

## Brainstorming with Venn Diagrams

When writing papers that require analysis of multiple ideas or sides of an issue, such as Compare/Contrast or Mediation papers, Venn diagrams can be utilized as a visual representation of the concepts and their association with each other. Venn diagrams use circles to represent ideas and to illustrate the relationship between the ideas. The area where the circles overlap represents commonality between the ideas, and the areas that do not overlap represent dissimilar ideas. Venn diagrams are useful while brainstorming topics as a way to organize ideas as well as to determine the similarities and differences between them.

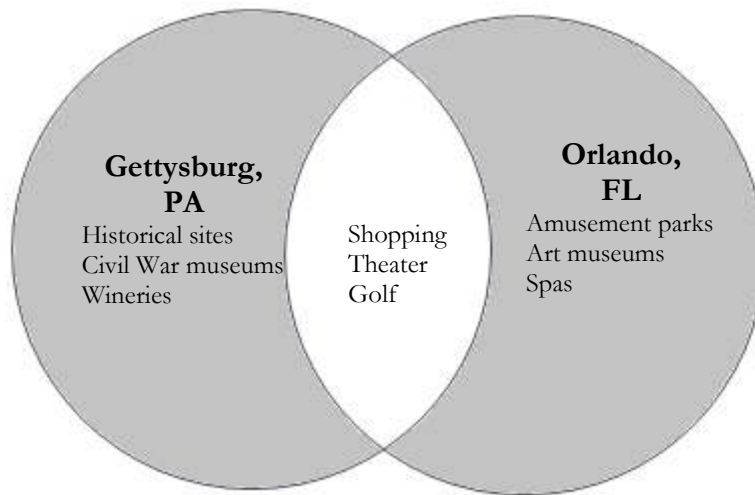
### Example:

A paper is assigned in which the attractions for two popular tourist destinations, Gettysburg, PA and Orlando, FL, must be either compared or contrasted. Construct a Venn diagram to illustrate the similarities and differences between the two cities.



The overlapping section in the center of the diagram represents shared characteristics, or topics that can be compared. In this case, several attractions are available at both Gettysburg, PA and Orlando, FL. Therefore, shopping, theater, and golf, which are located in the shaded portion of the diagram, may be topics for a comparison paper of Gettysburg and Orlando.

Different characteristics, or topics that can be contrasted, are located in the non-overlapping areas of the circles. In this example, they are the attractions unique to each location. The two sections which depict the dissimilarities between Gettysburg and Orlando are shaded in the following Venn diagram:



Therefore, attractions such as historical sites and amusement parks are possible topics for a paper that contrasts the two cities.

After brainstorming with the above Venn diagrams to discover the similarities and differences between the two locations, it is possible to select a topic and create an outline for a Comparison or Contrast paper.