

Compare and Contrast advice for students and parents

You can use this a way of looking at things which are similar (compare or comparison) or look at things which are different (contrast).

In some cases, you might want to do both or just one of them.

So, you could compare the reasons or what lead up to the beginning of World War 1 compared to World War 2.

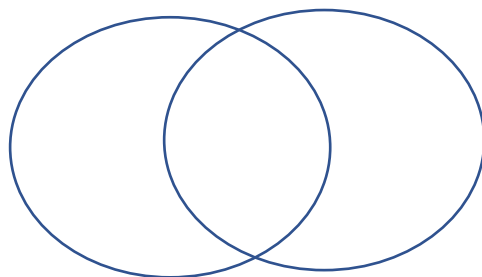
You may want to contrast the reasons for World War 1 with issues in the Vietnam War.

You may want to them used the information to construct an argument or to evaluate what you learnt.

So, if you took two poems one by Siegfried Sassoon and one by Wilfred Owen you might want to compare the language they used. Are the poems similar in style? Are they both on a similar theme, period of history? Would it be different if you compared Sassoon who wrote about World war 1 to Sidney Keyes who wrote about World War 2?

You can use compare as way or making some notes about a piece of writing.

One way to do this is to use a Venn diagram to look at the issue. Using two circles that overlap each other you can write the things unique to what you want to compare and then enter the things that are the same or overlap in the centre of the circles.



Or you could use a grid and put characteristics down one side and then tick to see which of the items you want to compare have the same or different characteristics.

Characteristics	Item 1	Item 2

[Cambridge University press](#) has some video on how to develop teens critical thinking skills such as Venn diagrams, ranking and scales and teach the teacher.

Some sample questions to prompt discussion to help parent and students dig deeper ...

- What are the key facts?
- When did the event happen? You can indicate the start and finish dates.
- How long did it last?
- What was the significance of the event?
- How did it impact on people?
- Was it different for different groups of people?
- Describe the reasons why the event happened?
- What did government, political parties, or interest groups do, did they agree or where there opposing or different views or theories about the event?
- What was the central theme(s) of the event? What evidence did they put forward? Was it disputed by other people with different or opposing views?
- Did various groups of leaders of groups make a change in the event?
- What well known or important people were known because of the event?

When looking a book, plays, films or art

- What is the title what does it tell us about the item being described?
- Is the title significant for the person who wrote or created it?
- How would you describe it to someone who did not know about it?
- What is the theme, what reaction or feelings does it evoke for you?
- If you are comparing two items which one do you prefer or like and why?
- If you are talking about a book what is the plot, the key characters, the theme, style of writing?
- For a film or a piece of art, what does it depict or show, is there a style or genre used?
- If you talking about people, who are they where are they from, how old are they, what is their background, race, class gender? Did they overcome any obstacles or struggles? Are they known for anything else? Who are their friends, peers, or are they in a relationship with? What do you most admire / least admire about their characteristics? If you were in their shoes what would you do?
- Where is the evidence that backs up their views / your views?

This doesn't have to be written down this could be a discussion over lunch or as part of their planning to write something or drawn as a comic or a storyboard.

They could do a video report or even a podcast on a subject (subject to supervision and social media age restrictions)

<https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/comparing-and-contrasting/>

<https://warpoets.org/conflicts/world-war-ii/sidney-keyes-1922-1943/>

<http://www.markedbyteachers.com/gcse/english/comparison-of-owen-and-sassoon.html>

<https://www.myvirtualacademy.com/blog/advice/teaching-teen-critical-thinking-skills/>

<https://www.cambridge.org/elt/blog/2020/06/24/critical-thinking-video-tips-to-develop-teens/>