

Writing prompt: comparison contrast paper

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Writing Prompt: Comparison/Contrast Paper

There are different types of writing styles that can be used by to convey different messages to their targeted audiences. It can be seen that authors writing about the same subject can convey their messages in different ways. This mainly depends on the literary devices they use to write their work. The same subject or topic can be written in different ways in order to convey the intended meaning to different readers. As such, this paper has been designed to compare and contrast two works from the racial block reading. This paper will attempt to compare and contrast the works of Martin Luther King, Jr entitled “ Letter from Birmingham Jail” and Carter G. Woodson’s article entitled “ The Mis-Education of the Negro.” The paper starts summarising each article and the main body will focus on comparing and contrasting these two articles. The main ideas discussed will be summarised in the conclusion at the end of the paper. Thesis statement: Is the writing style used by the authors mentioned above effective to present the theme of racial segregation in the US. Martin Luther King Junior’s letter specifically focuses on two concepts namely: peace and brotherhood in preaching as well as in fighting injustice. In this letter, reveals that he is a devoted Christian but he is also an advocate for rights and equality where he advocates the removal of all injustices that have resulted in Negroes being oppressed by the white supremacists in the United States of America. When he wrote this letter, he used rhetoric in order to appeal to the interests of the people so that they could also share his vision and views towards the negative impacts of racialism on the formerly oppressed races such as African Americans in the greater part of the USA. In this letter, King tries to

justify non violent direct action in fighting injustices in Birmingham which has however been criticised by other clergymen. He believes that people have the moral responsibility to obey just laws and they also have the responsibility to disobey unjust laws. King says that there are two types of laws: “ just and unjust,” (p. 8). However, he advocates non violent action in fighting this oppressive and unjust system, a decision that has been criticised by other clergymen. On the other hand it can be noted Woodson’s article is primarily concerned with portraying the bad part of the education system for Negroes in the US. He argues that instead of educating the Negroes, the system “ mis-educates” them to such an extent that they cannot use that education in a meaningful way in order to develop themselves. The education system justifies segregation. In the article, it is stated that “ Negro is thought of, the race is studied only as a problem or dismissed as of little consequence,” (Woodson, p. 591). The Negroes are taught that they are inferior to the whites and they should subject themselves to the white people. The blacks are also taught white values at the expense of their cultural values. In other words, the education for Negroes is of little value and substance in as far as economic empowerment and development are concerned. This education system teaches them that they should be dependent on white people and they should work for them always. Woodson argues that the Negro can be “ highly educated” but with very little knowledge about pertinent issues such as economics. The major similarity between the two articles is that they talk about injustices caused by racial segregation. Woodson says, “ Effort was made to justify the procedure in the seats of injustice where the law was interpreted as one

thing for the white man and different thing for the Negro,” (Woodson, p. 598). On the other hand, King states that he is in prison because he advocated using non violent means to fight unjust laws (p. 9). Racial segregation in these two articles is the major theme and it can be seen that this system has caused untold suffering to the great masses of the Negroes. This scenario has been created by the whites who believe that they are superior to any other race. As such, they use this supremacy to oppress the black people who are subjected to harsh working conditions for very little pay or nothing at all. The articles also state that the Negroes should view God in the image of whites since they are the superior people on earth. The main difference between the two articles is related to the style of writing. King’s letter is written in the first person and it is narrative in style. He is narrating the events that have led to his incarceration and he tries to convince other clergymen that he took the right decision in pursuing non violent action to fight the injustices created by the system in the US. On the other hand, Woodson’s article is written in third person and it is largely descriptive given that the author tries to describe the negative aspects of the education system meant for the Negroes. The author gives a vivid description of how the education system undermines the Negroes since they are viewed as incapable of meaningfully contributing to economic development. Over and above, it can be noted that the two articles by Woodson and King discussed above are primarily concerned with addressing the issue of racial segregation and injustices caused by white supremacy over the Negroes in the US. A critical analysis of the two articles shows that the major difference between them is that they are written in different

styles. Woodson's article is largely descriptive while King's letter is more of narrating where he is narrating the events that happened until the situation where he ended up in prison. King uses the first person while Woodson uses the third person writing style. References Carter G. Woodson, "The Mis-Education of the Negro" Martin Luther King, Jr, "Letter from Birmingham Jail"