

Project 2: Original Comparative Descriptive Essay

Before and After--Scrooge and Another Character

Overview of Original Comparative Descriptive Essay

I. TOPIC OF ESSAY

You will be writing a comparative/descriptive essay about Scrooge's interactions with another character (or two) from *A Christmas Carol*. You may place Scrooge with any character from *A Christmas Carol* such as:

- A. Bob Cratchit
- B. Scrooge's nephew Fredew
- C. Tiny Tim
- D. The men from the charity
- E. Other

II. NUMBER OF PARAGRAPHS IN THE BODY OF YOUR ESSAY

All students will write 2 paragraphs

III. SENTENCES PER PARAGRAPH

- A. **Basic** students will write 5-7 sentences per paragraph.
- B. **Extension**⁺ students will write 7-10 sentences per paragraph.

IV. OPENING PARAGRAPH

Students will not write an **Opening Paragraph**.

You will learn about how to write comparing sentences at the beginning of each paragraph rather than a Thesis Statement overall this time.

V. CLOSING PARAGRAPH

Students **will not** write a **Closing Paragraph**. You will learn how to write comparative sentences throughout each paragraph.

You should add a closing sentence in which you either restate your Thesis Statement or your title (if it improves your essay, of course).

VI. SOURCES

All students may use whatever sources are needed to gather information in order to add detail to your essay. A certain number of sources is not required nor is any source citation necessary.

VII. QUOTATIONS IN YOUR ESSAY

You may or may not include quotes or dialogue.

VIII. WRITE ON/ADDITIONAL SKILLS

You will learn/further develop the following additional skills

- A. **The Skill of "Show Don't Tell"** You will learn how to describe a character's actions and mannerisms rather than telling what your character is like

B. Comparative Words and Sentences

Note: You will not complete a Checklist Challenge for this essay.

Note: This Overview Box, which is provided at the beginning of each project, is here to give students (and teachers) an at-a-glance look at the entire composition assignment. Each step of each lesson is assigned and detailed throughout the week(s).

Student Sample Before and After--Scrooge and Another Character

Scowling at the figures on a bill, the corner of Scrooge's eye caught two men approaching the door. He snapped at Bob, "Lock the door," but it was too late. With fiery eyes, Scrooge glared at the bill as if he were trying to burn a hole through it. Meanwhile, the men entered, greeted Scrooge warmly, and asked, "Would you consider a Christmas donation to the poor?" Scrooge harrumphed, picked up another bill, and fired over his shoulder, "Tell those vagabonds to get a job or else die quickly and save us resources." "Sir, they suffer so much," the man started before Scrooge slammed his hand on his desk and spun around. Red-faced, he shouted, "Get out of my sight!" **[PoB-A]**

Scrooge leapt up from his desk with a grin as soon as he glimpsed the two men coming down the street. He sang out, "Bob, I'll get the door!" Still smiling, he flung open the door and welcomed the men inside like they were sons returning for the holidays. The men entered, greeted Scrooge warmly, and asked, "Would you consider a Christmas donation to the poor?" Laughing, Scrooge sat down, pulled out his checkbook, and inquired, turning around to face them, "Would one thousand pounds be enough?" "Sir, they suffer so much," the man began before Scrooge held up his hand, beaming. He handed them a check for two thousand pounds, and insisted with a grin, "Give that to as many people as you can and don't hesitate to ask for more. Merry Christmas!" **[PoB-B]**

Box A-1

Lesson A. Composition/ Study Skills: Choose Character and Brainstorming

↔ **A-1.** Read the sample Before and After--Scrooge and Another Character essay provided in the box (Box A-1).

The first step in your Before and After--Scrooge essay will be to choose the character with whom Scrooge will interact. **You will want to choose the same character for both paragraphs.** This will help you make a more drastic comparison.

Telling about Scrooge with one character and how he was, then telling about Scrooge with another character and how he was would not be as dramatic as **having him interact with the same character--with two very different sets of mannerisms, characteristics, etc.** (like the sample did).

You want your paragraphs to show the old Scrooge and the new Scrooge. This will be better done with the same second character and the same setting in the second paragraph.

◇ **A-2.** List the character with whom Scrooge will interact on the line provided.

Lesson B. Write On: “Show, Don’t Tell” By Using Description of Mannerisms and Actions

In CI books, you learn how to describe things with adjectives, multiple adjectives, adverbs, and more. You are taught to use the best, most descriptive adjective (one that paints a vivid, exact picture). You are also taught various descriptive imagery techniques such as alliteration, similes, metaphors, onomatopoeia, etc.

Another aspect of describing is that of using verbs, actions, and mannerisms. In other words, **not telling your reader about your character, but letting that character's actions and mannerisms speak for themselves**. That is, letting your reader see and hear what your character says and does--and learning about your character through those things rather than you telling the reader he is this or that.

<> **B-1.** In PoB-A of the sample essay provided, highlight the following words and phrases:

- | | |
|---------------|------------|
| 1. scowling | 2. caught |
| 3. snapped | 4. glared |
| 5. harrumphed | 6. slammed |
| 7. shouted | |

The actions taking place in the paragraph tell you about Scrooge by showing, rather than telling. As opposed to the author saying that Scrooge was mad, Scrooge did not want to see them, Scrooge did not care about the poor, he tells you what Scrooge did and said so you can feel what his character is like.

<> **B-2.** Choose another *A Christmas Carol* character and write four sentences that show rather than tell what the character was like.

Example: The faceless, black-cloaked ghost of Christmas Yet to Come pointed toward a gravestone.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Lesson C. Write On: Comparative Words and Sentences

Another way to provide description, especially comparative description, like in the story for this week, is to use comparative words and sentences. **Comparative words and sentences compare one thing to another.** In this case, they are words and sentences taking place in the same scenario--but with very different descriptions.

<> **C-1.** Highlight the first sentence of each of the two paragraphs of the Before and After--Scrooge sample (Box A-1):

1. Scowling at the figures on a bill, the corner of Scrooge's eye caught two men approaching the door.
2. Scrooge leapt up from his desk with a grin as soon as he glimpsed the two men coming down the street.

Notice how both paragraphs' opening sentences are similar. However, **the first paragraph begins with the word *scowling* while the second one begins with Scrooge happily leaping up.** This change symbolizes Scrooge's transformation from miser to benefactor of the poor. **One simple change in sentence structure makes a world of difference in description.**

<> **C-2.** In the second sentence of each of the two paragraphs (Box A-1), underline the verbs *snapped* and *sang out*.

Notice how each second sentence has Scrooge in the same situation, even talking about the same thing. However, **the way he takes that action in each one is drastically different--in one he *snapped* his words and in the other he *sang out* (a happier, more excited action) his words.**

By having the characters in the same setting, even talking about the same thing, the author is set up to have him or her say different things that compare the character's change in temperaments and character.

The above things show change/contrast in the character. In both cases, he said something to Bob Cratchit. However, in one scenario he "snapped" his words. In the other, he "sang out" his words. Snapping is an angry, impatient action. Singing out is a happy, excited action.

<> **C-3.** Highlight the fourth sentence of each paragraph of the sample (Box A-1).

The paragraphs show changes/differences in the character, and these are highlighted not just by both paragraphs happening in the same place, but also by the identical first actions and words of the visiting men from the charity. **This shows that the changes occur in Scrooge alone; the men have remained the same.**

<> **C-4.** In the sample paragraphs provided (Box A-1), circle three other contrasting words or sentence structures.

<> **C-5.** After you have written your essay this week (or as you outline and write it, plan for these), add the following:

1. Three contrasting words
2. One contrasting sentence structure

<> **C-6.** Label the things you added/found in C-5 in your essay to help your teacher find them easily.

Help Box for C-4

You should have highlighted any of the following phrases

1. "Lock the door"... "Bob, I'll get the door"
2. glared at the bill...flung open the door
3. Scrooge harrumphed...laughing, Scrooge sat down
4. fired over his shoulder...turning around to face them
5. Red-faced, he shouted...insisted with a grin

Examples: for Contrasting Words:

1. ran -- walked
2. whispered -- shouted
3. leaned -- stood
4. snapped -- whispered
5. stared blankly -- stared into eyes

Example for contrasting sentences

Senence A: Joe gazed at the dazzling fruit.

Sentence B: The fruit was dazzling to the gazing Joe.

Box for C-5

Lesson D. Study Skills/Prewriting: Outline Two Comparative, Descriptive Paragraphs

<> **D.** Outline your Before and After--Scrooge and Another Character paragraphs following these steps:

1. Plan for five to ten sentences per paragraph.
2. **Choose the same character and the same or a similar setting.**
3. Plan to use **actions and mannerisms to show the contrasting.**
4. Outline sentence by sentence or action by action--whichever way works better for you.
5. **Do not plan to put in a Thesis Statement or a Thesis Statement "Reloaded" this time.** Instead, let your descriptions and contrasting speak for themselves. This is a creative essay in that you will not tell your readers what you are going to tell them (like in more informative type of writing). Your writing and description will speak for itself.

All--Paragraph of Body A

Topic of Paragraph 1 _____

Sentence 1 _____

Sentence 2 _____

Sentence 3 _____

Sentence 4 _____

Sentence 5 _____

Sentence 6 _____

Sentence 7 _____

Extension--Sentence 8 _____

Extension--Sentence 9 _____

Extension--Sentence 10 _____

All--Paragraph of Body B

Topic of Paragraph 2 _____

Sentence 1 _____

Sentence 2 _____

Sentence 3 _____

Sentence 4 _____

Sentence 5 _____

Sentence 6 _____

Sentence 7 _____

Extension--Sentence 8 _____

Extension--Sentence 9 _____

Extension--Sentence 10 _____

SAMPLE

Lesson E. Composition: Write Rough Draft Comparative, Descriptive Essay

<> E. Follow these steps to write your essay:

- (1) **Read the topic of your first paragraph** of the body **and the sentence notes** beneath it.
- (2) **Add any notes to this paragraph that you desire**, or mark through things you do not want, or re-number the sentence lines if you want your information in a different order.
- (3) **Write the first paragraph of the body** of your essay (PoB-A) in your notebook (on every other line) or key it on the computer (double spaced).
- (4) **Continue the steps above** for the rest of your essay.

Lesson F. Composition: Final Copy

<> F-1. **Edit your essay** with your teacher or another “editor.”

<> F-2. **Input your edits/changes** and make any necessary changes to create your final copy.

Note: You will not be completing a Checklist Challenge for this short descriptive paper.

SAMPLE