

## The Comparative Essay

### Developing a Thesis:

- ❖ You will need to develop a basis for comparison: a theme, concern or device common to both works from which you can draw similarities and/or differences.
- ❖ Once you know your basis for comparison, think critically about the similarities and differences between the works you are comparing, and compile a list of them.
- ❖ Once you have listed similarities and differences, decide whether the similarities on the whole outweigh the differences or vice versa. Create a thesis statement that reflects their relative weights.

### Creating an Outline:

- ❖ Complete the *comparative essay brainstorming sheet* to help develop your thesis. Outline all of your topic sentences, then your points and quotations for proof.
- ❖ ASK YOURSELF: Does each topic sentence PROVE my “BIG IDEA” on its own? A good topic sentence (argument) and thesis is like a mathematical equation.

Argument 1 = Thesis (supports thesis or demonstrates that it is true)

Point 1 + Proof 1 = Argument

Point 2 + Proof 2 = Argument

Point 3 + Proof 3 = Argument

\*This model should exist for each argument (or your three paragraphs)

### Essay Structure: Alternating Method (Point-by-point pattern)

In the alternating method, you find related points common to your central subjects A and B, and alternate between A and B on the basis of these points (ABABAB...). For instance, a comparative essay on

#### Method 1:

Paragraph 1 – A1, B1

Paragraph 2 – A2, B2

Paragraph 3 -- A3, B3

#### Method 2:

Paragraph 1 – A1

Paragraph 2 – B1

Paragraph 3 – A2

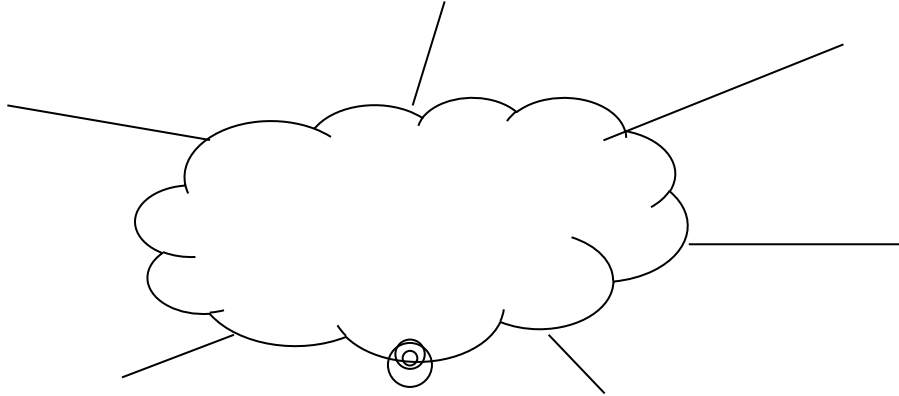
Paragraph 4 – B2

Paragraph 5 – A3

Paragraph 6 – B3

## Comparative Essay Brainstorming Sheet

**Step One:** Make a brainstorming web of the key themes or issues from your primary text. Once you have a list of key themes, think about another text from the course that deals with the same ‘big idea.’ The similarities and differences between the two texts will be the basis for your thesis.



**Step Two:** List the similarities and differences that you observe between the two texts that you are comparing for your essay. List them in a T-Chart. One text will be referred to as ‘Text A’ and the other will be referred to as “Text B.”

Text A	Text B
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