

Comparative Literary Analysis Outline

I. Introduction

Hook: Establish connection between the two texts

Background: - Introduce both works (titles, authors, contexts) - Explain why comparison is meaningful

Thesis Statement: Clear argument about the relationship between texts - Identify basis of comparison (theme, technique, character, perspective) - State your interpretive claim

Example: “While both Orwell’s *1984* and Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale* depict totalitarian dystopias, Orwell emphasizes technological surveillance while Atwood exposes the dangers of theocratic control, revealing different facets of authoritarian power.”

II. Organization Methods

Method A: Point-by-Point (Recommended)

Compare texts on one aspect at a time across paragraphs.

Body Paragraph Structure: - Topic: One point of comparison - Text A evidence and analysis - Text B evidence and analysis
- Synthesis showing relationship (similarity/difference/complexity)

Method B: Block

Discuss all aspects of Text A, then all aspects of Text B.

Body Paragraph Structure: - Paragraphs 1-2: Analysis of Text A - Paragraphs 3-4: Analysis of Text B (referring back to Text A) - Paragraph 5: Direct comparison and synthesis

III. Body Paragraphs (Point-by-Point)

Paragraph 1: First Point of Comparison

Topic Sentence: Introduce comparative element

Text A: - Evidence (quote/example) - Analysis of technique/meaning

Text B: - Evidence (quote/example) - Analysis of technique/meaning

Comparison: - Highlight similarity or difference - Explain significance of relationship

Paragraph 2: Second Point of Comparison

Topic Sentence: Next comparative element

Text A: Evidence + analysis

Text B: Evidence + analysis

Comparison: Show pattern or contrast

Paragraph 3: Third Point of Comparison

Topic Sentence: Final comparative element

Text A: Evidence + analysis

Text B: Evidence + analysis

Comparison: Deepen interpretation

IV. Conclusion

Restate Thesis: Rephrase comparative argument

Synthesize Findings: - Summarize key similarities and differences - Explain what comparison reveals

Broader Significance: - Why does this comparison matter? - What larger understanding emerges? - Consider cultural, historical, or thematic implications

Closing: Final insight about relationship between texts

Common Comparison Elements

Theme: How texts approach similar ideas differently

Character: Parallel or contrasting character types/arcs

Setting: Different contexts, same human experiences

Narrative Technique: POV, structure, style differences

Tone: Varying approaches to similar subjects

Symbolism: How similar symbols function differently

Historical Context: Different era perspectives on similar issues

Genre Conventions: How texts use/subvert genre expectations

Transition Words for Comparison

Similarities: similarly, likewise, in the same way, both, equally, also

Differences: however, in contrast, whereas, while, conversely, on the other hand, unlike

Complexity: although, despite, nevertheless, yet, paradoxically

Quick Tips

Balance attention to both texts equally Go beyond surface similarities—analyze significance Use comparison to deepen interpretation, not just list differences Maintain clear organization with strong transitions Ensure thesis makes an argument, not just observation Consider both obvious and subtle connections

