

INSTRUCTIONAL TASK 19

TASK 19 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

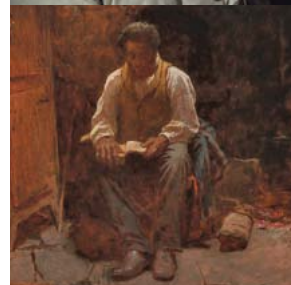
A common writing assignment for college students is a comparative analysis paper; developing the skills to effectively compare and contrast two things begins much earlier. Given the large list of similarities and differences to choose to address, some more valid academically than others, students benefit from assistance in making a coherent explanation or argument. Teachers should provide students with a frame of reference; something specific that both texts relate to and fuel the comparison. Students should be able to explain why the two texts are right for the task and create a thesis that explains the relationship between the two texts (for example, do they contradict each other, or extend, or debate, and so on). The analysis should follow a pattern in which the comparison is either point-by-point or text-by-text. Finally, students should link the two texts together and also link the points back to the thesis. Ideally, this task comes after students have acquired background information on the topic presented by the text, but this task can also be used to compare text structure rather than text content. It can also be adapted to allow for brief compare and contrast activities, student presentations, and comparisons of fictional works.

Steps Outlined:

1. Select two texts related to similar topics (article and textbook, articles and primary sources, two primary sources, etc).
2. Provide students with a frame of reference for comparing the two texts, by limiting the scope of the comparison, students can focus their reading on one element. Students can compare and contrast:
 - a. word choice in texts written in different eras/for different audiences/in different formats
 - b. text structure in texts written in different eras/for different audiences/in different formats
 - c. symbols and/or images in texts written in different eras/for different audiences/in different formats
 - d. author view of historical/cultural issue
 - e. historical context of each piece and how that might influence the authors views
3. Students complete reading both texts without stopping.
4. They then re-read the texts, annotating based on the frame of reference.
5. Using the Comparative Analysis Organizer included below, students take notes, establish the grounds for comparison, draft a thesis, and determine the organizational structure the essay will follow.
6. Students write a comparative analysis essay.

Source:

Harvard University. "How to Write a Comparative Analysis." Accessed April 19, 2013.
<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~wricntr/documents/CompAnalysis.html>



INSTRUCTIONAL TASK 19 (continued)

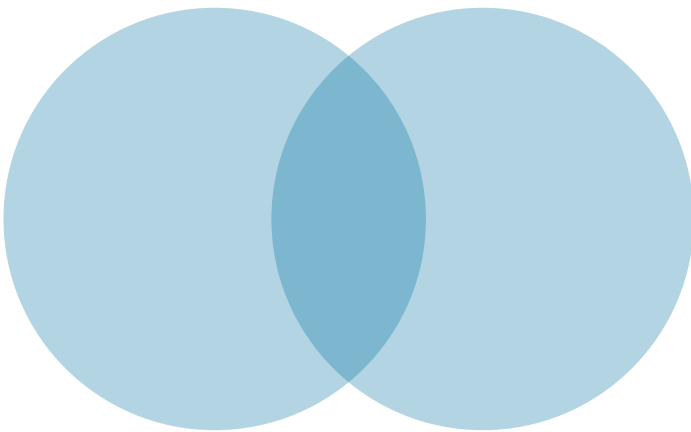
COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS ORGANIZER

TEXTS:

Frame of Reference (what am I comparing within these texts):

Grounds for Comparison (why are these two texts appropriate for this task):

Similarities/Differences between the texts:



THESIS:

Organization:

Point by Point or Text by Text

Why?