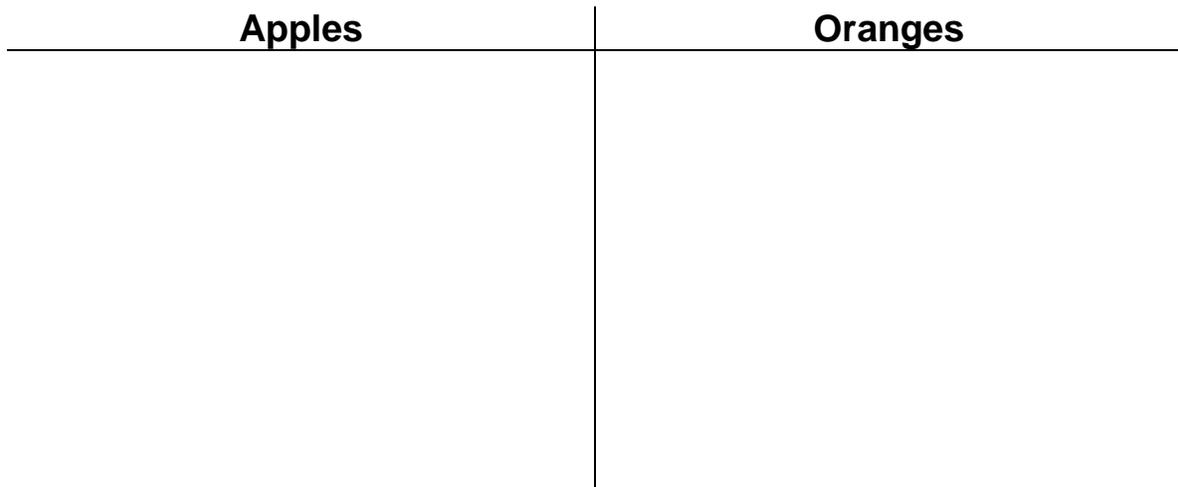


## How to Write a Comparative Literary Essay:

So, you've been asked to compare the inherent value of apples to oranges.

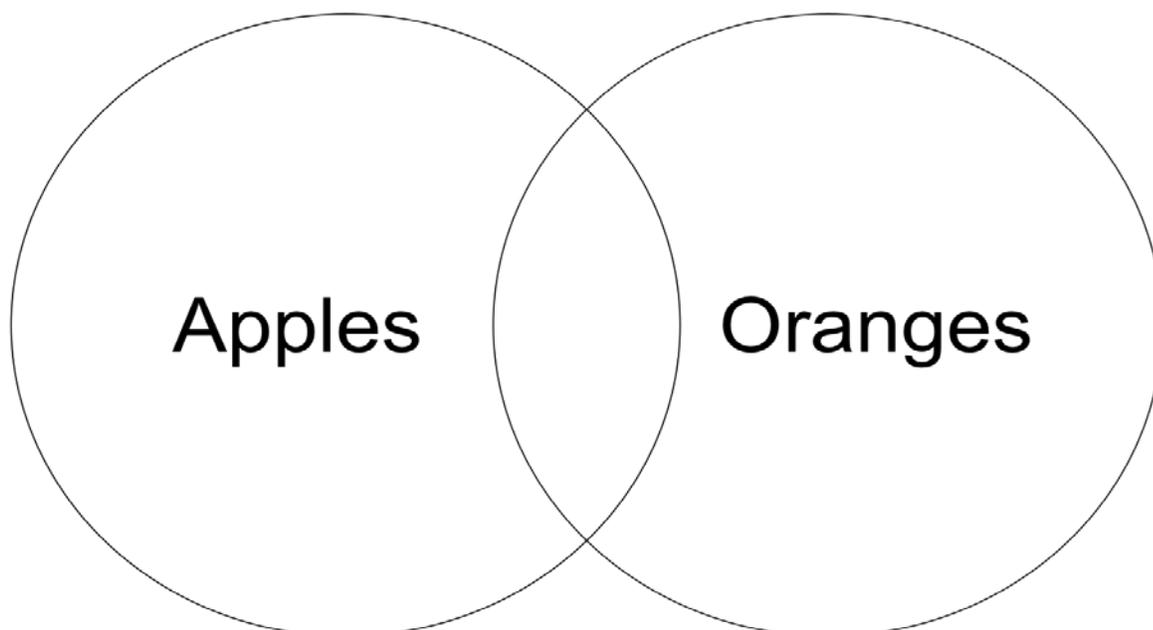
Now what?

First, categorize what you know about each subject.



Now that you have everything you know about each subject down on paper, start to look at what is the same about each and what is different about each.

A Venn Diagram is a particularly effective way to divide similarities and differences:



Ok. Now you have the meat and potatoes (the basic arguments) of your information.

***But what about your thesis?***

When you are listing information about similarities and differences, make mental (or physical) notes about what seem to be key, fundamental differences or similarities. ( For example: What make these two things in the same category? What makes them separate?)

*Practice thesis about apples and oranges (remember what the original question was):*

Once you have decided on your stance (your thesis), you can begin narrowing down your arguments to finer points.

Which ones are going to support your thesis? Keep them. Which ones have nothing to do with your thesis? Lose them.

***Onto the Essay:***

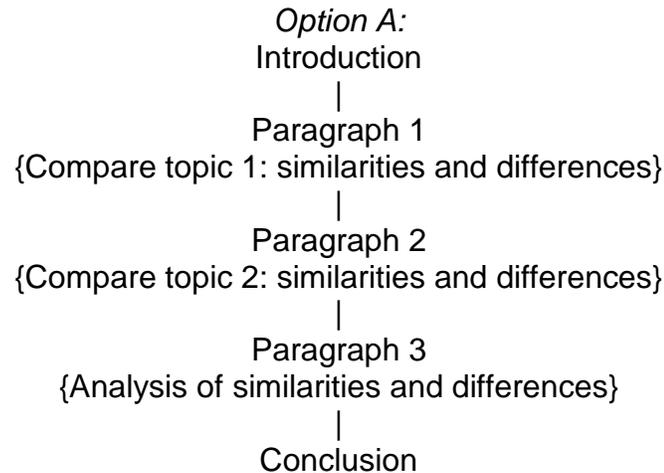
A comparative literary essay can take one of two forms:

*\*\*\*\*Disclaimer: Please remember that an essay is NOT just five paragraphs. An essay can be longer than five paragraphs. This is an outline and a general guide to help you begin to write comparative literary essays\*\*\*\**

*Option A:*

- Introductory paragraph:
  - Give key background information (i.e., give titles, authors' names), and **CLEARLY** state the thesis (the stance on the topic)
- Paragraph 1:
  - Discuss the first topic of comparison and contrast. Discuss the similarities and differences, but do *not* mention the second topic for comparison.
- Paragraph 2:

- Discuss the second topic of comparison and contrast. Discuss the similarities and differences. Do *not* discuss the first topic for comparison.
- Paragraph 3:
  - Discuss topics one and two together in an analytical way: is one more important than the other? Does one have more impact on the reader?
- Conclusion:
  - A reassertion of the thesis statement based on the above arguments. Through the essay, the points established should have been proven and this paragraph is a redefinition of the thesis.



*Option B:*

- Introductory paragraph:
  - Give key background information (i.e., give titles, authors' names), and **CLEARLY** state the thesis (the stance on the topic)
- Paragraph 1:
  - Discuss *all* of the similarities from both selections that support the thesis (If the topic is about landscape, there is no need to discuss how both stories have horses).
- Paragraph 2:

- Discuss *all* of the differences from both selections that support the thesis.
- Paragraph 3:
  - Discuss similarities and differences in an analytical way: is one more important than the other? Does one have more impact on the reader?
- Conclusion:
  - A reassertion of the thesis statement based on the above arguments. Through the essay, the points established should have been proven and this paragraph is a redefinition of the thesis.

