative and/or judgmental tone. The writer does not answer all the parts of the question. There is no conclusion.

**2** There are very few, if any, concrete details. Thesis is weak or non-existent. There are distracting errors in sentence structure, diction, spelling, grammar, usage, mechanics. The paper rambles because of a lack of control, organization, and/or development. The writer does not answer all the parts of the question. The paper is illegible.

**1** This paper is unacceptably brief or incoherently long, full of mechanical errors. It misses the focus of the topic. The writer does not answer the question. The writer draws or writes silly/cynical things.