

Comparison-Contrast Studies

Comparison-Contrast enables the study of works in perspective:

to isolate and highlight individual characteristics by comparing them with others to which they are similar or by contrasting them with others to which they are not similar.

What is the objective of the comparison-contrast?

To emphasize a technique or idea by showing how it appears in more than one work.

To show similarities in works in equal balance

To emphasize one work by highlighting its similarities to another

To establish a preference for one work over another

To evaluate the use of a technique or the treatment of an idea and use comparison and contrast to determine that one work is of more value, or more skillfully presented, than the other

What are the grounds of comparison? What characteristics do the works have in common? (What is the common denominator?) What is the topic you are addressing by comparing the works?

Integrate the bases of comparison: Make the assertion of comparison, then provide evidence and application from both works.

The assertion and application unifies the analysis; evidence from more than one work, offered without commentary or application, breaks up the analysis and makes it seem “lumpy”.

AP English essay questions that require comparison and/or contrast will specify in the question which is wanted. The assertion that is the response to the prompt should identify the objective and state what the comparison and/or contrast reveals about the objective/topic.

What is your objective?

What is your topic?

What assertions do you make?

What evidence in each work relates to your assertion?

How is the evidence relevant to your assertion?