

Comparative Analysis Essay

Introduction and Ideas

In this essay you will compare/contrast two ways of communication. Use chapter 11 in your textbook and the materials and exercises on the class page to help develop a thesis statement, topic sentences, and the appropriate organization.

To write this essay well, you will need to analyze the way we communicate under different circumstances and/or to different people. To analyze a language, we look at more than just the words used—we look at the tone, the body language, the phrases, and even what is not said or communicated. But that's not all! We use so many different mediums (ways) to communicate. Maybe it pays to focus on two different ways we communicate? The first step of this essay is going to require brainstorming and focusing your ideas.

Here are some ideas to help you get started on how to approach this topic:

Think about how we communicate the same message to two different people:

- Writing a letter to a best friend about school or class
- Writing the same letter to a respected elder

Look at scenarios that many people experience in their lives:

- First date with someone we want to get to know
- A date with someone we've known for a long time
- Learning a new language or being fluent in more than one language

Think about how we communicate when we express love and hate.

These are by no means the only things you can compare or contrast for language. Here is a list of other ideas:

- How I communicate with my coworkers vs. how I communicate with my boss
- How I communicate using technology vs. how I communicate when I'm face-to-face
- How I communicate when I'm with my family vs. how I communicate when I'm with friends
- How I communicate in my hometown vs. how I communicate when I'm someplace new
- How I communicate when I'm under stress vs. how I communicate when I'm stress free
- How I communicate when discussing something serious vs. how I communicate when discussing something more casual or relaxed

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- How I communicate to animals vs. how I communicate to people
- How I communicate to people of different ages

Assignment

Write an essay in which you compare and/or contrast two different language identities. A language identity is the way we communicate to a specific person or group of people under a specific circumstance. For example, the way we talk to a friend while we are out having fun is a different than the way we talk when we are in a job interview.

The thesis statement will make it clear why the comparison or contrast you are analyzing is of interest. It MUST also be an argument.

For example, this thesis statement does not tell us why we should contrast the two forms of communication: *The way I communicate with my brother is much different from the way I communicate with my sister.*

Here is a good revision: *The way I communicate with my brother is a reflection of how much more I depend on him than my sister.* This thesis statement also makes an argument. If you're wondering where the mapping is—I don't know. Sometimes an essay needs to be written before we know how to categorize the three main points it makes. Other times, an essay shouldn't map out the points.

Organization

Begin your paper by introducing the two things you are comparing or contrasting. You want to be sure the reader understands the two things you are comparing—so—if you are comparing your form of communication with your brother to that of your sister, tell the reader a little about your brother and sister. Or maybe you reference a show or data or an interesting article that discusses communication. Whatever you do, an introduction SHOULD NOT be a list of generalizations that everyone already knows. That's boring.

The body of your paper analyzes the two ways of communication. For each body paragraph, focus on one claim that supports your thesis.

For example, if you think the way you communicate with your brother is caring, honest, and casual, devote one paragraph to each of those claims. You would have three topic sentences:

1. My communication with my brother is very caring.
2. I am honest when I talk with my brother.
3. When communicating with my brother, I am casual and even playful.

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Within these paragraphs, you would show how your communication with your sister is NOT these things. You'd also want to explain what that difference means.

The conclusion should rephrase your argument and tell your audience where you might go from here. Ask yourself what questions remain unresolved, what ideas or questions grew out of your analysis. What did you learn about yourself or language because of your analysis?