

# Compare and/or Contrast Essay

## (aka Synthesis)

A comparison shows how two subjects are similar; a contrast shows how two subjects are different. In writing, you must first decide whether you will compare, contrast or both. Follow these steps when writing a compare and/or contrast essay.

### 1. Identify similarities and differences.

You should choose three items to compare or contrast and figure out how they are similar and how they are different.

- You will need to find at least three points for comparison / contrast.
- Write detailed characteristics for each point then back up each point with support (quotes).
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### 2. State your purpose in the thesis sentence.

- Identify the **three subjects** that you will compare and state whether you will focus on similarities, differences, or both. The thesis may also indicate which points you will compare / contrast.
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### 3. Choose a pattern to organize your essay.

- The two major patterns for organizing a comparison/contrast essay are:
- **Subject by Subject (Whole-to-whole).** You write first about one of your subjects, covering it completely, and then you write about the other, covering it completely. Each subject is addressed in a separate paragraph. The points of comparison or contrast will be the same for each subject and will be presented in the same order.
- The following is an example of subject by subject organization:
- Introduction
- I. "Dulce et Decorum Est"
- A. Theme
- B. Tone/Attitude
- C. Imagery
- II. "Pro Patria"
- A. Theme
- B. Tone/Attitude
- C. Imagery
- Conclusion
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- **Point by Point.** Each point is addressed in a separate paragraph. You discuss both of your subjects together for each point of comparison and contrast. Maintain consistency by discussing the same subject first for each point.

- The following is an example of point by point organization:

- Introduction

- I. Theme

- A. "Dulce et Decorum Est"

- B. "Pro Patria"

- II. Tone/Attitude

- A. "Dulce et Decorum Est"

- B. "Pro Patria"

- III. Imagery

- A. "Dulce et Decorum Est"

- B. "Pro Patria"

- Conclusion

- **4. Use appropriate transitions.**

- Transitions are important in comparison/contrast writing, especially with the point by point organization, to avoid confusion. Without transitions, the points you are comparing/contrasting may blur into one another. Also, a variety of transitions prevent monotony.

- For comparison:

- Use words such as like, the same as, or similar

- For contrast:

- Use words such as although, unlike, differ

- To evaluate the effectiveness of a comparison/contrast essay, ask the following: Is the essay balanced? The most common error in a comparison / contrast essay is spending too much time on one subject and too little on the other. Make sure the essay equally and thoroughly covers both subjects.

# Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night

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By Dylan Thomas

Do not go gentle into that good night,  
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,  
Because their words had forked no lightning they  
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright  
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,  
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,  
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight  
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on the sad height,  
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray,  
Do not go gentle into that good night.  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Type \_\_\_\_\_

Form:

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Defining Characteristics

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Identify an example of refrain

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What is a possible theme for this poem?

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# Because I Could Not Stop For Death

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Emily Dickinson

Because I could not stop for Death,  
He kindly stopped for me;  
The carriage held but just ourselves  
And Immortality.

We slowly drove, he knew no haste,  
And I had put away  
My labor, and my leisure too,  
For his civility.

We passed the school, where children strove  
At recess, in the ring;  
We passed the fields of gazing grain,  
We passed the setting sun.

Or rather, he passed us;  
The dewes grew quivering and chill,  
For only gossamer my gown,  
My tippet only tulle.

We paused before a house that seemed  
A swelling of the ground;  
The roof was scarcely visible,  
The cornice but a mound.

Since then 'tis centuries, and yet each  
Feels shorter than the day  
I first surmised the horses' heads  
Were toward eternity

Type \_\_\_\_\_

Form:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Defining Characteristics

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What is the main example of personification?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How does the speaker feel about death and dying?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### T-Chart

Poem 1: _____	Similarities	Poem 2: _____

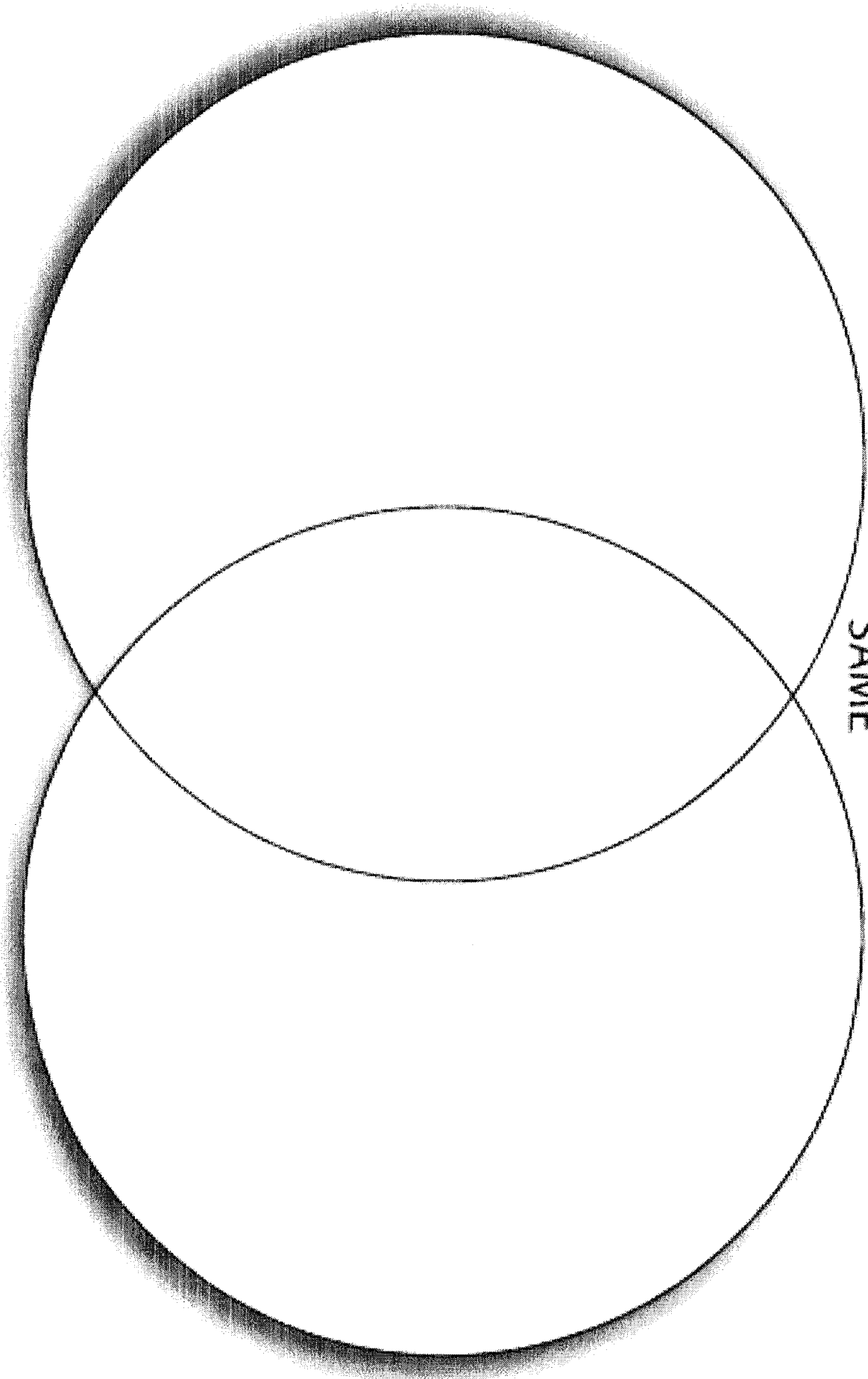
ame: \_\_\_\_\_

# Venn Diagram

DIFFERENT

SAME

DIFFERENT



## SCORING GUIDE FOR ANALYSIS OF SYNTHESIS TEXTS 1 AND 2

6

The six essay is **superior**, demonstrating an insightful understanding of the texts. The essay shows a sophisticated approach to synthesis, including pertinent references. The writing style is effective and demonstrates skillful control of language. Despite its clarity and precision, the essay need not be error-free.

5

The five essay is **proficient**, demonstrating a clear understanding of the texts at an interpretive level. The essay clearly synthesizes the concepts within the texts. References may be explicit or implicit and convincingly support the analysis. The writing is well organized and reflects a strong command of the conventions of language. Errors may be present, but are not distracting.

4

The four essay is **competent**. Understanding of the texts tends to be literal and superficial. Some synthesis is apparent. The essay may rely heavily on paraphrasing. References are present and appropriate, but may be limited. The writing is organized and straightforward. Conventions of language are usually followed, but some errors are evident.

3

The three essay is **barely adequate**. Understanding of the texts may be partially flawed. An attempt at synthesis is evident. References to the texts are not clearly connected to a central idea or may be repetitive. The response may be somewhat underdeveloped. A sense of purpose may be evident, but errors can be distracting.

2

The two essay is **inadequate**. While there is an attempt to address the topic, understanding of the texts or the task may be seriously flawed. An essay that makes reference to both texts but refers only fleetingly to one of them is inadequate. The response may be seriously underdeveloped. Errors are recurring, distracting, and impede meaning.

1

The one essay is **unacceptable**. Although the essay mentions both texts, the essay is too brief to address the topic or there may be a complete lack of control in the writing.

0

The zero essay reflects a complete misunderstanding of the texts and/or the task, or is a restatement of the question. Exclusive reference to only one text does not constitute synthesis. Exclusively narrative responses reflect a complete misunderstanding of the task.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Period \_\_\_\_\_

# 5 Paragraph Essay Outline

Thesis Statement:	
Support #1:	Quote #1:
	Quote #2:
	Quote #3:
Support #2:	Quote #1:
	Quote #2:
	Quote #3:
Support #3:	Quote #1:
	Quote #2:
	Quote #3: