

Comparing art works in the IW

A comparison naturally involves recognizing both similarities and differences. To start with, choose two works to compare that share some common characteristics, either in subject, medium or concept. Remember, It is pointless to try to compare things that bear no real relationship to each other!

A comparison is most effective when carefully chosen for the relationship between the two works being compared. Select a type of comparison to make based on one of these:

Subject matter

For a comparison based on subject matter or content, you would chose two works that apparently **address the same subject**, although you may find that they actually are very different.

Medium

For a comparison based on medium, you would compare two artworks or artefacts that **use the same medium to very different ends**

Concepts

For a comparison based on concepts, you would look at two works that **appear very different visually but address similar ideas or concepts**

Part 1 Formal Analysis

Compare and Contrast using the formal elements of visual analysis

Compare: analyze the two works discussing their similarities to each other. (You can refer to *guidelines for analysis* or *The formal elements of art*) For example, What similar sort of lines, colors, shapes, textures, patterns, composition are used? Are similar materials and techniques used? What about viewpoint? Lighting? The analysis will depend on the nature of the work you choose.

Contrast: discuss the ways in which the works differ formally (visually). How are materials used differently? How do the formal elements of line, color, shape, space, texture etc. differ in these works? Are they different in scale, technique, construction? Again, it depends on the work you have chosen.

Part 2 Content Analysis

Don't limit your comparison to visual analysis only, find out about the works significance. Is there is a story or an artists' intention that will contribute to your understanding of the meaning of the work?

Part 3 Contextual Analysis

Where is the work from? What was happening in that place at the time the work was made? What historical events or cultural background influenced the work? You need to locate each work within it's own cultural and historical context.

Summarize your discoveries

Having discussed the similarities and differences, summarize what you see as the key points and maybe draw your own conclusions about these artworks. Can you make any further connections to other art works or maybe to your own work?

Include Images Make sure you include images of the art works you are comparing, properly labeled and referenced! You can use prints or make your own copy by drawing, or both.