

Comparative Essay

The comparative essay focuses on developments in at least two societies or regions. It relates to major themes in the course, such as social and gender structures, interactions between or among societies, political organization, or economic systems. Comparative questions always require analysis of reasons for the similarities and differences identified. Students may have the opportunity to choose different cases for comparisons.

The time allotted for this essay is 40 minutes, 5 minutes of which should be spent planning and/or outlining the answer. Write an essay that:

- Has a relevant **thesis**
- Supports the thesis with appropriate historical **evidence**.
- Addresses all parts of the question.
- Makes direct, relevant comparisons.
- Analyzes relevant reasons for **similarities AND differences**.

Base Core						Expanded Core	
Thesis addresses Sim. AND Diff.						Comprehensive and analytical thesis	
Address Similarities						Includes more than 4 pieces of specific evidence	
Addresses Differences							
Evidence (3 pieces- 1 pt, 4 pieces- 2 pts)						Addresses all parts of the question thoroughly (as relevant): comparisons, chronology, causation, connections, themes, interactions, content	
Similarities			Differences				
1	2	3	1	2	3		
Direct comparison						Relates comparisons to larger global context.	
Reason for Similarities or Differences						Includes additional analysis of Similarities and/or Differences	
TOTAL SCORE						/ 9	

Compare & Contrast Essay Organizational Structures

Similarities and Differences (Satisfactory Format)

Thesis

Body paragraph 1—similarities between regions (evidence and reason)

- Political
- Economic
- Social

Body paragraph 2—differences between regions (evidence and reason)

- Political
- Economic
- Social

Note: There may not be similarities and differences in all three categories.

Categorical “Split” (Exemplary)

Thesis Paragraph

- chooses 3 categories (e.g. political, economic, and social)

Body paragraph 1 (Political)

- similarities AND differences between BOTH regions

Body paragraph 2 (Economic)

- similarities AND differences between BOTH regions

Body paragraph 3 (Social)

- similarities AND differences in BOTH regions

What *IS* Analysis?

Analyze: determine their component parts; examine their nature and relationship, “the ability to break down material into its component parts so that its organizational structure may be understood. This may include the identification of parts or components, examination of the relationship between parts, recognition of hidden meanings and detection of the organizational principles or patterns involved.”

- historical actors: events, processes, institutions, ideas, etc. (examination of multiple causation which looks at cause and effect relationships)
- evidence (determining the significance and reliability of various perspectives like when point of view is analyzed)
- interpretations of what happened (comparing and contrasting changing versions of developments or theories)
- underlying structures (determining how all the processes, institutions, ideas, events, actors, motives, evidence, interpretations are connected and related and affect each other)
- overall process of change and continuity (connecting different regions and eras)