

Compare Contrast Essay: Short Stories—Step-by-Step Directions!

Title
(Subtitle if you like)

Introductory Paragraph

Sentence 1: Compose a thought-provoking statement. This is your Hook Sentence.

Sentence 2: Write about the ways that this hook sentence is important.

Sentence 3: Summarize the plot of Story #1

Sentence 4: Summarize the plot of Story #2

Sentence 5: Introduce Story #1 and Story #2, authors, and a point of comparison; include a transitional word and then, using author's last names, explain the point(s) of contrast.

[Sentence 5 is your Thesis Statement]

Student Model #1 of Intro Paragraph

A Son's Path

While the bond between a mother and son is unbreakable, it is not impossible to strain. Many events can push the two apart, and even completely change their relationship. Two short stories, "A Visit to Grandmother" and "Through the Tunnel" revolve around a complex mother and son relationship, and how the two are pushed apart. In "A Visit to Grandmother," a young boy named Chig goes with his father Charles Dunford back to the home Charles ran away from as a 15-year old boy. Charles wants to clear his conscience, so he confronts his mother about how she mistreated him when he was young. In "Through the Tunnel," Jerry, a boy younger than Chig, is on a seaside vacation with his mother. He secretly trains himself to swim through an underwater tunnel, but when he makes his attempt, he almost dies. After his near-death experience, Jerry has a less hostile and more friendly relationship with his mom. Both "A Visit to Grandmother" by William Melvin Kelley and "Through the Tunnel" by Doris Lessing portray a complex relationship between a mother and her son in which the son is pushed away from his mother; while Kelley shows a son hardened by the trials of life who returns home to clear his conscience, Lessing shows a son who ends up closer to his mother due to his experiences.

Student Model #2 of Intro Paragraph

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Eternal Rest **Cool title! Maybe a subtitle too?**

When will the reaper come for you? What will death be like? **Intriguing start to your essay!** These thoughts are fairly morbid and unsettling for most people. Death as a concept is the ultimate unknown for living beings. The reality that death looms upon everyone and could strike at any minute is truly terrifying. **Yes. Need parallel plot summaries here.** Given this amorphous **Nice we!** concept, Roald Dahl and José Vasconcelos take death to two very different places in their works, *Lamb to the Slaughter* and *The Boar Hunt*. **Thesis must be arguable.**

Student Model #3 of Intro Paragraph

Man Versus Nature

perhaps add a subtitle for a more specific preview of what your essay will examine- a little cliché and general as is.

It is common for man to think of himself as being superior to animals - in fact, we (he?) **keep parallel structure / consistency with “man” and “we...”** generally don't consider ourselves to be animals. **Transition needed here.** In *The Boar Hunt* by José Vasconcelos, four friends set off on a boar hunting trip in the Andes Mountains. In the middle of their trip, they run out of ammunition and the powerful boars begin to uproot the trees that the men are sleeping in. Only one man escapes to tell the tale. **Nice summary. Transition here.** *The Whistling Monster* by Jamila Gavin is about a young boy named Kanassa who believes he is the best hunter, climber, and fisher. He constantly taunts the birds of his village with his bow and arrow. When he heads downriver to try to catch a special fish, he encounters the whistling monster. He only escapes because the birds forgive him and decide to help him. Both *The Boar Hunt* and *The Whistling Monster* examine how man believes he is superior to nature; while *The Boar Hunt* examines how four grown men are punished by nature, *The Whistling Monster* describes a young boy who narrowly escapes a monster with nature's help. **Nicely stated thesis.**

Body Paragraph #1: Point of Comparison

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Sentence 1: Topic Sentence: Introduce both short story titles, the authors, and how they are similar.

Sentence 2: Introduce Story #1, explain how it supports your topic sentence, and introduce a key quotation that supports your topic sentence.

Sentence 3: Cite (including page number) the quotation that supports your topic sentence.

Sentence 4: Discuss the ideas that this example of quotation raises.

Sentence 5: Include a transitional word or phrase, then explain how Story #2 is similar to Story #1.

Sentence 6: Introduce Story #2, explain how it supports your topic sentence, and introduce a key quotation that supports your topic sentence.

Sentence 7: Cite (including page number) the quotation that supports your topic sentence.

Sentence 8: Discuss the ideas that this quotation raises.

Sentence 9: Write a concluding sentence about how both stories are similar.

Student Model Body Paragraph #1: Point of Comparison

A Son's Path

Both Charles and Jerry had big growing-up moments, in which their mothers give them space to grow up on their own. These moments were leaving home for Charles and swimming through the tunnel for Jerry. The mothers in the stories think they are doing the right thing for their sons, but get different results than they intended. This is displayed when Charles' mother says "I tried to show you that you was more growed up than GL by letting you do what you wanted to do." (12). and Jerry's mother wonders "Have I been keeping him too close? He mustn't feel he ought to be with me. I must be careful."(64). Both of these quotes show the mothers letting their sons loose, but getting results opposite of what they wanted. Jerry comes running back, and Charles takes himself further away. The mothers of Charles and Jerry get different results than they intended when they allow their sons space to grow up on their own.

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Body Paragraph #2: Point of Contrast

Sentence 1: Topic Sentence: Acknowledge how the two stories are similar, but also how they differ in one way.

Sentence 2: Introduce Story #1, explain how it supports your topic sentence, and introduce a key quotation that supports your topic sentence.

Sentence 3: Cite (including page number) the quotation that supports your topic sentence.

Sentence 4: Discuss the ideas that this example of quotation raises.

Sentence 5: Include a transitional word or phrase, then explain how Story #2 is different than Story #1.

Sentence 6: Introduce Story #2, explain how it supports your topic sentence, and introduce a key quotation that supports your topic sentence.

Sentence 7: Cite (including page number) the quotation that supports your topic sentence.

Sentence 8: Discuss the ideas that this quotation raises.

Sentence 9: Write a concluding sentence about how both stories are different in one way.

Student Model Body Paragraph #2: Point of Contrast

Unlike in “Through the Tunnel,” where Jerry becomes closer to his mother, Charles Dunford feels separated from his mother in “A Visit to Grandmother.” Charles left home at only 15 years old to pursue an education, but also because he felt pushed away by his mother. He felt pushed away because his mother favored his younger brother GL, who had a lighter complexion, over him. Charles explains how he feels when he tells his mom, “If GL and I did something wrong, you’d beat me first and then be too tired to beat him. At dinner, he’d always get seconds and I wouldn’t. You’d do things with him, like ride in that buggy, but if I wanted you to do something with me, you were always too busy. I cried when I left here. Nobody loved me, Mama. I cried all the way to Knoxville. That was the last time I ever cried in my life.” (12). This quote shows how Charles ended up farther away from his mom due to challenges in his life, both emotionally and over geographically distance. In “A Visit to Grandmother,” Chig sees how his father’s relationship with his grandmother deteriorated, and the struggles that pushed them apart.

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Body Paragraph #3: Point of Contrast

Sentence 1: Topic Sentence: Develop a transitional word or phrase and then explain how the two stories differ in a second focus area.

Sentence 2: Introduce Story #1, explain how it supports your topic sentence, and introduce a key quotation that supports your topic sentence.

Sentence 3: Cite (including page number) the quotation that supports your topic sentence.

Sentence 4: Discuss the ideas that this example of quotation raises.

Sentence 5: Include a transitional word or phrase, then explain how Story #2 is different than Story #1 in the second focus area.

Sentence 6: Introduce Story #2, explain how it supports your topic sentence, and introduce a key quotation that supports your topic sentence.

Sentence 7: Cite (including page number) the quotation that supports your topic sentence.

Sentence 8: Discuss the ideas that this quotation raises.

Sentence 9: Write a concluding sentence about how both stories are different in the second focus area.

Student Model Body Paragraph #3: Point of Contrast

Both Charles and Jerry had big growing-up moments in which their mothers give them space to grow up on their own. These moments were leaving home for Charles and swimming through the tunnel for Jerry. The mothers in the stories think they are doing the right thing for their sons, but each parent gets different results than they intended. This is displayed when Charles' mother says "I tried to show you that you was more growed up than GL by letting you do what you wanted to do"(12). and Jerry's mother wonders "Have I been keeping him too close? He mustn't feel he ought to be with me. I must be careful"(64). Both of these quotes show the mothers letting their sons loose, but got results opposite of what they wanted. Jerry comes running back, and Charles takes himself further away. The mothers of Charles and Jerry get different results than they intended when they allow their sons space to grow up on their own. nice.

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Conclusion

Sentence 1: Topic Sentence: Compose a thoughtful statement that revisits the themes, ideas, or focus areas you have written about. This sentence should begin to consider why your topic is important. Do not repeat what you have already written.

Sentence 2: Write about the ways that your topic sentence helps the reader understand the stories and themes in more depth.

Sentence 3: Explore the ways that Story #1 and Story #2 help the reader understand and see the world in a new way. Use the story titles, authors, or characters in your sentence.

Sentence 4: Write a transitional word or phrase and then explain the ways that these stories similarities and differences are important for a reader.

Sentence 5: Compose a thoughtful and in-depth sentence about the ways that your overall ideas, observations, and essay help a reader understand the world in a different way.

Student Model: Conclusion

In both “A Visit to Grandmother” and “Through the Tunnel,” a son’s relationship with his mother is changed. The son in “A Visit to Grandmother,” Charles Dunford, is pushed away from his mother, while Jerry in “Through the Tunnel” ends up closer to his mom. Both the mothers in the stories try to help their sons grow up, but while Jerry’s mother gets closer to her son by giving him room to grow, Charles’ mother causes him to run away by favoring his younger brother GL. Examining the relationships between mother and son gives the reader a deeper understanding of these stories, because they are what the stories truly revolve around. Lessons about these relationships apply to real life too, in that giving someone room away from you can either push them back or carry them further away. It’s easy to take family relationships for granted, but as Charles’ mother learned, the thin line between love and hate is easy to cross.