

Comparative Essay

Consider using with *Voyages in English 2011*

Grade 6—Chapter 7, Lesson 2 or Writer’s Workshop

Grade 7—Chapter 6, Lesson 6

Grade 8—Chapter 4, Lesson 6 or Writer’s Workshop



Teach

Explain to students that a comparative essay is writing in which they analyze two subjects and tell how they are alike and different. A comparative essay contains the following elements:

- A clear identification of the two subjects to be compared
- Specific examples on how the subjects are similar and different
- An equal weighing of both subjects
- A well-organized introduction, body, and conclusion
- A consistent structure of comparison in the body of the essay

Practice

Provide students with a selection of folktales and a tall tale that include illustrations. Model for students how to compare and contrast the features and literary elements of a specific folktale and tall tale. Explain how the illustrations support the plot and give a sense of each story’s time and place. Point out the importance of exaggeration, similes, metaphors, and sensory details. Discuss the idioms, jargon, and colloquialisms that make each story seem more authentic.

Apply

Have students work in small groups. Have each group select a folktale and tall tale picture book to analyze and compare. Ask groups to look for and discuss the following:

- What features do a folktale and a tall tale have in common?
- What literary elements does the author use?
- How do the illustrations help you understand the culture and setting of each story?
- Why do you think the author chose to write about these characters?
- How do the subject matter, dialogue, point of view, and word choice reflect a culture’s heritage, traditions, and values?

Have students use their group’s responses to write a comparative essay.

Assess

Use the rubric on the following page to evaluate students on their understanding of a comparative essay.

Listening and Speaking Connection: Invite students to share their comparative analysis orally with the class. Ask the audience to listen for specific details that tell how the genres are alike and different.

Comparative Essay

POINTS

Ideas	
Compares and contrasts features of each genre	
Compares and contrasts literary devices used in each genre	
Analyzes importance of illustrations	
Recognizes how culture influences story	
Organization	
Introduction names folktale and tall tale	
Body uses a consistent structure of comparison	
Conclusion summarizes the comparison	
Voice	
Appropriate for audience	
Holds reader's attention	
Word Choice	
Specific examples	
Vocabulary that compares or contrasts	
Sentence Fluency	
Natural transitions between sentences and paragraphs	
Variety of sentence styles	
Conventions	
Correct grammar, usage, and spelling	
Correct punctuation and capitalization	
Presentation	
Consistent margins and spacing	
Neatness	