

Core C | American Lit - Compare/Contrast Essay | January 2022

A **compare/contrast essay** notes the similarities and differences between two things. The comparison and contrast should **make a point** or **serve a purpose**. Consequently, a compare/contrast thesis should do three things:

1. Compare
2. Contrast
3. Make a point

In **making a point**, you may:

- **Clarify** something unknown or not well understood
- Lead to a fresh **insight** or new way of viewing something
- Bring one or both of the subjects into sharper **focus**
- Show that one subject is **better** than the other

Creating the Compare/Contrast Thesis

Here is a basic formula to follow as you start creating the c/c thesis:

While both *topic 1* and *topic 2* (similarity), *one topic* (difference), (**make a point**).

For this essay, you will be evaluating two characters from *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, comparing and contrasting their views of slavery.

General example:

While both *public school* and *homeschooling* focus on educating students, *homeschooling* provides greater individualization and freedom of time, **making it the better option for most families.**

UTC example:

Though both Mr. Shelby and Mr. St. Clare are southern slave owners, Mr. Shelby accepts owning his fellow man as necessary to his own comfort, while Mr. St. Clare recognizes the cruelty of the system though failing to do anything about it, showing that **not all slave owners were happy with the system that they were in.**

* *you do not need to follow the formula exactly, just make sure to have all three elements in your thesis statement (compare, contrast, AND make a point).*

Assignment:

- ✓ Length – 800-1000 words (intro, 2 body paragraphs—1 per character, conclusion)
- ✓ MLA format (header, heading, title, spacing, font, etc.)
- ✓ 2 body paragraphs of at least 300 words each (one per character) due Tuesday, 1/18 via Turn-it-in (8 a.m.)
- ✓ **Final Essay due Tuesday, 1/15**

Organization:

Introduction – Your introduction should begin with a hook, then transition to your thesis by way of a short introduction to each of your characters. That way your body paragraphs can get straight to the point of comparing/contrasting the views of slavery of each character. The final sentence of your introduction should be your thesis statement (see "Crafting the Compare/Contrast Thesis," above).

Body – Use the **TRIAC** method to construct each body paragraph (you should have two—one for each character). Format each paragraph as follows:

- Begin with a **Topic Sentence** that makes a specific statement about the character. Keep your Topic Sentence general—the specifics will come in your restrict sentences.
- Next is your first *Restrict Sentence* which says something more specific about the topic sentence and leads to your evidence.
- Your **Illustrate Sentence** provides that evidence, in the form of a properly introduced and integrated quote. Remember to provide context—who is speaking, what is happening, etc., and **CHOOSE YOUR QUOTES CAREFULLY!**
- Follow with **AT LEAST** two **Analysis Sentences**, in which you use your own words to explain why the quote is important to your topic sentence and thesis. You can also add more information about the character in this section, but remember you have another point to make.
- Your second **Restrict Sentence** which says something more specific about the topic sentence and leads to your evidence, is your second point.
- Your **Illustrate Sentence** provides the evidence to that point, in the form of a properly introduced and integrated quote. Remember to provide context—who is speaking, what is happening, etc., and **CHOOSE YOUR QUOTES CAREFULLY!**
- Follow again with **AT LEAST** two **Analysis Sentences**, in which you use your own words to explain why the quote is important to your topic sentence and thesis. You can also add more information about the character in this section.
- Finish the paragraph with a **Clincher Sentence**, which ties back to the topic sentence.
- With two Restrict, Illustrate, and Analysis points, the acronym looks like this: **TRIARIAC**

Conclusion – This is the last chance you have to persuade your reader – follow these three steps: restate your thesis (in different words), summarize your main points (remember to transition between ideas), and leave the reader on a strong, emotional note (tie back in to hook, if possible). Please don't say "In Conclusion." Just conclude!

*Remember that you must use transitions between paragraphs (to transition from one main point to the next) and within paragraphs (to transition from one sentence/idea to the next).

TRANSITIONAL/KEY WORDS

○ To Compare

- also
- as
- in the same way
- like
- likewise
- similarly
- comparable
- equally
- in addition

○ To Contrast

- although
- but
- even though
- however
- on the other hand
- otherwise
- yet
- still
- conversely
- as opposed to
- different from
- whereas