



The Lantern English Co.  
The Advanced Writer

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## **The Expository Essay II – Syllabus**

**Course Description:** Students continue to focus on developing strong expository thesis statements while utilizing research and citation skills. Students will use their skills in expository writing to construct a comparison essay, a cause and effect essay, a problem and solution essay, and a final expository practice essay, structured with rough drafts and revisions.

### **Course Outline:**

**Week One:** The Comparison Essay – Submit Rough Draft

**Week Two:** The Comparison Essay – Submit Final Essay

**Week Three:** The Cause and Effect Essay – Submit Rough Draft

**Week Four:** The Cause and Effect Essay – Submit Final Essay

**Week Five:** The Problem and Solution Essay – Submit Rough Draft

**Week Six:** The Problem and Solution Essay – Submit Final Essay

**Week Seven:** Final Expository Essay – Submit Rough Draft

**Week Eight:** Final Expository Essay – Submit Final Essay



## The Expository Essay II – Grading Information

Rough draft assignments (Week 1, 3, 5, and 7) will be graded using the rough draft rubric shown below. Assignments 2, 4, 6, and 8 will be graded using our standard grading rubric for *The Advanced Writer*. All assignments will be averaged to receive a final course grade.

### Rough Draft Rubric –

<b>Exemplary 100%</b>	<b>Strong 99%-90%</b>	<b>Proficient 89%-80%</b>	<b>Developing 79%-70%</b>	<b>Emerging 69%-60%</b>	<b>Beginning 59%-50%</b>	<b>No Attempt 49% and below</b>
<p>Student has followed all assignment directions and has demonstrated exemplary understanding of lesson concepts.</p> <p>For drafts of outline, bibliography, and paper, student has submitted a complete assignment and demonstrated excellent effort.</p>	<p>Student has followed most assignment directions and has demonstrated strong understanding of lesson concepts.</p> <p>For drafts of outline, bibliography, and paper, student has submitted a mostly complete assignment and demonstrated strong effort.</p>	<p>Student has followed most assignment directions but has struggled to fully understand lesson concepts.</p> <p>For drafts of outline, bibliography, and paper, student has submitted a mostly complete assignment and demonstrated proficient effort.</p>	<p>Student has followed some or most assignment directions but has demonstrated a need for better understanding of lesson concepts.</p> <p>For drafts of outline, bibliography, and paper, student has submitted mediocre written work and demonstrated some lack of effort.</p>	<p>Student has followed some assignment directions but has demonstrated inadequate understanding of lesson concepts.</p> <p>For drafts of outline, bibliography, and paper, student has submitted inadequate written work so that the instructor finds it difficult to provide helpful feedback.</p>	<p>Student has followed few assignment directions and has demonstrated poor understanding of lesson concepts.</p> <p>For drafts of outline, bibliography, and paper, student has submitted short and poorly written work so that the instructor is unable to provide helpful feedback.</p>	<p>Student has followed few to no assignment directions and has demonstrated no understanding of lesson concepts.</p> <p>For drafts of outline, bibliography, and paper, student has submitted nothing.</p>



## **The Expository Essay II**

### **Lesson One: The Comparison Essay**

#### **SAMPLE LESSON**

By now, you might realize that expository essay writing is actually simple in form. In fact, if you have done writing in the past for school, you have likely already completed a lot of expository assignments. Even in early years, you learn how to define things through writing and categorize parts in writing. In addition, you may have already compared two things in writing, written about cause and effect, and even used your writing to discuss a problem and solution.

So, what makes these assignments worthy of an advanced writer's class? You may already know the answer: complexity. Expository writing, in concept, is not difficult. What increases the challenge and grows your ability as a writer is choosing and developing a complex topic. This ability to think through and express well-developed ideas about a complex topic will benefit you for life.

This week and next, you can apply those skills to the compare-contrast essay, also known as the **comparison essay**. This type of essay explains the similarities (or both similarities and differences) of two or more subjects.

#### **CHOOSING A TOPIC –**

1. **Choose a complex topic.** When writing a comparison essay, the subject possibilities are wide. However, at this stage of your writing experience, a comparison essay should *make a point or serve a purpose*. Choosing to compare apples and oranges or two different outfits is not going to lend to much meaningful discussion. Again, this is why you should focus on choosing a complex topic. You might choose to compare two ideas, two positions on an issue, two theories, two people, two texts, two pieces of art, or two events.
2. **Choose a topic of interest.** If the category is provided for you in the assignment, choose two subjects within that category that interest you, if at all possible. For example, if you are assigned a paper to compare two people, choose two people that interest you enough to learn about and compare them. On the other hand, if the category is not assigned, you have greater freedom to

choose something of interest. What category or sub-categories spark your inspiration? What category or sub-categories can you apply your interest or experience to? For example, growing up as a figure skater, one student found it fascinating to compare the training programs in the United States with those in other countries.

3. **Get Specific.** For example, if you have decided to compare two novels, you cannot focus on the novels at large for the purpose of a cohesive essay. The comparison will be too broad and lack significance. You might develop grounds for comparison. Will you compare the themes, the major conflicts in each novel, or a similar use of literary devices? Begin with a tight and specific focal point for your comparison essay.
4. **Develop a Grounds for Comparison.** Simply put, this means to make a point. While elementary students can write a report that compares plants and animals and make no greater connection, you cannot get away with that anymore. You have to make a point. Why have you chosen to compare these two subjects? What makes this comparison important or meaningful? You must demonstrate the reasoning behind your choice. Back to the figure skating example, learning about training programs in other countries in comparison to the training program in the United States was purposeful for this student because 1) these comparisons provided the student with different insights into how she could improve her own training habits; and 2) these comparisons made her viewership of world events more well-rounded because she could understand the backgrounds and experiences from which skaters in other countries were coming.

When choosing a category with subjects to compare and developing a point or purpose, you may find it beneficial to ask some questions. These critical thinking questions may help you narrow down the direction in which you want to take the essay. The following questions are not an exhaustive list and only give ideas for a few categories. You can develop your own similar questions for these and other comparisons.

In general, you can ask questions such as *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why*, and *how*. If you are comparing objects, foods, animals, etc., you can also consider other general properties such as size, shape, color, sound, taste, smell, weight, texture, or number.

### **Two historical periods or events**

- When did they occur—do you know the date(s) and duration? What happened or changed during each? Why are they significant?
- What kinds of work did people do? What kinds of relationships did they have? What did they value?
- What kinds of governments were there? Who were important people involved?
- What caused events in these periods, and what consequences did these events have later on?

## Two ideas or theories

- What are they about?
- Did they originate at some particular time?
- Who created them? Who uses or defends them?
- What is the central focus, claim, or goal of each? What conclusions do they offer?
- How are they applied to situations/people/things/etc.?
- Which seems more plausible to you, and why? How broad is their scope?
- What kind of evidence is usually offered for them?

## Two pieces of writing or art

- What are their titles? What do they describe or depict?
- What is their tone or mood? What is their form?
- Who created them? When were they created? Why do you think they were created as they were? What themes do they address?
- Do you think one is of higher quality or greater merit than the other(s)—and if so, why?
- For writing: what plot, characterization, setting, theme, tone, and type of narration are used?

## Two people

- Where are they from? How old are they? What is the gender, race, class, etc. of each?
- What, if anything, are they known for? Do they have any relationship to each other?
- What are they like? What did/do they do? What do they believe? Why are they interesting?
- What stands out most about each of them? (1)

## BEGINNING STEPS –

1. **Research, as needed, to understand the individual subjects more fully.**
2. **Develop a list of similarities and differences.** This is the obvious place to start any comparison essay, but you can accomplish this in many ways. You may be familiar with the Venn Diagram, which is a popular way to brainstorm and denote similarities and differences. You can also make two side-by-side lists on a sheet of paper. Whatever works for you is fine for this step.
3. **Develop a thesis.** The thesis for the comparison essay should be written based on the relative weight of similarities and differences. First, the thesis cannot and never should be written as an obvious and vague statement, such as, “The educational system in the United States and the educational system in Denmark are similar in many ways but ultimately very different.” Though the

idea of a comparison essay is basic, the thesis should never be so obvious. Think about the list of similarities and differences you developed and then make a claim based on your observations.

- **Differences outweigh similarities:**

The Chernobyl and Fukushima nuclear disasters both hold an important place in history in their region and in the world as a whole, due to their destructive nature and the movements towards improving safety they sparked; however, they each unfolded in very different ways and have left unique marks on culture.

- **Similarities outweigh differences:**

Taking place only about twenty years apart, the American War for Independence and the French Revolution shook the world as common people rose in revolt against absolute monarchies, and succeeded, with varying results.

## **STRUCTURING THE ESSAY –**

Lastly, you must decide how to structure the essay. There are two common ways of structuring a comparison essay.

- **Subject by Subject:** Also known as the Block Method, this structure presents all information about the first subject, followed by all information about the second subject. If you are discussing two local cafes, for examples, you might begin with three paragraphs about Whisk, discussing 1) its location; 2) its ambiance; and 3) its menu. Then, you would follow this up by discussing the same three parts of the other cafe, The Urban Farmhouse.

NOTE: When using such subject-by-subject organization, it is far too easy to write an essay that simply becomes a list of points. Remember, you must develop grounds of comparison, and especially in a subject-by-subject structure, you will need to be explicitly clear about this in order to make a point. That is not to say that you have to decide that one cafe is better than the other, for this is not a persuasive essay. Still, you must develop some sort of purpose. Why are you comparing these two cafes in the first place, if not merely for a list of similarities and differences?

- **Point by Point:** This structure presents comparisons by point. Again, if you were writing about two cafes, you would begin by writing one paragraph or section about the location of Whisk, followed by one paragraph or section about the location of The Urban Farmhouse. Then, you would write about Whisk's ambiance, followed by writing about The Urban Farmhouse's ambiance. Lastly, you would write about Whisk's menu, followed by writing about the Urban Farmhouse's menu.

## FINAL NOTES –

A strong expository comparison essay should make a point and accomplish at least one of the following goals:

1. Clarify something unknown or not well-understood
2. Lead to fresh insight or a new way of viewing something
3. Bring one or both of the subjects into sharper focus (2)

**Assignment 1:** Choose a complex topic to compare. Use your experience and personal interests to guide you. Once you have chosen a topic, develop specific grounds for comparison. Then, perform some research and create a list of similarities and differences which will lead you to developing a clear, specific thesis based on the weight of similarities and differences.

Write the rough draft for your first essay. This should be a three (3) to five (5) page comparison essay, using the ideas from the lesson and the attached example to guide and inspire you.

**Ensure that the essay is formatted properly.** Write your name and the date in the upper left-hand corner. Add a title centered above the essay. Properly format the paragraphs with an indented first line or a full space between each paragraph, and left-align the text. Justified text is optional but not required. Content should be typed in one of the standard fonts, size 12, double spaced.

### Essay requirements:

- three to five pages
- standard font, size 12
- double spacing
- at least **three** primary or secondary sources for citation
- works cited list, MLA style
- proper use of either in-text citations or parenthetical citations, MLA style

**Sources –**

1. “Comparing and Contrasting.” *The Writing Center*, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, <https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/comparing-and-contrasting/>.
2. Danhi, Lisa. “Writing a Compare/Contrast Essay.” *CLRC Writing Center*, Santa Barbara City College, <https://historywithmrgreen.com/page2/assets/Compare%20Contrast%20Essay%20Help.pdf>.