Comparative Analysis

A comparative analysis is a paper in which you compare and contrast two items, such as theories, texts, characters, historical figures, and more. A good brainstorming tool is a Venn Diagram. It requires the following elements:

Frame of reference

The Frame of Reference is the context in which you place the two items you plan to compare and contrast; this can be a theme, question, theory, idea, or problem. Think of it as an umbrella under which you have grouped your two items for contrast.

Grounds for comparison

The Grounds for Comparison is your rationale. It lets your reader know why you've selected these two items for comparison and that your choice was deliberate and offers a legitimate perspective.

Thesis

The thesis will indicate the relationship between the two items being compared. As with any argumentative essay, your thesis should convey the entirety of your argument, which includes your frame of reference and grounds for comparison.

Example: The Great Gatsby*

Although Luhrmann's adaptation of Gatsby remains faithful to the novel's plot, it utilizes a much flashier and less contemplative tone. Careful analysis of the two works demonstrates the imperfections of cinematizing a work of literature for mainstream audiences.

Book

- Opens with Carraway's narration but doesn't include a frame that explains where he's narrating from.
- Buchannan is unlikable, but not a villain. He tells George that Gatsby owned the car that killed Myrtle, but he never explicitly blames Gatsby.
- Gatsby seems afraid in the moments before his death.

- Carraway is the narrator.
- George ends the affair between Gatsby and Daisy by killing both himself and Gatsby.

Movie

- Opens by framing Nick as an alcoholic recovering at a sanitarium.
- Tom plays the villain and convinces George that Myrtle's death is Gatsby's fault.
- Gatsby is confident and strong just before George shoots him. When he dies, he hears the phone ring and thinks that Daisy has called.

^{*}Inspiration taken from Prezi, Slate, and Cinemablend.



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