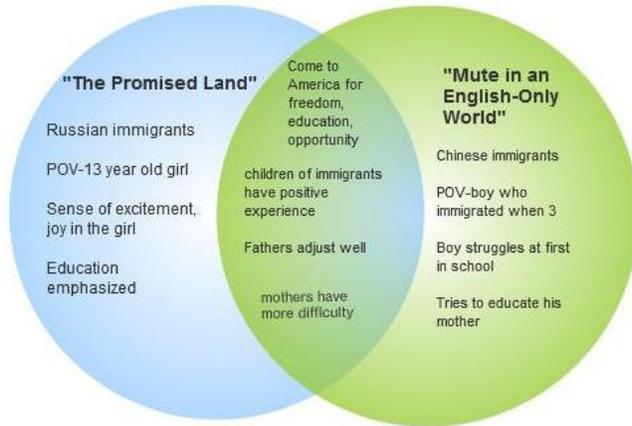


A compare/contrast essay requires you to make connections between two texts by discovering similarities and differences between several texts and analyzing how these connections lead to a deeper understanding of the topic you are discussing.

DISCOVERING SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES



Making a **Venn Diagram** can help you gather information. To make a Venn diagram, simply draw overlapping circles, one circle for each item you're considering. In the central area where they overlap, list the traits the two items have in common. Assign each one of the areas that doesn't overlap; in those areas, you can list the traits that make the things different.

Using a **chart** is another good method of gathering information.

PREWRITING GRID, Compare/Contrast

	Essay One	Essay Two
First Point of Comparison/Contrast	<i>What does this author have to say about this particular point?</i> (Include brief quote reminders, page #s)	<i>What does this author have to say about this particular point?</i> (Include brief quote reminders, page #s)
Second Point of Comparison/Contrast	Essay One <i>What does this author have to say about this particular point?</i> (Include brief quote reminders, page #s)	Essay Two <i>What does this author have to say about this particular point?</i> (Include brief quote reminders, page #s)
Third Point of Comparison/Contrast	Essay One <i>What does this author have to say about this particular point?</i> (Include brief quote reminders, page #s)	Essay Two <i>What does this author have to say about this particular point?</i> (Include brief quote reminders, page #s)

DRAFTING A THESIS STATEMENT

Once you collect your information, you will need to express these key differences/similarities in a rough draft **thesis statement**. The thesis should give your reader a road map so she/he can follow the flow of your paper easily.

Too general: *This paper will compare and contrast these two essays.*

“The Promised Land” and “Mute in an English-Only World” both discuss the life of immigrants.

“The Promised Land” and “Mute in an English-Only World” have many similarities and differences.

Better: *Both essays illustrate the relative ease with which young immigrants and their fathers assimilate to American culture in contrast to their mothers’ more difficult paths.*

GETTING ORGANIZED

Once you have your rough thesis, you need to make a decision about organization. Generally, there are different ways to organize a comparison/contrast essay.

Point-by-point:

Paragraph 1: Introduction/thesis

Paragraph 2: **First point** of analysis, discussion of **first text**

Paragraph 3: **First point** of analysis, discussion of **second text**, making comparisons and connections to what you’ve said in the previous paragraph

Paragraph 4: **Second point** of analysis, discussion of **first text**

Paragraph 5: **Second point** of analysis, discussion of **second text**, making comparisons and connections to what you’ve said in the previous paragraph

Paragraph 6: **Third point** of analysis, discussion of **first text**

Paragraph 7: **Third point** of analysis, discussion of **second text**, making comparisons and connections to what you’ve said in the previous paragraph

Paragraph 8: Reflective conclusion

Blocking (or chunking):

Paragraph 1: Introduction/thesis

Paragraph 2: Discuss **first point** of analysis of the **first text**

Paragraph 3: Discuss **second point** of analysis of the **first text**

Paragraph 4: Discuss **third point** of analysis of the **first text**

Paragraph 5: Provide a clear transition sentence which makes it clear you are moving into a discussion of the second text. Discuss **first point** of analysis of the **second text**, make comparisons/connections to what you’ve said about this same point in the first text

Paragraph 6: Discuss **second point** of analysis of the **second text**, make comparisons/connections to what you’ve said about this same point in the first text

Paragraph 7: Discuss **third point** of analysis, make comparisons/connections to what you’ve said about this same point in the first essay

Paragraph 8: Reflective conclusion

START WRITING!

Now that you've decided on an organizational framework, the only thing left to do is start writing! All of the prewriting and planning you've done should give you plenty of material to get started.

Introduction: Think of an introduction as an upside-down triangle. Start with several sentences that set the broad context for the topic of your paper. Then, start to get more specific and introduce each of the items you will be discussing and write a brief overview sentence or two about each. Next, narrow your focus further as you move towards introducing your thesis statement as the last sentence of your introduction. For example:

Living in America presents many opportunities for immigrants. Adjusting to a new life in a new country can also be challenging. In her essay, "The Promised Land," Mary Antin tells of her experiences in the weeks after she arrived in America as a young Russian immigrant. Antin comes to America with great hopes of learning a new way of life and experiencing the American Dream. In his essay, "Mute in an English-Only World," Chang-Rae Lee shares his story as a first-generation American from a Korean family who benefits greatly from his move to America. Lee focuses on the difficulties his mother has adjusting to America due to her lack of ability in speaking English. Both essays illustrate the relative ease with which young immigrants and their fathers assimilate to American culture in contrast to their mothers' more difficult paths.

Paragraph development: Try using the **PIE** method to develop each of your paragraphs.

1. Present your topic sentence (**Point**)
2. Further define your point (**Point**)
3. Provide support from the text followed by your analysis of why each of the quotes/examples/paraphrased summary of ideas is significant (**Illustrate**)
4. Wrap up the paragraph with an overall conclusion before moving on to the next paragraph (**Explain**) For example:

Antin moves from Russia to America when she is thirteen, and she easily falls in love with her new country. Within the first two weeks of being in America, she changes her clothes and her name to fit in to what she sees as a wonderful new world. The area of town they live in is a slum area for immigrants, but she sees it in a very different light. She sees "two imposing rows of brick buildings, loftier than any dwelling I had ever lived in" (62). Even though she was accustomed to opulent furnishings in Russia, such as "upholstered parlors, embroidered linens, silver spoons," now she is thrilled by the brick on the ground, a bed, a few chairs, a mattress, and pans that "shone glorious in our eyes" (63). Even the windows above her come alive with possibilities: "Many friendly windows stood open, filled with uncovered heads of women and children. I looked up to the topmost row of windows, and my eyes were filled with the May blue of an American sky!" (62). Antin's first impression of America is that it is a place of beauty and excitement. She is not intimidated by her surroundings; rather, she is eager to dive in. At an age when many adolescents are jaded and pessimistic, she is intoxicated by the possibilities of free education, free light, and free music and cannot wait to start school where she will truly learn to be an American. Mary Antin is happy to shed her "greenhorn" Russian clothes, her Russian name, and her past life in exchange for what America will give her in return.

Conclusion: Your conclusion can be many different things. You may choose to:

- Wrap up your analysis
- Look at the “bigger picture” beyond your analysis of these specific texts
- Add your personal reflection and response to the material
- Provide an anecdote, a story, an example as a means to close out your discussion
- Pose questions or raise challenges

For example:

These two essays provide a window into the immigrant experience in America in the 1950's. The desire for the freedom, education, and opportunity was the common motivating factor for immigrant families such as the Antins and the Lees. For the children of these families, assimilation to their new surroundings was accelerated by their desire to blend in as quickly as possible. The fathers had a similar need to rapidly assimilate to their new surrounding as they entered the work force in order to support their families. Often, the hard work and long hours of these fathers put a heavier burden on their wives. It was often the mothers who struggled the most; left at home, they were not given the same opportunities to learn a new way of life and, many times, a new language. As they worked hard to fulfill their traditional roles of caring for their children and their husbands, these women were often denied their piece of the American Dream.