

ESSAY 3: COMPARE & CONTRAST ESSAY

DUE 4/25

20% OF FINAL GRADE

100 points possible

Assignment Description

Comparison and contrast are two elements of everyday life; whether we're choosing between two different brands of toothpaste, trying to decide which movie to watch next, or even deciding which grocery store to visit, we all use comparison and contrast to arrive at some kind of informed conclusion. Maybe Crest comes in cinnamon flavor while Colgate doesn't; maybe this movie trailer seemed funnier than the other one; maybe Kroger has better coupons even if it's a little further away. We use the information at hand to make a value judgement.

Similarly, this assignment requires you to make a choice: do you want to **compare** two texts (show how they are similar), **contrast** them (show how they are different), or illustrate the ways two texts might have some comparable elements yet have contrasting arguments/ meanings/ etc.—that is, **both**?

As the name implies, a comparison and contrast essay asks that you consider two (or more) subjects in order to evaluate the ways they are similar or ways they are different. In order to compare two texts, you have to employ critical thinking in order to make connections between them or to see how they function differently. A successful comparison & contrast essay will go beyond just description and summary to offer an insightful analysis of the commonalities and divergences in the texts. It's not about one text or the other, but instead about *how they relate to one another*.

For this essay, you'll **use the same object of analysis you used in Essay 2**—a music video or a TV title sequence—and you will **compare and contrast it with another text from the same medium**. (For example, if you analyzed a music video in Essay 2, pick another music video that you'll compare/ contrast with it for this essay. The same criteria apply for your second text as in Essay 2—official artist videos, official TV title sequences, etc.) Once you've considered the rhetorical tactics in your new text, consider the similarities and differences in each. Then you'll compose an essay in which you either compare these two texts, show how they contrast each other, or use a combination of comparison and contrast to make a larger point.

Remember—this IS a rhetorical analysis, it's just a specific kind. As with any rhetorical analysis, you should identify and describe the rhetorical situations (genre, audience, purpose, and context) and the ways ethos, logos, and pathos are used in order to influence the viewer. These are the important elements you should use to compare/ contrast these two texts.

The Process

Once you've selected a second text to evaluate for this essay, then consider:

- The rhetorical situation of the new work, including the author, audience, purpose, context, tone, genre, design, constraints, and exigence. What is overall message?
- The rhetorical strategies, or how the work is composed to produce a specific effect (use of words/ lyrics, color, shape, lighting, set design, contrasts, etc.). None of it is by accident!
- Evidence of the use of rhetorical appeals (ethos/pathos/logos) and the how the combination of images and music/ sound/ lyrics seek to engage the audience
- How the lyrics influence the meaning and how they interact with the visual images.

Once you've fully considered the rhetorical strategies and messages in your new piece of media, then you can consider it against your original text. Decide if you want to focus on the ways that they differ, on the similarities between them, or some combination of the two. Maybe you want to focus on how two music videos depict violence in a different way; maybe you look at two TV title sequences that may be from different genres but that share a similar format so they create a similar rhetorical impact; or maybe you look at how two texts both use nostalgic imagery and music but are doing so for drastically different reasons or to make wildly different arguments.

Think about **how you want to organize your essay**, too. In a comparison and contrast essay, you can use either use **subject-by-subject** organization or **point-by-point** organization, or a combination of both.

After you've planned your strategy, you're ready to start drafting. Remember, as always, your **thesis statement** should clearly indicate the argument that you are making about how you are considering these two texts in relation to each other. And don't forget an introduction and conclusion!

Key Terms: *Analysis, Rhetorical Strategies, Rhetorical Context, Visual Rhetoric, Comparison and Contrast*

RHETORICAL AUDIENCE AND CONTEXT

As with Essay 2, your audience for this comparison and contrast essay is your peer community of fellow UNA students. In your essay, assume that your audience is NOT familiar with the video texts you are analyzing—you'll need to provide some summary and context so that your reader can understand your analysis.

Your goal is to craft a clear argument about the relationship between your two texts in order to demonstrate your understanding of the similarities/ differences in their rhetorical strategies and meanings.

Requirements

- A thesis that compares/contrasts two texts and makes a clear argument about your interpretation
- A coherent organizational structure that supports your thesis
- A clear connection between your way of viewing this work and the evidence in the text that supports that view

- A strong sense of audience
- Citations for the video texts and any other works you consult in a works cited page
- Thorough proofreading and MLA 8th Ed. formatting
- Length: 4 pages (1000 words) **PLUS** Works Cited page
- 12-point Garamond, Times New Roman, or Calibri font
- FILE NAME: LastName_E3.docx (Microsoft Word file type)

Evaluative Criteria and Rubric:

This essay should demonstrate your ability to:

- Compare/ Contrast the rhetorical situation and rhetorical strategies of two texts
- Write a thesis-driven paper, supported by evidence from the text
- Create clear, carefully edited writing that is largely free of proofreading errors and major errors of grammar, mechanics, and syntax

The following criteria will be used to evaluate the essay:

Criteria	Description	Points Possible
Summary & Strategy	The writer is able to identify and summarize the main idea of the texts as well as identifying the rhetorical situation in each (author, purpose, audience, and context).	20
Interpretation	The essay compares or contrasts the two texts, offering a clear argument about their similarities/ differences and the resulting rhetorical implications.	20
Evidence	The essay cites specific evidence from the texts to support its analysis.	20
Structure	The essay exhibits a clear, logical structure that includes a clear introduction, thesis statement, and conclusion.	20
Clarity/ Mechanics	The essay's clarity does not suffer due to excessive mechanical, grammatical, or spelling errors.	10
Format	The essay is the correct length and conforms to MLA format including a Works Cited page.	10