Compare and Contrast Essay #1

**Objective:** to locate, organize and synthesize information on both works of literature to support your thesis. Comparison essays tend to focus on similarities, while contrast essays focus on differences, but usually both are included to some degree.

**Basic criteria:**

* Between 500-800 words
* Double spaced
* Typed and proofread
* Outline must be checked by me before writing rough draft
* Appropriate title
* Minimum of three quotes from the stories

**Question:**

Compare and contrast a theme(s) from TKAM with another piece of literature or two characters and a theme.

**OR** create a question on your own that compares and contrasts two or more stories

Some ways you can compare two short stories are:

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| **Point of Comparison** |  |
| **Theme** | Why did the author write this story?  Was there an epiphany for the character? For you, as reader?  Were you reminded of a time in your own life, and encouraged to think of it in a different way? |
| **Character** | Take the characters from each story and explain how they are similar, how they are different. Explain how this impacts the story (plot) and theme (message).  How do the author’s characterize? Compare methods of indirect and direct.  Compare the characters as heroes or antiheros?  Spend less time describing a character’s appearance and more time describing their personality and actions. |
| **Point of View/Voice** | Point of View: First person or third person POV? Whose story is this? Is the story told by a minor character who acts as an impartial observer? Or is the main character the same as the first person? How does this affect the story or the theme?  Voice: educated, formal, informal, sad, upbeat, hopeful…? |
| **Setting** | Setting includes both TIME and PLACE. It is easy to focus on place and forget to mention time. How does the setting affect the theme? The big ideas?  Time: Contemporary (present-day), set in the past, in the future?  Place: Specific to one region? Universal? Small-town, urban? |
| **Structure or Style** | Are there any point-of-view switches?  Is time linear, or are there many flashbacks and flash forwards?  Is the story divided into ‘chapters’, or easily dividable chunks?  Is it an allegory? A satire? An atmosphere story? Escapist or Interpretive? |
| **Plot** | When writing an essay it is tempting to spend most of your time regurgitating the plot, finally getting to the comparison in the final paragraph. This is a very common trap. Avoid it. Spend very little time on the plot. Practise summarising both stories as part of your revision, in one or two sentences. And as always, how does the plot relate to the big ideas? The themes? |

**Steps to writing:**

1. Create a **Venn diagram** OR use a **chart graphic organizer** to **brainstorm** your ideas. In point form, list the different ways the stories highlight discrimination OR what your research concerns.
2. **Review your ideas**. What is the most insightful and interesting points? Highlight these.
3. Can you compile this information into one **thesis** (your main argument) that encompasses both stories? Eg. *Character- “Harrison Bergeron” is a satirical story that ridicules our perception of the rebellious hero whereas “The Dollhouse” uses the stereotypical innocent child who indirectly questions the established social norms.*
4. Write an **outline** on a graphic organizer that contains at least three quotes and a general outline of your organization and structure. Note there is a format to compare and contrast essays- point by point or block organization. Be sure to use it correctly.
5. Write a **rough draft** on a document. Use transition words but don’t worry too much about grammar and conventions YET. It is more important to get a general idea down on paper.
6. After 24 hours, **revise** essay sentence by sentence. Look for sentence structure, comma use, inserting quotes properly and clarity of argument.