

# Compare, contrast, analyze metaphors essay sample



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

## You can't teach an old dog new tricks

This metaphor is used to describe people as having an age-limit to their learning ability. According to this, there is a point in time when a person just stops acquiring new skills or knowledge because they become too old to do so. This might be evident in encounters you might have had with old people who are too stubborn to change their ways.

You see this in old professors who refuse to use the computer because they would rather use the "old reliable" typewriter. You see this in middle-aged persons who do not want to try any new sport or hobby because they claim that they're starting too late and they would never learned quickly enough to be good at it. When you see grumpy old men complain, you say to yourself, "Just leave them alone. They're too old to change".

On face value, there might be some truth to this statement. For instance, an old person suffering arthritis would no longer be able to learn martial arts or gymnastics. A person who is losing his hearing might no longer be able to learn music. A person who has a weak heart is no longer able to learn rigorous sports like basketball or football. All these are examples of limitations that give support to the idea that "old dogs" can no longer learn anything new because they have passed their prime.

## It's never too late to learn

A closer look at these factors will reveal that these considerations have nothing to do with age at all. These limitations are couched on conditions of the body and the mind. Being old has nothing to do with one's ability to

learn. The reason why old people sometimes fail to learn is because they harbor the attitude that they never will. Stubbornness is a state of mind and not a limitation based on actual facts.

Even young people can be stubborn and they will never learn anything if they do not desire it. This is the psychological aspect of the problem. On the other hand, there can also be physical limitations that hinder people from learning new things. To have weak joints or a faulty heart will definitely limit a person's choices on what additional skills he would want to acquire.

In any case, although age is naturally linked to physical and mental decline, this link is not absolute. There are healthy 60-year old who continue to play sports as if they were in their 20's. On the other end of the spectrum, there are 20-year olds who are too sick to even leave their homes. At this point, it becomes clear that the failure to learn is never about age but on conditions that affect one's ability to learn.

One cripples himself or is crippled from the learning process because of some natural or artificial limitation whether real or merely perceived. A person will not learn if he is afraid to. A person will not learn if he anticipates failure even before attempting to succeed. These conditions bring about an inability or unwillingness to learn new things and this is what prevents people from improving themselves in a certain aspect.

With this in mind, it would be more accurate to rephrase the " old dog" metaphor into the following:

1) You can't teach a disabled dog new tricks; or

2) You can't teach a stubborn dog new tricks; or

3) You can't teach a cowardly dog new tricks.

An old person is not trapped with who is or what he can do because of his age. He is trapped by conditions that come about because of his age. It is not uncommon to see people past their prime who continue to long for adventure and go skydiving or bungee-jumping to their doctors' horror. It is not unusual to see women who learn to play sports or learn photography after they see their children go off to college.

People have so much potential in them and it is they who decide whether or not they want to learn something new or not. Age is just a social construct - a number that we use to measure the number of years we have lived on this earth. You can either be affected by this number, sulk and feel miserable or you can stand up and live each day in a way that gives you chances to become better. There is no limit to learning if there is a continued desire for learning. Many professors continue to read about and discover new things up to the very end of their lives. People who love sports will continue to experiment and try new physical activities until they are no longer able to stand up on their own.

It's a sad thing that many people in society believe in the "old dog" metaphor. Old people who try new things are often made fun of or discouraged by younger people. Our failure to encourage them is a large stumbling block that makes them want to stop trying. Oftentimes, they are not afraid of the learning itself but of losing face if ever they are not successful. In the midst of younger people, they feel that they should set an

example and so they would rather sit down quietly rather than face the possibility of being ridiculed.

Once again, we see that these things have nothing to do with age. These examples are about how society perceives age and how they treat old people as if they are no longer of use. Many old people end up in nursing homes and are rarely visited because they are considered a waste of time and a burden. But little do know that these old people, in their time alone have learned so many new things on their own. We fail to recognize that for as long as a person lives, there will always be learning.

We always associate old people as persons who we can learn from but we sometimes forget that they are also persons who can learn... no matter how old these dogs may be.