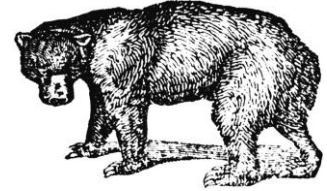


Make  
**COMPARE  
&  
CONTRAST**  
A Tamable Beast



## WHY do we compare and contrast?

We compare and contrast ideas, individuals, texts, philosophies, nations, movements, etc. in academic writing to gain a deeper understanding of the materials we are studying, their relationship to each other, and what is most important about them.

KEEP THIS IN MIND THROUGHOUT YOUR WRITING PROCESS. YOU ARE NOT ONLY DISCOVERING SIMILIARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BUT ALSO EXPLORING HOW AND WHY THESE COMPARISONS ARE IMPORTANT.

## WHAT are we trying to accomplish?

Like other academic writing, compare and contrast tasks should have an engaging, specific, and arguable thesis that explains what your comparisons are going to reveal.

KEEP THIS IN MIND THROUGHOUT YOUR WRITING PROCESS. YOUR FINAL GOAL IS A COHESIVE SERIES OF COMPARISONS THAT SUPPORT A CENTRAL ARGUMENT.

## HOW do we get started?

Some assignments explicitly ask you to compare and contrast two or more subjects, while others might be more difficult to establish. Your first objectives are to determine your **SUBJECTS** and **TOPICS**: what sorts of comparisons and distinctions are going to be relevant to your assignment and which subjects you are going to compare and contrast.

ASK YOURSELF: WHAT IS RELEVANT TO THE ASSIGNMENT? WHAT IS RELEVANT TO THE COURSE? WHAT IS INTERESTING AND INFORMATIVE? WHAT MATTERS TO THE ARGUMENT YOU HAVE BEEN ASKED TO MAKE?

# SAMPLE PROMPTS

Topic (which will probably be broken down into sub-topics)

Subjects

Subjects (in this case you will be choosing topics on your own)

(your answers to this question will provide your) Topics

- Discuss the ways in which Shakespeare talks about the passing of time in three of the sonnets we read for class.
- Choose a particular idea or theme, such as romantic love, death, or nature, and consider how it is treated in two Romantic poems.
- Compare and contrast Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* with Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*.
- Trace the concept of 'power' in both Thomas Hobbs' philosophy and Friedreich Nietzsche. How are these concepts alike and how do they differ?
- Discuss the changing ideals of American womanhood between the American Revolution and the outbreak of the Civil War.
- Select two self-portraits from different historical periods and analyze how each conveys information about the artist and his or her era.
- How do the different authors we have studied so far define and describe oppression?

# ESTABLISH

1. why you are comparing and contrasting these subjects/what you are looking for: your **FOCUS**
2. what concerns, images, questions, answers, etc. they share: your potential **TOPICS**
3. which topics are important (to the course, your prompt, etc.) or which might complement each other or be a part of the same argument: your **TOPICS**
4. **HOW** and **WHY** they each approach these topics the way they do: your **CONTENT**
5. thesis and presentation strategy: your **ORGANIZATION**

## ORGANIZATION STRATEGIES:

**TOPIC**  
by  
**TOPIC**

**SUBJECT**  
by  
**SUBJECT**

