ENG220CL—Short Writing Assignment 4 Guidelines

**Guidelines**
This short writing assignment should be a 400-500 word essay that conforms strictly to conventional MLA formatting standards, i.e., double-spaced, 1” margins on all four sides, 12pt. Times-Roman font, etc. As with any properly written compare and contrast analysis, use a minimum of three points of comparison (and contrast). You may find some suitable criteria options to use in your analysis in the Vogler text.

**Sample Brainstorm Process for a Compare/Contrast Analysis**

Consider, for example, a hypothetical compare/contrast analysis on castles (which yours is not on): Let’s say that you narrow your focus to two supernatural amulets of two heroic figures. You’ve chosen the legendary “Sword of Omens” of the character Lion-O from the ThunderCats franchise (**topic 1**) with the mystical “Sword of Power” of the character He-Man from the Masters of the Universe franchise (**topic 2**). What ties them together are that they are both swords and that both owners are heroes in their own right. Obviously, the two famous weapons will have some characteristics that are similar (comparing) and some characteristics that are different (contrasting). To keep your analysis consistently parallel (and to avoid killing its flow), it is required that the **same criteria** are used equally to analyze both topics. This hypothetical example will compare and contrast first the physical characteristics of each sword (**criterion 1**), then the history of each sword (**criterion 2**), and, finally, the purpose and importance of each sword (**criterion 3**). When the criteria is clearly identified in the analysis’ thesis statement (as is the case in sample below), it becomes what is called a roadmap or blueprint plan for the writing assignment (required).

**Sample Thesis Statement**

*The “call to adventure” stage of the departure phase in Dreamwork’s Shrek is more easily identifiable than that in Disney’s Tangled, when lined up with Christopher Vogler’s conditions of “Reconnaissance” (Vogler 101), “Disorientation and Discomfort” (Vogler 102), and “No More Options” (Vogler 103).*

**Breakdown**: Let’s see the component breakdown of the sample thesis above.

(a). **Topic(s)**: Topic 1- **Shrek** and Topic 2- **Tangled** (highlighted above in green)
(b). ARGUABLE Opinion on the Topic(s): The call to adventure in one topic (Shrek) is more easily identifiable than in the second topic (Tangled) based on three of Vogler’s criteria. (highlighted above in blue)
(c). **Criterion #1**: Reconnaissance (highlighted above in yellow)
(d). **Criterion #2**: Disorientation (highlighted above in yellow)
(e). **Criterion #3**: No More Options (highlighted above in yellow)

* Your thesis statement (which will differ greatly in content from this sample), must also contain a representation of every component listed above, i.e., components (a.) through (e.). Since this is a course themed on travel, let’s utilize a travel metaphor for clarification.
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Remember, you are the writer, and your instructor is the primary reader (audience):

- In the actual thesis statement, components (a.) to (b.) metaphorically INFORM THE READER OF WHERE THE AUTHOR IS TAKING THEM.

- In the actual thesis statement, components (c.) to (e.) metaphorically INFORM THE READER OF HOW THEY ARE GOING TO GET THERE (roadmap/blueprint plan).

- It is required that your thesis statement perform each of these functions, i.e., telling your readers where they are going to go (to Paris!), and telling them how they are going to get there (by automobile, aircraft, and passenger train). Good thesis statements have a TOPIC+AN AGRUABLE OPINION+A BLUEPRINT PLAN OF REASONS. Theses that don’t perform all of these functions will be considered incorrect.

- It is not enough that you merely identify the criteria for each topic and the similarities and differences of those criteria in each topic. You must also supply ample hard evidence to support any/every claim. For example, if you claim that the swords themselves, as wielded by the heroes of both Masters of the Universe and the ThunderCats, are, in fact, crucial to the heroes’ successes, your evidence to support that claim would be in the form of quoted—and properly cited with proper lead-in devices—passages from the primary texts, with suitable, follow-up explanations of why they were included in the analysis.

The example in the box below has all of the required specifications:

(a.) a proper lead-in phrase (highlighted below in yellow),
(b.) a quoted passage that follows the lead-in device (highlighted below in green),
(c.) a proper parenthetical citation (highlighted below in blue), and
(d.) a follow-up, explanatory sentence (or, sentences), a.k.a., lead-out device (highlighted below in pink).

The final, and most important, example of dual-natured Prince Adam/He-Man not being able to really function as a hero without his enchanted Sword of Power lies in that fact that, without it, he is only Prince Adam, a normal, mortal man. When Prince Adam wields the sword and proclaims the battle cry, “By the power of Grayskull, I have the power!” he is magically transformed from his ordinary self, to the heroic and muscle-bound He-Man (Wetzler 22). This shows that, while the mundane Prince Adam might have some heroic traits, such as the willingness to actually go on an adventure, he utterly powerless to do so without this magic amulet. Only the sword can transform Prince Adam to He-Man, and only He-Man has used it to defeat his uniquely powerful enemies; and, evidently, he must not be able to do either if he does not have it in his possession.