





Lesson 3: Literary Response

☐ Getting Started

For this two-day lesson, you will write a short comparison/contrast, literary response paper about the two stories you just read — "The Gift of the Magi" and "The Necklace." Typically, in a comparison/contrast paper, you focus on the ways two things are similar (comparison) or the ways they are different (contrast). If the two things obviously have a lot in common, your paper would focus more on exploring their differences. For example, you might examine the differences between two mountain bikes or smartphones to help you decide which one to buy. If the two things don't seem to have a lot in common, you'd try to find ways they are similar. For instance, if you like rap music and your father likes jazz, you could examine features they have in common to help you both appreciate each other's music.

You can probably easily come up with ways in which "The Gift of the Magi" and "The Necklace" differ — their setting, the likability of the main character, the effect of the ending, etc. — so for the paper you write for this lesson, you will compare elements of the two stories to show how you think they are similar. You'll back up your observations with examples and quotations from the stories.

Stuff You Need

-  "Brainstorming Similarities"
-  "Informal Outline"
-  "Literary Response Rubric"
-  "Details and Support"

Ideas to Think About

- How do authors use similar techniques to tell stories?
- Why is textual evidence important when analyzing literature?

Things to Know

- Comparison/contrast papers usually focus more on ways that two things are similar (comparison) or more on ways they are different (contrast).
- When you include a direct quotation from a story in a paper, place a quotation mark at the end of the quotation (with no period), then include the author's last name in parentheses, and finally insert a period. (If the source contains page or line numbers, you would include that information as well.) Your citation should look like this: "Quote" (Author's last name).

- Transitional words and phrases help you move smoothly from one idea to another in a paper.

Activities

☐ **Activity 1: Brainstorming Similarities**

Consider some ways that "The Gift of the Magi" and "The Necklace" are similar. Try to look beyond any obvious factual similarities (such as both stories featuring a young, poor married couple or both stories having a third-person narrator) to elements that may not be evident right away. Here are some possible areas of similarity to consider:

- Ways in which Jim and Monsieur Loisel are alike
- How the stories communicate to the reader that the characters are poor
- The two stories use hyperbole (obvious exaggeration)
- The role that poverty plays in the development of the plot
- Ways in which the third-person omniscient narrator in both stories is similar
- How the two stories communicate a moral lesson
- The use of irony in the stories
- How the stories deal with the ideas of pride, love, or sacrifice

Use the graphic organizer on the "Brainstorming Similarities" page to explore 3-4 of these and/or your own ideas further. Take notes on specific ways you think the two stories are alike in that category. Try to find specific examples or quotations from the texts to back your observations. For example, if you think that Jim and Monsieur Loisel are alike in certain ways, jot down what personality traits you think they share and some examples of quotations that you think support your analysis (such as things the characters do or say in the story). Don't worry if you can't come up with a lot of information right now — as you work through the process of writing the paper, you may find additional evidence to support your assertions or additional details about how the two things or people are alike. Put a star by the two similarities that you'd like to use in your paper.

☐ **Activity 2: Creating a Rough Outline**

Your paper will be four paragraphs long. Here is what each paragraph should contain:

- **Introduction:** This paragraph mentions the two stories, their authors, and some clear differences between the two stories. The last sentence will contain the thesis statement and will mention two ways that the stories are similar. **HINT:** Consider how you can transition from the differences you mention to the thesis statement. For example: "Although the stories have many differences, _____ and _____ are two ways they are similar."
- **Body Paragraph 1:** The topic sentence should explain the first similarity mentioned in the thesis statement, and the paragraph should focus on that similarity only. The paragraph will contain evidence (examples, explanations, quotations) that supports your thoughts.
- **Body Paragraph 2:** The topic sentence should explain the second similarity mentioned in the thesis statement, and the paragraph should focus on that similarity only. The paragraph will contain evidence (examples, explanations, quotations) that supports your thoughts.
- **Conclusion:** The final paragraph restates the thesis (using different words) and provides some final thoughts (such as some key differences within the two areas of similarity you discussed).

Use the "Informal Outline" page to help you plan the structure of your paper. The graphic organizer from the brainstorming activity will help you fill in some of the information. You may not be able to fill in every section right now; you can add details once you start writing the paper. Refer to the "Literary Response Rubric" to understand how the assignment will be assessed.

☐ Homework

Spend some time expanding on the details and support of the two similarities you will focus on in your paper. One strategy to help you develop your points is to turn an assertion into a question and then use the APE strategy from Lesson 2. Here's an example.

Perhaps you think that Jim and Monsieur Loisel are similar.

First, turn that into a question: How are Jim and Monsieur Loisel similar?

Now **Answer** that question.

- *Jim and Monsieur Loisel are similar in their selfless behavior toward their wives.*

Next, **Prove** that idea by providing examples or quotations from the text.

- *Mathilde wants 400 francs to buy a dress for the party. This is her husband's response: "He grew slightly pale, for this was exactly the amount he had been saving for a gun" (de Maupassant).*
- *Jim's watch is the most precious and valuable thing he owns: " Now, there were two possessions of the James Dillingham Youngs in which they both took a mighty pride. One was Jim's gold watch that had been his father's and his grandfather's" (O. Henry).*

Extend by explaining how the evidence supports your ideas.

- *Even though Monsieur Loisel was hoping to buy a gun, he instead gives the money to his wife so she can buy a dress that will make her happy to attend the party.*
- *Jim sells his most prized possession, a family heirloom, to buy a Christmas present for his wife. Both men sacrifice an item that they want so that their wives can have something that will make them happy.*

Note that each quotation ends with a quotation mark (with no period), then the author's last name in parentheses, and finally a period. This method helps the reader specify which story is being quoted. Make sure that the Extend portion includes an explanation of each individual quotation or example and then a sentence that summarizes or brings together the two things being compared. You can add details and quotations to the pages from either Activity 1 or Activity 2, or if you'd like to use the APE method, complete the "Details and Support" page.

☐ **Activity 3: Write Your Paper**

Use the activity pages you completed yesterday to help you write your paper. As you begin combining ideas into paragraphs, be sure to use transitional words and phrases to help you move smoothly from one point to another.

These words and phrases help you move from one point to a contrasting or different point: *although, but, even so, however, in contrast, instead, nevertheless, on the other hand, still, though, yet*

These words or phrases help you link points that are similar: *also, and, in a similar way, like, likewise, moreover, similarly*

These words or phrases indicate that you are giving an example or being more

specific: *for instance, for example, to illustrate, specifically*

☐ **Wrapping Up**

For homework, you will type your paper (if it isn't typed already) and make any needed revisions.

☐ **Homework**

Type your paper (if you haven't done so already). Look over the rubric again and then read through your paper to make sure you have addressed all of the points listed in the rubric. Read your paper, preferably out loud, to note any awkward wording or grammatical errors. Be sure to spell check your work as well.

Brainstorming Similarities

Directions: Think of 3-4 ways that "The Gift of the Magi" and "The Necklace" are similar. You can use some of the ideas in the lesson, your own ideas, or a combination of the two. Take notes on how they are similar and how you could back up your thoughts with evidence (examples or quotations) from the two stories.

Way the two stories are similar	Details	Evidence from "The Gift of the Magi"	Evidence from "The Necklace"

Informal Outline

Directions: Use this page to help you organize your paper.

Introduction

Title and author of the two stories	
Some important ways the stories are different	
Thesis statement that mentions the two similarities you will focus on	

Body Paragraph 1

Possible topic sentence	
Evidence to back up the similarity	
Explanation of the evidence	

Body Paragraph 2

Possible topic sentence	
Evidence to back up the similarity	
Explanation of the evidence	

Conclusion

Restate your thesis (using different wording)	
Make some final thoughts/ observations	



	yes	no	points
Does the introduction include the stories' titles and authors? (5 points)			
Does the introduction mention some ways the stories are different? (5 points)			
Is there a solid thesis statement at the end of the first paragraph? (10 points)			
Are the two similarities clearly stated? (15 points)			
Do you support your ideas with evidence from the text? (15 points)			
Do you sufficiently explain how the evidence supports your points? (15 points)			
Are the discussions thoughtful and insightful? (10 points)			
Do you use effective transitional words and phrases? (5 points)			
Do you restate your thesis in a different way in the beginning of the conclusion? (5 points)			
Do you have a strong concluding paragraph? (10 points)			
Is your paper free of major punctuation and grammar errors? (5 points)			
Total			

Comments: _____

Details and Support

Directions: Use a variation of the APE method to help you develop your points of comparison.

Your first point of comparison: _____

1. Turn that into a question: _____

2. **A**nswer the question: _____

3. **P**rove your answer by providing examples or quotations from the text.

a. "Gift of the Magi": _____

b. "The Necklace": _____

4. **E**xtend by explaining how the evidence supports your ideas.

a. "Gift of the Magi": _____

b. "The Necklace": _____

c. Sentence that summarizes/brings together the evidence from the two stories: _____

Your second point of comparison: _____

1. Turn that into a question: _____

2. **A**nswer the question: _____

3. **P**rove your answer by providing examples or quotations from the text.

a. "Gift of the Magi": _____

b. "The Necklace": _____

4. **E**xtend by explaining how the evidence supports your ideas.

a. "Gift of the Magi": _____

b. "The Necklace": _____

c. Sentence that summarizes/brings together the evidence from the two stories: _____

Parent Overview

Lesson 3: Literary Response

Getting Started

? Big Ideas

- How do authors use similar techniques to tell stories?
- Why is textual evidence important when analyzing literature?



Facts and Definitions

- Comparison/contrast papers usually focus more on ways that two things are similar (comparison) or more on ways they are different (contrast).
- When you include a direct quotation from a story in a paper, place a quotation mark at the end of the quotation (with no period), then include the author's last name in parentheses, and finally insert a period. (If the source contains page or line numbers, you would include that information as well.) Your citation should look like this: "Quote" (Author's last name).
- Transitional words and phrases help you move smoothly from one idea to another in a paper.



Skills

- Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence. (LA)
- Use words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counter claims. (LA)
- Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text. (LA)
- Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. (LA)
- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (LA)
- Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. (LA)
- Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take. (LA)

Introducing the Lesson

In this two-day lesson, students will write a short comparison/contrast literary response paper comparing "The Gift of the Magi" and "The Necklace."

Outline of Activities and Answer Keys

Activity 1: Brainstorming Similarities

Students brainstorm ways the two stories are similar. Several examples are provided in the lesson, and students are free to use those and/or come up with some of their own. Encourage them to consider specifics for each one. For example, if students think that Jim and Monsieur Loisel are alike, they should note ways that they are similar (such as being calm and patient or being loving and selfless husbands) and back up those observations with specific evidence from the text, such as examples or quotations. This is just a prewriting assignment, so students do not have to be exhaustive in their analyses. For homework, they will add details and evidence for the two points of similarity that they choose for the paper.

Activity 2: Creating a Rough Outline

A graphic organizer is provided so that students understand how to structure their paper. They may not be able to fill in all the sections right now, but the work they are able to do will help them as they write their paper. Encourage students to refer to the rubric so they understand how the assignment will be assessed.

Homework

Students continue developing their two points of comparison. They can add to the brainstorming page in Activity 1 or fill out the "Details and Support" page, which uses a variation of the APE method to help students develop their ideas.

Activity 3: Write Your Paper

Wrapping Up

Questions to Discuss

- Were you surprised at how many similarities you found between the two stories? Explain. (Answers will vary.)
- Which of your points do you think has the strongest support? (Answers will vary.)
- Which story do you like better? Why? (Answers will vary.)

Things to Review

Review transitional words and phrases.

Review the APE method.

Review how to construct a comparison/contrast essay.

Homework

Students should finish their literary response paper for homework. They should also type the paper, consult the rubric to ensure that all of the points have been addressed, and review the paper for grammar and punctuation errors. Due to time constraints, the revision and proofreading stage is minimized for this assignment, so the point value on the rubric is low. Still, encourage students to ensure that their work is spellchecked and reviewed for major errors.

Use the rubric found in the student section to assess the assignment.