***Why Compare and Contrast?***

Comparing and contrasting is such a natural part of who we are. In this age of social media, we often fall into the unhealthy trap of comparing our lives with each other. By looking at our “friends” social media accounts, we are motivated to eat healthier meals, go to the gym, or buy the latest smartphone.

We compare prices of items, what post secondary institutions we want to go to, which products are better, the electives we want to take, the most effective way to commute to school, the movies we want to see, and the list goes on! Start taking a mental note of all the ways you use the skill of comparison in your daily life and you will find you use it alot.

When it comes to literature, we often compare our lives with the characters in the books we read. We feel that we understand a character better when we connect to aspects of their identity.

***So Why Compare?***

**Compare -** To note the ***similarities*** between two or more things.

In literature, we compare various elements to highlight commonalities, links and relationships between two or more things. Through the process of comparison we find common ground, often creating a deeper understanding for the object of our comparison whether that be a character, the setting of a story, or the events that mark the characters’ lives.

When we compare ourselves to a character from a text, for example, it enables us to see parts of ourselves in the character’s life story. We garner a sense of compassion and empathy for their struggles and feel joyful at their victories. Essentially, comparison in this sense, enables us to foster a deeper understanding that we all belong to the human race, creating connection and unity.

***So Why Contrast?***

**Contrast -** To note the ***differences*** between two or more things.

In literature, we contrast various aspects to showcase the differences between two or more items. Through this process we are able to understand how complex and dynamic the objects of our analysis actually are.

When we contrast our lives against characters from a text, for example, we discover that experiences are unique and should be appreciated and explored as such. The differences are an entry point in understanding another’s perspective, background, or living conditions. They can be used to recognize injustice, privilege, and other aspects of inequality. In addition, contrasting items allows us to pinpoint the subtle differences between various items.

What ways can we compare and contrast in literature

* Within the same text (various elements),
* One text to another text
* Text to self
* Text to world

Key Words for Compare and Contrast

The following words indicate that two pieces are being compared.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Also * As well as * Both * Comparatively | * In the same way * In addition * Just as * Like * Most importantly |
| * Similarly * The same as * Too * In the same way * In like manner * In the same manner | * Likewise * Similarly * By the same token * Have in common |

The following words signal that two pieces are being contrasted.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * Although * Besides * But * Compared with * On the other hand * On the contrary | * Conversely * Differs, differs from * Even though * Furthermore * However * Alternatively |
| * In contrast to * Instead * Less than * More than | * Nevertheless * Notwithstanding * Otherwise * Rather than * Regardless * Though, Unless, Unlike, While, Yet |