

Welcome to

Comparative Essays

TFSS

English Homepage

Analytical Essays

How to Write an Comparative Essay

- A comparative essay is an essay in which two works are compared. They may include similarities and/or differences.

Read the book

- In order to write a great essay, it is important to understand the pieces you are writing about. So read, read and read.

Determine Themes

- In order to make a successful thesis, list all the themes that may be found in both novel
- list the similar themes found in the novels

Narrow it down

- once you have a list of similar themes, write down how the themes relate to each novel
- find any differences in the novel (for that particular theme) if you can

Make a choice

There are 2 different types of comparative essays. Depending on your two novels, you will have to make a choice.

- Similarity vs. Similarity
- Similarity vs. Difference

Make a thesis

- based on your type of comparative essay, be prepared to make a theme
- A similarity vs. similarity essay will be in the format In both novels, _____ and _____, so and so happened. This is what you are going

to prove in your essay

- A similarity vs. difference essay will be in the format *In the novels (title) by (author) and (title) by (author) both _____, however, in one novel this happens while in the other novel this happens.*

In the following example, it will be a similarity vs. similarity. The two novels that will be compared are *Oryx and Crake* by Margaret Atwood and *La prisonniere* by Malika Oufkir (translated by Michelle Fitoussi). There are direct quotations as well as concrete examples.

EXAMPLE

- Major theme in both novels: Survival
- In *Oryx and Crake*, Snowman needs to survive with the crakers as he thinks he is the last person living on earth and in *La prisonniere*, Malika Oufkir needs to survive 20 years in a desert prison
- both Snowman and Malika make it through and survive but it couldn't have been done without the encouragement and help of others
- therefore the essay will be similarity vs. similarity
- **Thesis: In both novels, the characters realize that survival is challenging, however, with the companionship of others, they find out that it is possible to survive and to gain freedom.**

Introduction

- 3-4 sentences
- First sentence: general statement that introduces your theme.
- next two sentences: elaborate about the theme and novels
- last sentence: thesis

Everyday, there are humans living in poverty and in hospitals who strive to survive so that they can live another day. In the novel *Oryx and Crake* by Margaret Atwood, Snowman, the protagonist, tries to survive on an isolated land with the children of *Oryx and Crake*, and in the novel *La Prisonniere* by Malika Oufkir, translated by Michelle Fitoussi, Malika tries to survive twenty years in a desert gaol. In both novels, the characters realize that survival is challenging, however, with the companionship of others, they figure out it is possible to survive and to gain freedom.

Argument #1- follow AA BB format

- **Topic sentence: introduces your argument, throughout this paragraph, you will be gathering quotations that prove this statement.**
 - In both novels, the main characters find it difficult to survive in isolation.
- **A: Transition, phrase that introduces your proof/quotation**
 - To begin with, Snowman faces a difficult situation, as the compounds have been destroyed and as a result, limited resources are available.

- **Quotation: quotation from the book that proves your argument**
 - Snowman is starving as he tries to save his food: "He's stashed some mangoes... a precious half bottle of Scotch- no, more like a third- and a chocolate flavoured energy bar scrounged from a trailer park, limp and sticky inside its foil"(Atwood, 4).
- **Analysis: how your quotation proves your argument**
 - Healthy food is the key to survival and without this resource, Snowman's health is slowly weakening day by day. Limited clothes and shelter also make Snowman's life very difficult to live in the paradise project land as these are also the basic necessities of life.
- **A: transition, phrase that introduces your next proof/quotation**
 - Furthermore, Snowman desperately misses his luxurious life in the compound.
- **Quotation: quotation from the book that proves your argument**
 - Before, when Snowman lived in OrganInc compound, he had the luxuries of an indoor swimming pool, a small gym, furniture and high speed bullet trains (26-27).
- **Analysis: how your quotation proves your argument**
 - Snowman's past experiences make it difficult for him to live in the paradise land where there is limited technology. His painstaking memories of previous years remind him of his easy life and this makes it hard for Snowman to face the harsh conditions.
- **Transition sentence: How novel B relates to novel A (for this particular argument)**
 - Like Snowman, Malika faces difficulties living in the desert gaol.
- **B: transition, phrase that introduces your proof/quotation for the second novel**
 - Malika's necessities of life are limited when she is kept in prison to slowly die.
- **Quotation: quotation from the book that proves your argument**
 - Malika explains that due to the government's rationed food, she and her family were at a point of starvation: "We fantasized about a piece of meat, we salivated when the smell of the guards' tagine wafted in on the wind. Then we were as excited as hounds scenting their quarry"(Oufkir, 211).
- **Analysis: how your quotation proves your argument AND how it relates to novel A**
 - Food is the chief resource that keeps a human alive and without this, survival is hard especially in a hot desert prison like Malika's family. Similar to Snowman's limited resources, Malika has rationed water, ragged clothes, no fresh air and spoiled food.
- **B: transition, phrase that introduces your proof/quotation for the second novel**
 - Malika had a luxurious city life in the past, similar to Snowman but now, she can only hear silence rather than the sounds of the city.
- **Quotation: quotation from the book that proves your argument**
 - Malika slowly forgets the noise of the city, the conversations on

the streets, the car horns, the telephone rings and all the familiar sounds of the city that her family really misses (203-204).

- **Analysis: how your quotation proves your argument AND how it relates to novel A**
 - When Malika lived in the city, she was the King's adopted daughter hence, her luxuries and basic necessities of life were easy to obtain. Now, past memories make it difficult for her to survive in the prison, as the harsh conditions and the reality that she is not living in the city anymore must be faced.
- **Concluding Sentence**
 - Therefore, survival is difficult during harsh times without the basic necessities of life.

Argument #2- follow AA BB format, how companionship of others help Malika and Snowman survive

- **Topic sentence: introduces your argument, throughout this paragraph, you will be gathering quotations that prove this statement.**
 - Despite the difficult times, companions will help one obtain freedom.
- **A: Transition, phrase that introduces your proof/quotation**
 - Due to the children of Oryx and Crake, Snowman is determined to survive.
- **Quotation: quotation from the book that proves your argument**
 - He thinks, "Despite their irritating qualities- among which he counts their naïve optimism, their open friendliness, their calmness and their limited vocabularies- he feels protective towards them"(153).
- **Analysis: how your quotation proves your argument**
 - Snowman feels that despite all the arduous circumstances he must tolerate to survive, he should stay alive to guide the children and develop their future. Snowman slowly believes that survival is possible if he has a purpose, and now he is eagerly determined to survive.
- **A: transition, phrase that introduces your next proof/quotation**
 - Also, due to the children, Snowman pursues freedom as his companions make him realize that he is not the last human on earth.
- **Quotation: quotation from the book that proves your argument**
 - They tell Snowman that they saw others who had skin and hair on their face like him and that they went along the beach (364-365).
- **Analysis: how your quotation proves your argument**
 - Due to the children's information, Snowman finally finds freedom when he discovers the humans whom he has been searching for a long time. Thus, companions can lead one to achieving their freedom.
- **Transition sentence: How novel B relates to novel A (for this**

particular argument)

- Similar to Snowman, Malika finds a purpose to survive the harsh conditions of the prison: her family.
- **B: transition, phrase that introduces your proof/quotation for the second novel**
 - Malika's family was in misery as they could not communicate, their health was deteriorating, diseases were born and morale was low.
- **Quotation: quotation from the book that proves your argument**
 - Malika helped her family by listening, comforting, advising, storytelling and at the end of the day she was tired by using her energy to support them. But she said that they were her reason for living (213).
- **Analysis: how your quotation proves your argument AND how it relates to novel A**
 - Due to her companions, Malika is more determined that she must survive to help her family and like Snowman, her family makes Malika realize that survival is possible if life has a purpose.
- **B: transition, phrase that introduces your proof/quotation for the second novel**
 - Next, Malika and her family escape the horrible life of the desert prison by building a five metre tunnel.
- **Quotation: quotation from the book that proves your argument**
 - "On 27 January 1987, we smashed the concrete and eased up the slabs with a spoon, a knife handle, the lid of a sardine tin and an iron bar from one of our beds. By we, I mean Maria, Soukaina and myself. Mimi was in no condition to help us, but she encouraged us and was very efficient when it came to clearing away the earth"(252-253).
- **Analysis: how your quotation proves your argument AND how it relates to novel A**
 - Although Malika's sisters were weak from starvation, rats in the prison, attempted suicides and isolation from the real world, they were determined to obtain freedom and it was due to them, that Malika started her road to freedom.
- **Concluding Sentence**
 - Their tunnel was the escape to their past life, just like Snowman and eventually after many years, in February 1991, Malika and her family finally became free.

Conclusion- sum up thesis and arguments

In conclusion, both Snowman and Malika realize that despite the challenges involved in surviving without the basic necessities of life, if one has companions, survival will be possible and freedom can be achieved.

[Citations](#) [Editing](#) [Checklist](#) [Poetry Analysis](#)

[Books](#) [Poems](#) [Resumes](#) [Reports](#) [Grammar and Punctuation](#)

