

COMPARE/CONTRAST ESSAY REQUIREMENTS

OBJECTIVE:

In a well-organized essay, you are to identify and explain the most compelling similarities and/or differences between *The Giver* and the Dystopian novel that you read.

LENGTH:

Your essay should contain a minimum of five paragraphs: an introduction, at least three solid body paragraphs, and a conclusion. Each paragraph must be at least three sentences, though you are strongly encouraged to strengthen your writing by including more than the minimum number of sentences per paragraph.

THESIS STATEMENT:

Your thesis statement should be a single sentence in which you summarize the major points you intend to discuss in your essay. It should occur toward the end of your introductory paragraph, and the order of your body paragraphs should match the order in which your major points are listed in your thesis.

TEXTUAL EVIDENCE:

It is essential that you use specific examples from each novel to prove your points. In addition, you are required to use at least three quotations from the novels (with at least one quotation coming from each book). Quotations must be appropriately incorporated into the text of your essay and properly cited by indicating the page number in parentheses at the end of each quote. For the purposes of this essay only, it is not necessary to include the title of the book from which you have selected the quotation as its origins should be obvious from the way you introduce it and/or discuss its significance.

FORMAT:

Your essay should be submitted in Times New Roman, 12 pt. While the heading (your name, Humanities 6, and the date) should appear in the upper right hand corner of your first page and be single-spaced, the rest of your essay should be double-spaced. Be sure to properly indent each paragraph. There are no extra spaces between paragraphs. Consult the Resource Page of the Class Wiki for specifics about how to format long quotations (more than four lines of text).

TITLE:

You must include an interesting title that does not contain the word "essay" or the terms "compare/contrast." All major words of the title should be capitalized (including the first word) and this title should be centered after your heading and before your introductory paragraph. It is recommended that you allow a line before and after the title.

SIX TRAITS OF WRITING

IDEAS/CONTENT:

Your essay must focus on similarities only or similarities and differences. Because it is easiest to identify differences between works of literature, your essay should not rely on differences only. Challenge yourself to come up with original analysis and find interesting connections rather than stating the obvious. It is essential that your essay be thoughtful and that you thoroughly explain your ideas. Be sure to use specific examples from each book. Be definitive rather than waver back and forth when trying to make a point. Because your primary audience is your teacher who has some familiarity with the books you've read, you should keep your plot summaries to a minimum and focus, instead, on your idea development. Your essay must contain at least three quotations from the novels (a minimum of one quote from each book); these quotes must be purposely and appropriately introduced, correctly formatted, and properly cited.

ORGANIZATION:

Your essay should include an easy-to-follow organizational system that makes sense and matches the order in which you have listed your major points in your thesis statement. It is essential that each of your body paragraphs focuses on one concept only. You should move your reader along by using transitions between ideas and use words or phrases that emphasize when you are comparing ideas and when you are contrasting them.

WORD CHOICE:

In a formal literary essay of this sort, you must avoid first and second person (no "I," no "you"). Your word choice should be appropriately academic so avoid conversational elements as well as vague wording. Be careful not to overuse certain words or phrases which can feel repetitive and tiresome to your reader.

SENTENCE FLUENCY:

It is important to vary the length and structure of your sentences in order to add sophistication to your writing. When you read your essay aloud, it should flow smoothly.

VOICE:

Your essay should have a more formal tone than much of the more autobiographical writing we have done this year. However, this doesn't mean it can't represent who you are by reflecting your interesting ideas and unique perspectives. Your authorial voice will come through by being sure you are confident in your ideas (not wishy-washy) and thorough in your explanations.

CONVENTIONS:

Pay attention to CUPS (Capitalization, Use of Words, Punctuation and Spelling). Keep in mind the comma rules you've learned ("because" is not a coordinating conjunction and therefore is not usually preceded by a comma) and remember that a run-on sentence is not a long sentence, rather it is one in which the end punctuation (usually a period) is missing.