

ENG4U: Independent Study Unit: Theme Comparison Essay

Assignment:

To create an essay which effectively compares and/or contrasts the themes of a student-selected novel with a text that was studied in class.

The topic question is, **“With regard to their various themes, are these two books fundamentally similar or different?”**

You may answer this question in any way you wish.

Process:

1. You are free to structure your essay any way you wish, but you must include five key elements:
 - a. A first page that includes all the necessary identifying information as found in the MLA Style Guide (see handout).
 - b. An introduction that includes an engaging hook, a helpful and thought-provoking discussion, and a thesis statement that directly answers the topic question
 - c. Main points that clearly compare and/or contrast the themes of one book with the other (and include various quotes and examples to support your points)
 - i. Your points will be mainly supported by quotes from the novels themselves, but you will also need to use quotes from **three external academic sources** to support these points.
 - d. A conclusion that restates your thesis, reminds the reader how your argument was proved in each of your successive points, and ends on a thought-provoking or insightful point
 - e. A good works-cited page (you should most heavily rely on your two novels, but you should make good use of **at least three** secondary sources to bolster your ideas)
2. This ISU will be completed in five stages:
 - a. You will need to read two novels for this assignment: a novel that we will study together in class, and a novel of your choice based on a range of options provided by the teacher. **You will need to read both novels ahead of time – they should be finished by Tuesday, November 7th.**
 - b. Find **three good quality, credible sources** to help you unpack what some common (or contrasting) themes of these books might be (the teacher will guide you in finding these). As you note what common (or contrasting) themes are presented within your books, record the three most dominant themes on the analysis sheets provided, identifying the common idea or topic that is at the center of each pair of similar or contrasting themes.

Then, on these same sheets, record at least one good quote to support each of your identified themes, making sure to quote from at least three sources.

These analysis sheets will be due on Tuesday, November 14th and they will be worth 10% of your final project grade.

- c. Complete a formal outline for your essay, consolidating the insights from your analysis sheet into a thesis with major points, sub-points, and specific evidence, and a Works Cited page, listing all the sources you used. This will be due on **Tuesday, November 28th, and it will be worth 10% of your project grade.**
 - i. **This outline will need to show the specific evidence you plan to use in each paragraph, including both your primary sources and your external sources.**

- d. Once you have received your outline back, you will have two weeks to submit your final essay, which will be worth 80% of the project grade.
- e. **Assessment: As this final essay is a highly weighted assignment, students are URGED to use the assessment box. Get targeted feedback on your work before it is evaluated!**
3. Note: To achieve the best grade on this paper, consider what the authors were actually trying to **say** about the topics (in other words, what are the actual themes they are conveying) rather than merely how they **treat** a topic. In other words, even though Orwell shows a society that opposes and destroys love does **not** mean that he believes that love is doomed and pointless). Your thinking/inquiry mark on the final assignment will consider to what degree you have truly captured similar or differing themes vs. similar differing topics or treatments of topics.
4. As this is a university-level assignment, it is important that you learn to quote from the text. In order to get level 4s on this essay, it will be essential to use several quotes in each body paragraph (include one quote from an external source in each paragraph) to demonstrate and reinforce your points. If you simply use specific examples, the most you will be able to achieve will be a level 2+.
5. Your review must be written as an essay: There should be no headings. **The paper must be between seven and eight pages** (not including title page and works cited). Please respect the page limit.
6. When you refer to the author, use her or his last name, not first name. Eg. For Harper Lee, say, "In the novel, Lee tells the story from the point of view of Scout or Jean Louise Finch."
7. **Turnitin: Note that all essays should be submitted to turnitin.com by the BEGINNING OF CLASS on the due date.**
 - a. Class ID: **16161036**
 - b. Enrollment password: **books**
8. Make sure to format your essays in formal style according to the MLA 8 style.

Novel Choices (You MUST use one of the texts studied in class):

Nineteen Eighty Four, George Orwell, and one of the following:

- *Brave New World*, Aldus Huxley (PG)
- *The Tin Flute*, Gabrielle Roy
- *Grapes of Wrath*, John Steinbeck
- *The Count of Monte Cristo*, Alexandre Dumas
- *Fahrenheit 451*, Ray Bradbury

Hamlet, Shakespeare, and one of the following:

- *Brave New World*, Aldus Huxley (PG)
- *The Stranger (The Outsider)*, Albert Camus
- *Man in the Iron Mask*, Alexandre Dumas
- *Animal Farm*, George Orwell

	Level 1 (50%-59%)	Level 2 (60%-69%)	Level 3 (70%-79%)	Level 4 – to Level 4 (80%-89%)	Level 4 to Level 4+ (90%-100%)
	Below Expectations	Approaching Expectations	Meeting Expectations	Beyond Expectations	
Thinking/Inquiry (40) -Overall argument and thesis statement	Overall argument has more than one significant problem; your thesis has a significant issue, or it is ineffective in answering your topic question, but an effort is demonstrated -You had significant difficulty in identifying ways in which the novels were similar or different.	Overall argument has a significant problem; there is a problem with your thesis, or it doesn't quite answer your question. -You didn't quite compare themes, but compared topics, settings, or characters.	Overall argument is mostly good; thesis is simple, but it works. -You were effective in comparing the way the authors treated specific topics similarly or differently.	Overall argument is very strong and logical; thesis is well developed and contains strong supporting points to back it up. -You mostly compared themes on the given topic, but occasionally you slipped into treatment of that topic.	Overall argument is exceptionally creative and insightful ; exceptionally well-formulated thesis is excellent in its development and in the insight of its supporting points. -You have truly compared themes on the given topics in an insightful way.
-Quality of evidence in support of thesis (including good use of two external sources)	Little or ineffective evidence given, but an effort is demonstrated	Most points have some form of specific evidence, but you may need to use more quotes to demonstrate the truth of your claims.	Each paragraph is well supported by specific evidence, including at least two relevant and well explained quotes.	Each paragraph is very well supported with a range of specific evidence, including multiple well explained and well incorporated quotes.	Each paragraph is overwhelmingly supported with a great range of specific evidence, including several excellent, well-incorporated and well-explained quotes.
Communication (40) -Clarity, logical order	Points are random and, at this point, ineffective; paper is unclear and/or confusing, but an effort is demonstrated.	Organization is emerging; points may not be ordered appropriately (eg., strongest point is in the middle instead of the end); there may be some clarity issues that detract from your paper.	Every point is relatively clear and in logical order in relationship to the thesis and the other points.	Every point is very clear and in logical order in relationship to the thesis and the other points.	Your paper demonstrates superior clarity in expression and in the relationship of points to the thesis and to each other.
-Transitions between points (especially topic and concluding sentences)	Your paper has few, if any, transitions, which makes it really hard to follow your argument, but an effort is demonstrated.	Your paper is missing several important topic or concluding sentences, and as such it can be fairly difficult to follow the progression of your argument.	Your paper contains some good transitions that help the reader keep track of your overall argument. You may occasionally miss a topic or concluding sentence.	Your paper contains very good topic and concluding sentences in each point, making it easy to follow the progression of your argument.	Your paper contains excellent topic and concluding sentences in each point, and each of these transitions seems smooth and not forced.
-Appropriateness of style, expressed in formal English (phrasing, formality, vocabulary, flow)	-Your writing is currently suffering from significant formality issues and/or mundane language. Keep working on using even more powerful and precise language. -Your writing is not flowing smoothly, and as such, it is hard to understand. Use transitional words and vary your sentence structure to improve.	-Your writing in this paper is not yet effective due to significant formality issues and/or mundane language. Keep working on using even more powerful and precise language. -You are having difficulty in making your writing flow smoothly; use transitional words and vary your sentence structure to improve.	-Your writing is usually effective, but your paper contains some formality issues or mundane language. Keep working on using even more powerful and precise language. -Your flow is mostly good, but occasionally a little choppy, unnatural, or disjointed.	-Your writing is quite effective in its use of precise, powerful language, and in its range of vocabulary. -Your flow seems natural and smooth due to strong use of transitional words/phrases and a good variety of sentence structure.	-Your writing is exceptionally effective in its use of creative, compelling language as well as complex vocabulary and other literary devices where appropriate. -Your writing flows beautifully due to your excellent use of transitional phrases and a strong variety of sentence structure.
-Grammatical Precision and Spelling	Your writing contains mostly errors, including many sentence structure difficulties, but an effort is demonstrated.	Your writing contains many insignificant errors, or some sentence structure errors.	Your writing contains some insignificant errors, but not enough to detract from the clarity of your points.	Your writing contains only a few insignificant errors; overall excellent grammar.	Your writing contains very few errors at all – you have clearly proofread this carefully.
Application (20) -Strength and power of introduction and conclusion	Your introduction and/or conclusion is very short and undeveloped, or there is not enough difference between them.	Your introduction and/or conclusion is not quite full enough. Expand these discussions to add to their clarity and power.	Your introduction and conclusion are simple, but effective. Keep working to make them even more forceful and compelling.	Your introduction and conclusion are clear and effective, and they are also beginning to be powerful in their ability to engage the reader.	Your introduction and conclusion are exceptionally effective in their clarity, and moreover, they are very powerful and compelling.
-Success in adhering to the requirements of the assignment (Note that you cannot pass the application section without citations and a works cited page.)	Five of the Level 4+ requirements are met, but an effort is demonstrated	Six of the Level 4+ requirements is met	Seven of the Level 4+ requirements are met	Eight of the Level 4+ requirements are met	-Correct first-page layout -Properly double-spaced -Pages are numbered -No spaces between paragraphs -At least two quotes per body paragraph -Proper 1-inch margins -No longer than 8 pages long (excluding "Works Cited") -Proper citations used -Strong "Works Cited" page