

Writing Assignment 4: Comparative Analysis (Research Project)

Workshop Deadlines: Workshop has two deadlines and both must be met.

- Post first draft of WA4 in the D13 forum by 11:59 PM May 21st
- Post peer-evaluation of WA4 in the DB13 forum by 11:59 PM May 25th

Final Draft Deadline: May 31, 2018 by 11:59 PM PST

Objective:

Since Writing Assignments 3 and 4 are the research project when put together, their collective purpose is to give you additional practice in library research, source analysis, and literary analysis. By writing this essay, you will:

- become closely familiar with the compare/contrast rhetorical method of writing because you will take course in analyzing the similar and differing elements in literature as you determine the strength with which each element is used
- further develop your skills for writing a clear thesis statement with a plan of development
- organize your ideas either subject-by-subject or point-by-point
- support your claims with directly quoted, paraphrased, and/or summarized material from two primary sources (two short stories) and six secondary sources (literary criticisms, overviews, forewords, abstracts, dissertations, biographical sources)
- express yourself clearly and concisely
- continue to adopt the MLA style when formatting your document and when citing your sources, both parenthetically and on a Works Cited.
- revise then editing your draft carefully

What you previously completed in WA3:

1. Selected research project option/prompt, selected two primary sources, and created your thesis and plan of development for WA4
2. Selected six secondary sources and created six rhetorical précis, one per secondary source
3. Created your Works Cited page

What you must do for WA4:

With all your preparation, you are now ready to complete the research project by writing your comparative analysis essay. In this essay you will use the two Flannery O'Connor short stories as your primary sources, and you will use your six secondary sources, each at least once to further your argument. **The following are 9 important guidelines for students to follow.**

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1. Include an appropriate introductory paragraph.

Make sure your introductory paragraph introduces the author, the title of the two short stories that you are working with, the years they were published, some relevant background information regarding the author or the cultural context in which her work was written—something relevant to your essay. The introductory paragraph is a good place to include a quote from a secondary source regarding the genre of the writing, biographical information about the author, or provide some general insight into her works as a whole, particularly if the passage is from an overview, a book preface/foreword, an abstract, or a biographical article/essay. You must also include a strong thesis and plan of development at the very end of your introductory paragraph. Since you already created one for WA3, you may now include it as the last sentence of your introductory paragraph.

2. Keep your analysis between 1,500 to 2,100 words, not including the Works Cited page.

Please do not exceed the maximum word limit. It is important to use concise language, strong supporting evidence, and to control your writing. Just as a tip, frequently review your work for extraneous stuff that pads your writing and weighs down your argument.

3. Remember your intended audience: college-level literary scholars.

4. To effectively organize your argument, use either a “block method” (one side at a time) or “alternating method” (point-by-point) pattern of organization. Here is a briefing about each of the two pattern types.

Block Method

- Also called One Side at a Time or Subject-by-Subject
- Focus is on items being compared/contrasted (stories)

The writer presents one work (story), describes all of its relevant grounds and attributes (elements of comparison/contrast), and then does the same with the second item (other story), using the same grounds for comparison/contrast. Points of comparison/contrast are discussed in terms of the works being evaluated.

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Advantage of Block Method: It guarantees that each object will have a unified discussion.

Disadvantage of Block Method: The points of comparison, because so widely separated in the essay, may be less clear to the reader.

Works best when:

- two objects compared are relatively simple
- points of comparison are general and few in number
- amount of information presented is not great

Generally a poor organizational choice for complex essays

Alternating Method

(Recommended for this assignment)

- Also called Point-by-Point or Element-by-Element
- Focus is on the grounds and attributes of comparison (literary elements within the stories)

The writer alternates between elements of comparison/contrast (the three literary points), jumping back-and-forth between the two stories. Works compared are discussed in terms of the grounds and attributes of comparison.

Advantage of Alternating Method: It makes it easy for the reader to grasp the specific points of comparison because one literary element is thoroughly analyzed for both stories before moving on to the next literary element.

Disadvantage of Alternating Method: It might be harder to pull together details and form a distinct impression of what each object (story as a whole) is like, as the author of the essay is constantly jumping back-and-forth.

Works best when:

- There are many specific points of comparison that require close attention
- Amount of information presented is great for each point of comparison

Generally a good pattern of organization for multifaceted literary essays

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5. Include a reasonable amount of textual support from your two primary sources, meaning your Flannery O'Connor short stories, of which one must be "A Good Man Is Hard to Find."

You have the option of directly quoting, paraphrasing, or summarizing the passages from the stories. Please use the Triple-E formula: Example + Evidence + Explanation. I mark off when I do not see some variation of this formula being used in your essays to sandwich your evidence.

- First, present the *example* to support your argument.
- Next, present the quoted, paraphrased, or summarized *evidence* to substantiate your example in support of your argument. When directly quoting, make sure to properly integrate your quotes. First, introduce the context of your borrowed evidence by indicating what it is intended to show or by naming its source, or both. Your goal is to seamlessly connect your quotations to your own sentences. Then insert the quote and parenthetically cite it by including the last name of the author (since you are using multiple sources in this essay), a shortened version of the title of the story (since you are using two stories by the same author), and the page number ("A Good Man" 117).
- Lastly, please sufficiently *explain* how the borrowed evidence supports your example, thereby proving your thesis argument as a whole. Make sure to connect the dots for your readers; never assume that they will get it. Additionally, keep in mind that if the borrowed evidence does not help your argument or if you are unable to make a connection back to your thesis, then do not use it. The whole point of borrowing information/evidence from an outside source to use within one's essay is to strengthen one's argument, anything else is counterproductive.

Please do **NOT** do the following:

- Place quotes in the topic sentence of supporting paragraphs
- Place quotes back to back
- Flood your writing with too many lengthy (4+ lines) quotes with limited to zero original thought
- Leave your readers to figure out the meaning of a quote
- Quote phrases or passages that are non-essential

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6. Include supplemental support from your secondary sources (literary criticism, abstract, dissertation, preface/foreword, overview, biographical source) that you have read and summarized. Keep in mind, the material that you borrow from the secondary sources are supposed to give your argument more dimension and texture, not be your argument. You may include them in the following ways:

- Use what the critics/scholars have to say to directly support/amplify any of your own ideas or points. For example, you may find a quote in a literary criticism about the symbolism behind O'Connor's use of cloud patterns in "A Good Man..." and want to incorporate it into your WA4 essay because it strengthens your own argument regarding "the *symbolism* of the cloud patterns in O'Connor's stories."
- Use what the critics/scholars have to say to spark some idea, but then expand upon that idea with your own original analysis that goes beyond what the critic/scholar had to say.
- Use what the critics/scholars have to say to perfectly conflict with any of your own ideas or points. This is a great set-up for refutation and counter-argument. **For this assignment, at least one secondary source must be rebutted/refuted and counter-argued. Keep in mind that this approach can add dimension to your essay because it bridges gaps in the ongoing discussion about the story or the author.**
- Use this source because it has given you a new understanding of the story or some element of the story? For example, you may find in one of your secondary sources some idea about "the grandmother's character" that you had not considered before. You could then use that idea by the critic who wrote the literary criticism and explain this new contribution to the grandmother's character. This approach shows that you are willing to include other people into your essay and credit them for their great contributions. This approach is an echo of one of your WA1 prompts.
- Use what the critics/scholars have to say because they make a general statement that you accept by the him/her and would like to incorporate that broad statement/point into your own writing in a "specific" manner, perhaps in a way not originally intended by the critic/scholar. For example, the author of the secondary source could make statement about the general theme of redemption in O'Connor's works, but you would like to use it only in application to the Misfit's character. That may not be how the critic originally intended it, but that is how you will use it to support your argument. That's fine, just explain your intentions.

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- Use what the critics/scholars have to say because they make a specific statement that you accept by the writer and would like to incorporate into your work in a more “general” manner, perhaps in a way unintended by the critic/scholar. For example, a critic makes a statement that the grandmother in "A Good Man..." is a product of her Southern environment that embraces the Jim Crow sensibility. You may want to apply that into your essay but for both the Grandmother and Julian's mother because it seems to apply to both. Thus, you are using it in a more general sense that transcends the specific original use of the statement.
- At times, you may come up with something yourself and then find a critic or advanced scholar saying the same thing. Of course, it is still your idea, and—yes—you can present it as your own, but it certainly would add authority and lend support to what you are saying if you simply included the critic/scholar to the argument.¹

Overall, just remember that you are the literary mixologist who is combining your own original ideas about the two short stories and other people’s ideas about the two short stories. Again, some of the concepts in your essay may be yours—supported by contextual evidence from the two short stories, and some ideas in your essay belong to various critics/scholars (writers of secondary sources), but the “whole” is created by synthesizing the parts together. As the “literary mixologist,” you do the mixing; therefore, you must designate “who” gets to contribute to your argument and “how” he/she gets to contribute to your argument in a way that best supports your thesis.*² That’s a lot of power, and it’s all yours.

7. Include a suitable concluding paragraph.

Your concluding paragraph must reiterate the thesis and plan of development in order to frame your complete argument. That final paragraph must also bring your argument to a thoughtful close with a final thought, scholarly question for further review, meaningful and self-explanatory quote, OR some other effective closing device. The concluding paragraph is also a good place to include a quote from a secondary source regarding the author or her works, particularly if the passage is from an overview, a foreword, an abstract, or a biographical source.

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¹Borrowed from “Writing the English Essay: Substance and Style.” Trent University.
<http://www.trentu.ca/academicskills/writingenglishessaythree.php#tipsonusingsecondarysources>

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8. **Make sure to use the MLA style to format your essay; to apply appropriate in-text parenthetical citations to directly quoted, paraphrased, or summarized passages within your essay; and to format your seven (technically eight, but you will not be including O'Connor's name twice)) source entries on your Works Cited page.**

- Refer to the MLA web links in the External Links' module for assistance
- Long quotes (4+ lined block passages) must be presented in a different format than regular quotes: indent 1" (ten spaces) and exclude quotation marks.
- The in-text parenthetical citation rests directly after the borrowed passage; it rests after the closing quotation mark.
- The period or comma rests after the in-text parenthetical citation.
- According to the most current MLA guidelines, you no longer need to include URLs at the end of your source entries in your Works Cited.

9. Please do not include your six rhetorical précis in your WA4 essay.

NOTE: For further assistance with this essay, please refer to your

- *WEALS handbook*
- *The Complete Short Stories of Flannery O'Connor*
- the various resources available in the Writing Assignment 4 learning module.

Rubric:

Point Value:

Workshop	20 points
Introductory Paragraph	20 points
Supporting Paragraphs	100 points
Concluding Paragraph	20 points
Syntax	20 points
Citations	20 points
Total	200 points

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Required Elements (Rubric): The following revising and editing checklist (pp. 8-10) is my criteria for grading.

- _____ Use of the present tense when analyzing any body of work.
- _____ Concentration on the comparative/contrast method of development
- _____ Two (2) Flannery O'Connor short stories must be used as primary sources, one of which must be "A Good Man Is Hard to Find"
- _____ Use of six (6) secondary sources: literary criticisms, abstracts, overview, dissertations, graduate theses, biographies, forewords, introductions....etc.
- _____ One secondary source must be rebutted to/refuted and counter-argued
- _____ Use of only the *Gale Virtual Reference Library*, *Literature Resource Center*, and/or *Academic Search Premier* for the six secondary sources
- _____ A properly formulated Works Cited page with at least seven (7) entries for your eight sources (one for your O'Connor stories and six for your secondary sources)
- _____ A developed introductory paragraph that solidly introduces Flannery O'Connor, the titles of her two stories, their publication years, their genre, possibly the cultural context of the stories, and/or any relevant background information.
- _____ A clear thesis statement that identifies both the subjects you are comparing/contrasting and a plan of development that states the three elements you are comparing/contrasting. Thesis must make it crystal clear which *Option* has been selected. Place thesis and plan of development at end of intro paragraph as the last sentence.
- _____ A thorough analysis of each point for both subjects (paralleled points)
- _____ For subject-by-subject comparisons, you must include a distinct transitional phrase that connects the two sections of the essay
- _____ For point-by-point comparisons, you must include appropriate transitions to indicate a shift from one point to another
- _____ Strong topic sentences at the start of supporting paragraphs that begin with appropriate transitional phrases, include the plan of development point being discussed in that paragraph and reinforce the thesis in some way.
- _____ Effective transitions throughout essay: use transitional/signal phrases at the start of each supporting paragraph and when launching supporting examples (First, Secondly, Comparatively, Similarly, Additionally, Next, Conversely, In contrast, for example, for instance...etc.)
- _____ Convincing summarized, paraphrased, and/or directly quoted evidence that support your main point (thesis). Quotes, paraphrased passages, or summarized passages (contextual support) must be directly relevant and should sufficiently illustrate your claim

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- _____ Use at least two (2) relevant quotes and/or paraphrased passages for each literary device per story (i.e. three literary devices per story equals to 6+borrowed passages from the short stories: the primary sources)
- _____ Do not place quotes back-to-back.
- _____ Correct integration (Triple E) and citation (MLA) of quoted, summarized, and/or paraphrased material: establish context of quote before inserting quote, discuss the significance of the borrowed passage to your main argument after quoting, and use the MLA format to cite your sources both in-text and on your Work(s) Cited page
- _____ Triple E: Present the example, include the contextual evidence to support the example, and provide an explanation of *how* the contextual evidence supports the example and the thesis in order to make sure that your readers understand why you have used that source in your essay.
- _____ Avoid beginning and ending your paragraphs with quotes; instead, begin your paragraphs with strong topic sentences and end them with muscular concluding remarks.
- _____ Closing sentences at the end of supporting paragraphs that bring topic of paragraph to a close
- _____ Concluding paragraph must include the following: reiteration of the thesis and plan of development to properly bring the argument to a close and to frame the essay; followed by a closing thought, resolution, or brief and relevant quote that ends the entire discussion on a thoughtful note.
- _____ Use the present tense.
- _____ Careful use of diction (detailed descriptions, concise language, avoid slang, avoid fallacies or biased language...etc.
- _____ Proper use of mechanics (good grammar, appropriate punctuation marks, strong sentence structure...etc.)

Eliminate the following:

- _____ Spelling errors and grammar errors
- _____ Run-ons
- _____ Fragments
- _____ Slang and clichés
- _____ Contractions
- _____ Personal pronouns, such as *you, your(s), yourself, me, I, mine, myself, we, us, our(s), and ourselves*
- _____ Repetition, especially at the beginning of nearby sentences

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- _____ Vague words, such as *good, interesting, nice, hate, neat* ...etc.
- _____ Pronoun Agreement errors
- _____ Subject-Verb Agreement errors
- _____ Punctuation errors, such as comma, semi-colon, quotation marks, apostrophes...etc.

Finally, be sure you have included the following:

- _____ Correct use of commas, semi-colons, apostrophes, and quotation marks
- _____ A combination of sentence forms (simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex)
- _____ Parallel structure with parallel elements in a series (commas must separate three or more elements in a series)