

# Analyzing and assessment essay samples

[Profession](#), [Student](#)



- Analyze a writing sample from one student

The writing sample is a compare/ contrast essay about characters in “ The Gift of Magi” and “ The Necklace.” The writer compares Della and Madame Loisel, who are major characters in the two stories. The writer asserts that both characters have some similarities in that they both live in poor conditions; however, they have many differences. The writer does not seem to have the right structure for writing a compare and contrast piece, but the piece is detailed. According to the writer, Madame Loisel is conceited, in that she tries to meet the standards of her rich friends. When her husband tells her that they were invited to a fancy ball, she is sad because she does not have fancy clothes and jewels. In order to attend the ball, she borrows fancy jewels from her rich friend. She loses it, and since it is costly, they have to work for it for the next ten years.

Della, on the other hand, is less conceited, and she is only interested about buying her husband the best Christmas present. Because she does not have enough money, she sells her hair and buys her husband a decoration for his watch. Unfortunately, her husband had already sold his watch to buy a set of combs for his wife.

- Identify the students strengths and weaknesses

The writing sample has its own strengths, from the essay we can get a glimpse of the two characters and what they represent. From the piece of writing, it is evident that Della and Madame Loisel have two distinct characters despite being poor. The piece gives us enough background information from both stories.

The first weakness of the piece is the fact that, in the first paragraph, the

writer confuses the stories and characters. The piece says that Della is from “ the Necklace” whereas Madame Loisel is from “ the Gift of Magi.” This is very wrong, especially since it is in the second sentence of the piece. The writer should be careful so as not to confuse characters.

The writer also asserts that Della and Madame Loisel are very similar, but we fail to see the similarities apart from the fact that they are poor. For instance, the lack of honesty is another comparison among the main characters in both stories is another similarity.

Another weakness is that the comparison is haphazard and incomplete.

There is only one similarity for both characters. The piece fails to compare the two characters well as it gives us an account of what happens in the two stories instead of comparing characters. The piece does not follow the required structure for a compare and contrast essay. The writer should pick different sub topics and compare the characters based on those sub topics. A compare/ contrast essay has two outlines; block outline and point- by- point outline and the writer failed to use one of the outlines.

- Provide written feedback for the student

The essay starts well as indeed both characters have some similarities, but I wonder if you read the stories well as you confused the characters in the second sentence. Compare/ contrast essay is one of the easiest as it has simple outlines, yet you failed to use either of the outlines. You gave an outline of the two stories, and you failed to compare the two characters well. In an essay, the content is as important as the structure as it helps in delivering a cohesive message.

When writing a compare/ contrast essay, you should identify similar themes in

the stories and compare them. You should also identify major themes that are not present in the other story and use it writing differences. For instance in your essay, you should have compared the characters of Della and Madame Loisel, and the themes of love, wealth, martyrdom, sacrifice and deceptiveness of objects.

You are on the right track since you have enough background information about both characters; you should research about the structure and outline of a compare/ contrast essay. I hope these comments help.

- Establish 1-3 writing goals for the student

Writing can be quite challenging; hence, a student should have written goals. There are different kinds of essays that we should master. Therefore, the first writing goal is constant practice. A student should take at least 15 minutes daily to write something. Writing is an art that can be perfected through practice. Through practice, writing will be a habit hence you can easily write any kind of essay when you are required to. Constant practice will improve your skills and vocabulary too. Writing a perfect essay seems hard, but through practice it can be realized (Yu-Feng, et. al., 2011).

The second writing goal is taking time to read other essays and researching on how to improve your writing skills. A student should constantly read other essays, as it will expand your horizons and broaden your vocabulary.

Students should also read a variety of books. Knowing the structure of an essay will not help, if you lack content. Extensive reading will equip you with the content, and it will make you seem more knowledgeable.

The third writing goal is having a structure for different essays at your fingertips. During exam time, students do not have time to research on how

to write a compare/ contrast essay or an argumentative essay. In as much as the type of essay will dictate your writing, there are specific things tutors expect in different essays. A student's goal should be to be aware of what it takes to write any type of essay perfectly.

- Determine an appropriate improvement plan to assist the student toward his/her writing goals (the plan should be written in at least three steps and incorporate appropriate scaffolding and specific writing strategies)

Having identified the writing goals, it is important to identify strategies that will improve the student's writing. The first step is to encourage students on the importance of good writing skills. Giving students' instructions and giving them examples of good essays will motivate them to write good essays.

The second strategy is explaining important skills for all types of writing. All types of writing require certain things such as good grammar, good flow, and understanding of the question.

The third step is to encourage the practice and feedback on the essay.

Students cannot improve their writing skills if they do not practice. Learning certain writing skills involves several attempts, and constant and positive feedback will help students practice harder.

The fourth step is encouraging students to follow writing rules by giving those handouts containing rules. Students will be required to follow all rules in writing, and when they fail to do so they will be penalized. The rules should be comprehensive. It should contain the different structures, grammar rules, punctuation, common writing errors that should be avoided among other factors. The above steps can improve a student's writing if they are followed. The key to improvement is regular practice.

## **References**

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