

Compare-Contrast Essay Assignment

What is a comparison-contrast essay?: When you compare, you are looking at similarities, and when you contrast, you are looking at differences between two topics. A comparison-contrast essay may focus on just similarities, just differences, or a combination of both. The thesis of the essay should make the focus and purpose clear. Comparison-contrast essays are usually structured in two ways or arrangements—"block" or "point-by-point" (also called "alternating") arrangement.

An essay with block arrangement discusses all of the points for one item then moves to the next. For example, your essay in a block arrangement would state all of your points about the Lenore Drew speech, then make points about the Charles Drew speech. A point-by-point or alternating formatted essay makes a specific point of comparison of the two speeches in each paragraph. Your essay in a point-by-point arrangement would discuss a specific comparison/contrast of the two speeches in a paragraph, as it relates to a specific point you are making. For example, you might have a paragraph that discusses Drew's dedication to mentoring (and how both speeches address it) and another about Drew's concerns about the cost of medical schools (and how both speeches address it). Try outlining both patterns to determine what structure is most effective for your essay.

Writing Task: Write a comparison-contrast essay of the two speeches, which should be minimum of three pages and follows the styles established for the course. The essay should also include a minimum of five digitized items, along with appropriate source citations, from the [Profiles in Science: The Charles R. Drew Papers](http://profiles.nlm.nih.gov/BG) website that relate to your speech comparison/analysis. Consider for example, if you have a paragraph about how both speeches focus on Dr. Drew's advocacy for teaching and mentoring African American physicians, you might cite a photograph of Drew working with his students or a quotation from one his students.

Guided Essay Writing:

1. Using the template on the third page, develop a Venn Diagram to brainstorm all of the similarities and differences between the speeches.
2. After brainstorming, determine whether you will develop a claim that focuses on the similarities, differences, or both.
3. Once you have determined what points you want to make in your comparison-contrast essay, review the items from the [Profiles in Science: The Charles R. Drew Papers](http://profiles.nlm.nih.gov/BG) website to determine which five will be most relevant for your essay.
4. Write an outline that includes the thesis and topic sentences of your essay. Remember, your thesis should do more than state that there are similarities or differences between the two speeches. Rather, the thesis should articulate what these are and why they are significant. Each topic sentence should state the point of each paragraph, and should clearly link to the thesis.

Guided Essay Writing (continued)

5. Draft an essay with an introduction that ends with a thesis, body paragraphs that provide supporting details from the documents you have studied (each body paragraph should begin with a topic sentence that articulates its main point and connects back to the thesis), and a conclusion that recaps your main points and articulates their significance and implications.
6. Peer review the essay with the above guidelines in mind.
7. Take time to revise and edit the essay based on the feedback you received.

