

Assignment Title: Parallels Essay

Assignment Number: 1

Due Date: Thursday, Jan 30th 2014 by start of class

Writing To: Reflect (JTC Ch. 5)

Topic: For this essay, you will be comparing or contrasting two 'parallel' experiences - that is, two experiences that are engaged through different mediums. Examples might be shopping in a store vs. shopping online; posting on Facebook vs. posting on Twitter, reading a book in print vs. listening to a book on tape. A good starting point is 'real' vs. 'virtual'.

The simple examples are easy to find - your first great challenge is choosing an interesting topic, and taking an exciting angle on that topic.

Ultimately, you want your comparison/contrast to not just be an inventory of similarities/differences, but instead to establish some *fundamental, interesting* argument about the differences or similarities of these experiences, and what we can learn by comparing them. You want your reader to walk away with a new understanding that they may not have considered about the distance (great or small) between two seemingly connected experiences. **Everything is an argument** - set out to make (and prove) a claim.

Purpose: For students to consider the ways in which genres, communities, context, and other assorted surrounding 'stuff' impact the presentation and reception of a topic, an activity, an argument, an experience, etc.. For students to practice writing with an emphasis on interesting angles, illustrative detail, engaging tone or voice. For students to help develop a personal relationship with the instructor and the class.

For the instructor to assess students' beginning ability to compare/contrast, present an interesting angle, use illustrative detail/examples, develop an engaging tone or voice, as well as to help instructor get to know students.

Product: A brief blog-style document comparing and contrasting two experiences in two different mediums. The paper will be in two parts - the first part, 'comparing', will be where you establish the parallel between these two experiences. Here you are linking similarities, establishing a connection between the two. In the second part, you are contrasting - you are drawing out distinct differences between the experiences.

If possible, attempt to establish an introduction/conclusion that sets up and then reassesses the central idea (or **angle**) of your argument.

The style should be blog-style - this means professional but not overly formal; organized but not academic; engaging and daring but not flippant or irreverent.

(continued on back)

Grading Criteria:

- Use of an interesting and specific claim and angle
- Use of specific and illustrative detail
- Use of specific language to develop an individual voice
- Attention to and development of the rest of the 'Top Ten'
- Attention to visual presentation; possibilities include:
 - Embedded content (pictures, video)
 - Hyperlinks
 - Paragraph formatting
 - Font choice
 - Headings/sections
 - Whatever carries your fancy
- Extra - drawing connection to in-class discussions

Requirements:

- 2-3 double-spaced pages in Microsoft Word (~500-700 words)
- Submitted to Engrade in .doc, .docx, or .pdf format
 - Voluntary submission (complete document or condensed summary) to Reddit as a response to Assignment Topic
 - Comments/reflections posted to other students' projects on reddit
- Note - Monday Conference people will not have an opportunity to workshop a draft in conference. Consider making an appointment for office hours or with the Writing Lab.

Student Notes: