

# LET'S LOOK AT YOUR FORMATIVE TOPICS. BRAINSTORM:

- Compare and contrast: “Justice being done...” How do To Kill A Mockingbird and Philadelphia explore the idea that the ideals of **justice** do not always live up to the reality?
- Compare and contrast: How do To Kill A Mockingbird and Philadelphia explore the idea that **prejudice** can give way to development of **empathy**?



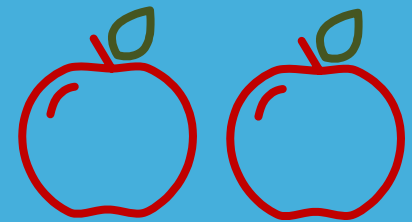
- What **ideas** do **both texts** suggest about justice? Where do these texts differ on the ideas they present about justice?
- What **ideas** do **both texts** suggest about prejudice and empathy? Where do these texts differ on the ideas they present about prejudice and empathy?



10:00

You have 10 minutes. Meet with the people writing on your topic. Assign one scribe to note-take on the board. Share the **ideas** you plan to write on (pink highlighters!) around this topic. They should be framed as **concepts** and should highlight a broad similarity (e.g., “Both Demme and Lee reveal that...”) or a core difference (e.g., “Whereas Lee’s novels suggests to readers that..., Demme’s film uncovers...”).

# WRITING A **COMPARATIVE** RESPONSE



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Philadelphia and To Kill a Mockingbird

## REMEMBER :



- As the name suggests, in a comparative essay you compare, contrast and evaluate two texts. This means that there must be enough similarities and differences between your two topics to be discussed in a meaningful way.

# THREE BASIC STRUCTURES



- The block essay (**EASIEST**)
- Paragraph-by-paragraph essay: Each paragraph explores Text A followed by Text B (**HARDER**)
- Integrated essay: Each paragraph weaves discussion of Text A and Text B (**HARDEST**)

# LANGUAGE



- Formal, impersonal language.
- Use of metalanguage
- Use of complex and compound sentences.
- Integrates evidence and examples into sentences as evidence
- Contractions, slang and abbreviations are **not** used.
- Present tense action verbs to summarise and analyse (e.g. explores, rejects, experiences, displays)
- Use the language of comparison and contrast. For example, some words to use for comparison (similarities) are: like; as; both; similarly and commonality. Some words to use for contrast (differences) are: while; although; differ, contrary to; however; unlike; conversely and on the other hand.
- BUT, you need to move beyond these *basic* comparative phrases (we'll get to that)

## REMEMBER :



The task is not a simple exercise in writing blocked paragraphs or ‘mini-essays’ with each detailing individual examples and tenuously linked by a connecting phrase or sentence between paragraphs. Ideas / arguments / evidence must be compared and contrasted.

# WRITING AN INTRODUCTION



- Read the sample introductions and answer the following questions:
  - What elements are included in all of the introductions?
  - How much focus is there on characters?
  - How do the introductions begin?
  - How do they end?
  - How much focus is there on context?

## **SAMPLE TOPIC:** How do To Kill A Mockingbird and Philadelphia explore the damaging effects of entrenched prejudice on individuals and communities?

Twentieth century America saw periods of great social upheaval as once-marginalised groups became empowered to challenge the status quo and the oppressors themselves. Harper Lee's novel To Kill a Mockingbird and Jonathan Demme's film Philadelphia, though set seven decades apart, show a country that continues to struggle with this upheaval, and explores the lasting, damaging effects of prejudices within American, and our own, society. Indeed, both for those targeted by prejudices and who hold them, biases are destructive to a sense of identity and belonging, and are a divisive force within communities. However, these texts are ultimately optimistic, and show us that, beyond the trauma that forces communities to look upon their own disparities and injustices, prejudice can be overcome, giving way to hope for a more harmonious future.

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**Context:** Bigger than the texts. Focuses on central theme/idea of topic.

**Introduce texts:** Both texts, including author/director and form. Underline title.

**Contention:** Broad answer to the essay prompt. Find commonality between both texts.

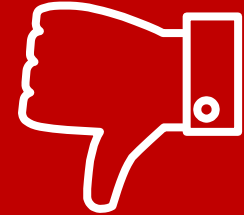
**Approach:** Signpost broad similarity 1

Signpost broad similarity 2

Signpost “however” or “whereas” (can be difference)

**‘Big’ finish:** Bigger than the texts. Uncover the authors’ purposes and texts’ core, lasting idea on the topic’s central theme/s.

# WHAT NOT TO DO:



- ✗ Don't repeat the topic
- ✗ Don't rewrite the topic to the one you really wanted (one you have already completed in class!)
- ✗ Don't waste time with unnecessary background detail – unless you can make it relevant to the question
- ✗ Don't continuously repeat the terms of the topic - define and expand upon them

# WHAT WORKS:



- ✓ Look closely at what the topic is asking and address the specific themes, issues and ideas
- ✓ Identify the relevant themes/issues/ideas in the topic question
- ✓ Think about how they play out in the two texts – choose the ones that give you plenty of scope to compare and contrast
- ✓ Look for the 'key' words in the question
- ✓ In general terms, outline your approach with some focus on points of similarity and difference
- ✓ Emphasise **the topic and the ideas** rather than the texts in this part of the essay
- ✓ Don't be concerned if this introduction appears to be longer than your text essays

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# WRITE YOUR OWN INTRODUCTION:

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1: Introductory statement

2: Introduction of texts

3: Contention/outline of approach

4: Draw the authors' purposes together  
(opportunity to compare/contrast)

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# BODY PARAGRAPHS



- Read the body paragraphs provided and answer the following questions:
  - How would you describe the structure of these paragraphs?
  - How much comparison do you notice?
  - How much is each text focused on? Do they explore one more than the other?
  - How much evidence is used?
  - How do the BPs begin? How do they end?
  - How do the writers transition between ideas?

## **SAMPLE TOPIC:** How do To Kill A Mockingbird and Philadelphia explore the damaging effects of entrenched prejudice on individuals and communities?

These texts reveal that it is not only those targeted by prejudices who feel its damaging effects, but also those who hold these prejudices themselves. In both To Kill a Mockingbird and Philadelphia, perhaps unsurprisingly, we see the damaging effects of prejudice on its victims; Tom Robinson, in the former text, who loses his life as a result of the biases against him that manifested themselves in his unfair trial, and Andy Beckett, in the latter text, whose job is unlawfully terminated after his employers realise that he is both gay and a sufferer of AIDS. What is perhaps more revealing in these texts is the detrimental effects of prejudice on those who hold such beliefs themselves. In Lee's text, Bob Ewell's hatred consumes him to the point that it eventually kills him; indeed, Lee's depiction of Ewell dying from a wound inflicted by his own knife sustained whilst seeking revenge against the lawyer who defended the black man over whom Ewell feels superior by virtue of his whiteness, is symbolic of the irreparable harm that our own hatred can cause us. So too does Demme's Joe Miller suffer as a result of his prejudices. An otherwise doting father, Joe's hatred is shown to conflict with his nurturing, loving instincts when he warns his infant to "stay away from [her] Aunt Theresa" because of her sexuality. In this scene, Demme uses the symbolism of the turkey leg, held in one hand and wielded club-like before his child's face, to represent the archaic hatred that co-exists with the strong, nurturing love of which he is capable, represented by the milk bottle he holds in his other hand. Importantly, Demme suggests through this scene that Joe's prejudices will be harmful not only to him, but also the baby Larice. However, although Lee's antagonist suffers death as karmic punishment for the fate he and his daughter Mayella inflicted upon Tom Robinson, Demme's protagonist Joe is able to overcome his prejudices against Andy's sexuality, revealing the director's perspective that those who hold prejudices must not simply be removed from our communities, but can learn the empathy necessary to repair the division caused by such biases. Though Ewell shows little growth throughout the novel, Joe takes some steps toward changing his deeply held beliefs about homosexuality. Having once not "want[ed] Andy] to touch" him or "even breathe" on him, feeling that he must "get [AIDS] and everybody who has it as far away from the rest of us as possible" Demme emphasises the significance of the moment when Joe overcomes his fear to touch Andy's face as he lies dying in the hospital; a moment of care and nurturing that is indicative of the affection that Joe has developed for the man who once "made [him] sick". In contrast to Ewell, whose hatred eventually manifests itself in his own violent demise, Joe's nurturing side eventually triumphs, redeeming him from the damaging effects of his own prejudices.

# OPENING AND CLOSING



- **Each paragraph can open with a key idea that compares/ contrasts both texts**
  - Both *The Crucible* and *Year of Wonders* show that any group in society can be effectively controlled if subject to strictly applied rules. (**SIMILARITY**)
  - Orwell and Funder similarly reveal that apathy and fear create unliveable societies which only a few courageous individuals dare to challenge. (**SIMILARITY**)
  - Whilst Lee suggests that those from within oppressed groups must rely on those in positions of power to save them, Demme reveals that what is far more powerful is when those who are oppressed are empowered to seek justice for themselves. (**DIFFERENCE**)
- **After comparing the texts, the paragraph should end by reiterating the main idea**
  - Therefore, Malala and Nigel Cole's emphasis is on the dangers of complacency and the need for people to challenge any governing body that seeks to restrict their freedom
  - Ultimately, readers see how both texts are dystopian in nature, showing how precarious are today's constitutional rights and how necessary it is to preserve these liberties for future generations.
  - It is in this way that Demme challenges Lee's narrative of the disempowered oppressed, instead suggesting that those who have experienced prejudice have the power to challenge the perspectives and actions of their oppressors.

# THE TRANSITION



- The most over-used word is **similarly...**
  - *“Students who offered detailed description of one text and then the other with only the word “similarly” in between, were not actually comparing but simply offering general narrative about the texts.”*

# COMPARATIVE LANGUAGE



To express:				
Similarity	Difference	Comparison	Contrast	Summarising or emphasising
exactly precisely virtually practically more or less almost nearly approximately about entirely quite	considerably a great deal very much rather somewhat a little slightly scarcely hardly totally completely entirely quite dissimilar	like similar as same in the same way too both most important have in common the same as similarly as well as while	although yet whereas however but while differ instead unless unlike though on the contrary contrary to even though on the other hand the reverse	In terms of... They are virtually identical They are almost exactly the same There are more similarities than differences They are quite different because... One of the few similarities/ differences is... in every way

# EXCELLENT TRANSITIONS



- In contrast to the very public journey depicted in *Tracks*, Chris' odyssey in *Into the Wild* is much more personal; a private retreat from the "poison of civilisation."
- Existing as a real-life reflection of Orwell's Oceania, Funder uncovers the GDR's ability to create the 'most' perfected surveillance state of all time.'
- Less extremely but just as chillingly, Anna Funder's seeking out of the true stories of East Berliners reveals the control of the GDR over people's thoughts due to the feeding of lies which was inevitably made reality for people.

# WRITING THAT SCORES WELL



- Assured and consistent focus on the central issue/ idea presented in the selected topic and using this as the nucleus for comparison
- Seamless comparisons and contrasts between the two texts throughout the essay, with a sense of balanced textual awareness and analytically-informed insights provided throughout: “Despite the contrast in setting the two texts are comparable as they present female characters whose lives have been disrupted by the various “bombshells” thrown at them, which range from adulterous husbands and personal crises, to being abandoned on a “goat-strewn” island for twenty years.”

# WRITING THAT SCORES WELL



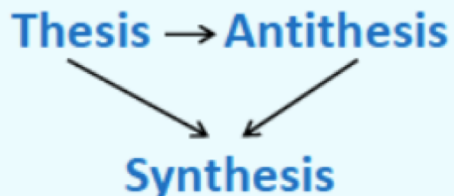
- Capacity to reveal complex thinking about the central issue/ idea in the topic, with conceptualising apparent or implied
- Connected and comparatively-centred conclusions:  
“Both texts are united in believing that the control of history, and subsequently language, has the potential to destabilise the foundations of society. When viewing Orwell’s predictions through the lens of Funder’s contemporary writing, it becomes clear that even the most extreme hypothesis of Orwell has the potential to become concrete reality.”

# MODEL 1: CAUSE, CONSEQUENCE, EXCEPTION



- **Introduction**
- **Paragraph 1:** What causes a situation or idea outlined in the topic?
- **Paragraph 2:** What are the consequences (positive, negative and otherwise) for individuals and society of the ideas from the topic?
- **Paragraph 3:** What exceptions to these consequences do the authors present?
- **Conclusion**
- Enables students to focus on the main concern/s or theme/s raised by the question by following them through from their origins to the solutions offered by the authors or discovered by the characters.

## MODEL 2: CAUSE, CONSEQUENCE, EXCEPTION



**Thesis:** the points chosen in response to the topic

**Antithesis:** the counterpoints to these ideas

**Synthesis:** the resolution of the tension or conflict between the two

**Introduction:** Deal with key terms

**Paragraph 1:** Main Point (Thesis) 1

**Paragraph 2:** Main Point (Thesis) 2

**Paragraph 3:**  
Counterpoints to Ideas 1 and 2 (Antithesis)

**Conclusion:** Resolution (Synthesis) of the above