M04 Instructions for Writing Project 2: Comparative Analysis

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Read the following, which provides an overview and guide for writing the Comparative Analysis essay for Writing Project 2. In this module, you will write the Half-Draft of Writing Project 2.

Overview: Write an essay comparing and analyzing key similarities and differences between features of two closed research theme readings from the theme list provided by your instructor.

Objectives: To critically analyze and compare two closed research theme readings based on significant similarities and differences in characteristics such as perspectives and themes expressed, conclusions drawn, arguments and rhetorical strategies used, credibility and appeals to audiences, etc.

Medium: An academic essay, between 450-600 words for the Half Draft; minimum 1000 words for the Final Draft; both drafts double-spaced in 12-point Times New Roman or similar font; formatted and cited according to either APA or MLA style, as specified by your instructor.

For this project, you will compare two readings from your class’s closed research theme list, writing a comparative analysis of the texts that are relevant, complex, reasonable, and supportable using evidence from the texts themselves.

To begin this project, go to your class’s closed research theme list (in Modules) and select two readings that you think contain some interesting similarities and differences. One of them may be the reading you wrote about for Writing Project 1, or you may select two new readings.

Then follow the steps in the Comparative Observations Worksheet (in Module 4), which will help you develop insightful or interesting points of comparison between the two readings. It will also help you develop a thesis statement for your half-draft. In addition to the Comparative Observations Worksheet, your participation in "M04 Discussion: Today's Big Idea--A Panel Discussion" will help get you thinking about how to compare the two readings.

Elements of a Comparative Analysis Essay

ANALYTICAL THESIS STATEMENT

Your essay should include a thesis statement in which you shape a position you want to take on how these two readings compare. As explained in the Module 4 slideshow Elements of Comparative Analysis and Comparing Texts, the thesis statement you develop might take the position that…

Two apparently very different texts contain important similarities

Two apparently similar texts contain crucial differences

The two texts vary considerably in quality

The similarities and differences between the two texts lead you to draw one or more new conclusions about closed research theme or other issues or problems addressed in the readings

ARRANGEMENT

Your essay should be logically organized, relative to the similarities and differences you analyze, and should include an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion:

In general, an effective comparative analysis essay will include...

An introduction that engages readers on the topic, introduces both closed research theme readings and presents a thesis statement.

Body paragraphs in which the points of comparison in the texts are analyzed and where you offer your own conclusions about those similarities and differences (for more on this, see below). Typically, each body paragraph focuses on one key similarity or difference. These paragraphs should be arranged in a logical order that will help readers make the most sense of your analysis.

A conclusion that briefly recaps the analysis, offers final thoughts, and/or wraps up your essay in a way that is thought-provoking to readers.

Transitional words and phrases to show the relationships of ideas between and within your paragraphs (see The Little Seagull Handbook, Chapter W-5).

YOUR COMPARISONS

In the body paragraphs of your essay, you should compare and analyze your two selected closed research theme readings.

In general, each body paragraph should…

Offer a topic sentence that identifies the point of comparison that will be analyzed in the paragraph.

Contain evidence that demonstrates and supports the point of comparison. This evidence will be in the form of “They Say” summaries and/or quotations from the closed research theme readings.

Contain interpretations of and reasoning about the evidence to explain how it illustrates the point of comparison. This interpretation and reasoning may be in the form of “I Say” moves that provide further explanation of the evidence and/or additional “They Say” summaries and/or quotations from the readings that provide additional context to understand the evidence.

End with a concluding sentence that ties the point of comparison to the overall thesis.

The Little Seagull Handbook, Chapter W-5, provides additional guidance on how to develop paragraphs.

CITATION AND DOCUMENTATION

Your drafts need to be formatted and documented based on either MLA or APA style, as specified by your instructor. You need to cite in-text “They Say” summaries and quotations from the closed research theme readings and any other outside sources you use, if you use any. And you need to provide a list of sources, based on your citation style. This list of sources may include only the closed research theme readings you chose but should also list any other sources you used.

Assignment Summary

Half Draft (due here in Module 4)

Clearly developed thesis statement that takes a position about the similarities and differences between the two closed research theme readings

An introductory paragraph that attempts to gain the interest of the reader, introduces the closed-research theme readings, and presents the thesis statement

Body paragraphs that compare and analyze key similarities and differences between the closed research theme readings (For this half draft, include as much of your analysis as you can develop within the word count restrictions.)

Well-reasoned analysis based on relevant and complex comparisons illustrated and supported with evidence from the closed research theme readings

In-text citations of “They Say” summaries and quotations of the closed research theme readings and other sources you might use

APA or MLA style formatting, as specified by your instructor, with a References (APA) or Works Cited (MLA) page

Observation of the conventions of Standard Written English

450-600 words (no more, no less) for the half draft (Works Cited or References list does not count in the minimum word-count requirement)

See the assessment rubric on the assignment page “M04 Writing Project 2 Comparative Analysis: Half Draft” for an understanding of how the half draft will be graded

Final Draft (due in Module 5)

Clearly developed thesis statement that takes a position about the similarities and differences between the two closed research theme readings

An introductory paragraph that attempts to gain the interest of the reader, introduces the closed research theme readings and presents the thesis statement

Body paragraphs that compare and analyze key similarities and differences between the closed research theme readings, with topic sentences and transitions

Well-reasoned analysis based on relevant and complex comparisons illustrated and supported with evidence from the closed research theme readings

A concluding paragraph

In-text citations of “They Say” summaries and quotations of the closed research theme readings and other sources you might use

APA or MLA style formatting, as specified by your instructor, with a References (APA) or Works Cited (MLA) page

Observation of the conventions of Standard Written American English

Minimum 1000 words for the final draft (Works Cited or References list does not count in the minimum word-count requirement)

See the assessment rubric on the assignment page “M05 Writing Project 2 Comparative Analysis: Final Draft” for an understanding of how the final draft will be graded