Fall 2012

Composition 1101

Prof. Scanlan

**The Comparison and Contrast Essay**

*Comparison* shows how two or more things are similar, while *Contrast* shows how things are different. In most writing examples, however, both comparison and contrast are used together. One of the writer’s most powerful tools when writing a comparison/contrast essay is the *analogy*. The analogy is a special form of comparison in which a writer explains one thing in terms of another, more familiar, thing. Below is an example of an analogy from an essay titled “The Shopping Mall High School,” by Arthur G. Powell et al.:

If Americans want to understand their high schools at work, they should imagine them as shopping malls. Secondary education is another consumption experience in an abundant society. Shopping malls attract a broad range of customers with different tastes and purposes. Some shop at Sears, others at Woolworth’s or Bloomingdale’s. In high schools a broad range of students also shop. They too can select from an astonishing variety of products and services conveniently assembled in one place with ample parking.

**More Specifically**, in Essay 2, you are to write a three-page essay in which you compare and contrast two of the following essays from our textbook that all focus on a specific vision, viewpoint, or way of describing New York.

-Colson Whitehead

-E.B. White

-Langston Hughes

-Ralph Ellison

-Katie Roiphe

-Anna Quindlen

-Nelson George

**Details:**

1. What is the basis for comparison? (subways; immigrant experiences; neighborhoods, methods of introduction, conclusions, first impressions of NYC)

2. How will you organize your essay?

• subject-by-subject (Chunking; essentially separate essays about each subject, but discussing the same points for both subjects)

• point-by-point (make a point about one subject and then follow it with a comparable point about the other)

3. Use parallel structure within sentences (matching nouns, verbs, phrases, or clauses to express the same or similar ideas. Examples: not only/but also, both/and, neither, nor, either/or)

4. Conclude with a before and after statement about how your ideas of New York have changed after this comparison.

**Grading Rubric:**

1. Title, introduction, thesis, method (25 points)

2. Parallelism, sentence structure, topic sentences (25 points)

3. Paragraph structure, transitions, organization (25points)

4. Analysis and Conclusion (25 points)

**Due Dates:**

Oct 2: Two-page draft of comparison

Oct 4: Final Draft of Essay 2 due in class in a folder with process work