

Preparing to write the comparative textual analysis

- Read the two pieces once for a quick overview, and then a second time to get a feel for the similarities and differences.
- Identify and highlight the audience, purpose and form.
- Plan your paper. How are you going to structure your ideas? What key lines must you talk about? Highlight the intersection points of the passage. Read the passage a third time to see if your ideas still make sense.
- Assess the effects of literary features. Be sensitive to the effect created by the author's choice of words. Find a focus. It should fit the passage rather than trying to make the passage fit it.
- Introductions and conclusions frame your paper. Try for swift, incisive entries and thoughtful exits.
- Avoid narration. Remember analysis rather than summary. Show how meaning is created. The reader needs to be led to see "the hand of the writer".
- Deal with the beginning and end of the passage
- Use language appropriate to the discussion.
- Adopt a neutral objective voice without losing your own personal flair.
- Use specific references and integrate them seamlessly.
- Edit and revise as much as time allows.