

COMPARE AND CONTRAST ESSAY

Purpose

In this activity, students will compare two of the scientists they encountered in the “Changing Views” articles. (Note: If the students took part in the debate, you might want to recommend that they write about the two scientists that were not part of their debate group).

They will explore one of the core ideas of the unit by writing a short essay about how society changes its views about science. This is also an opportunity for you to pre-assess your students’ writing, and for students to get used to using the writing rubric. Part of this closing activity is students using the rubric to evaluate their own writing.

Process

Students are going to write an essay comparing and contrasting two of the scientists that they learned about in this lesson. The ultimate goal is to think about and describe how each scientist had a different experience when presenting their new ideas to society. Some questions they could ask about the scientists are: How well were these ideas received? How long did it take society to accept their ideas? What proof did they have to provide to get people to accept their ideas? Did any political or religious ideals get in the way of their ideas being accepted?

Let them know the following requirements for the essay:

1. It should be at least five paragraphs.
2. The first paragraph should be an introduction with a clear thesis statement.
3. The last paragraph will be a conclusion and wrap up.
4. The middle three paragraphs should have at least one comparison and one contrast.

Instead of just turning their papers in, students will grade their own papers using the Big History Writing Rubric. Hand out the Big History Writing Rubric to the students, and tell them that this is what they are going to self-evaluate their essays against. This is an opportunity for them to get a better handle on this rubric, which is important because it will be used to grade them throughout the course. Be sure to review and discuss the rubric carefully; don’t just read through it with the class. You might even take a sample paragraph of writing and evaluate that as a class.

Assign a due date for the paper and decide if you want to use class time for the writing. It would likely be very helpful to have students bring in their papers on the due date, and then have them “grade” themselves in class before turning everything in to you.

Once the assignment has been submitted, be sure to carefully examine each essay, each student’s use of the rubric, and then provide pointed feedback to each student. This should help you evaluate all of your students and consider the goals that you might want them to work toward in their next writing assignment.



COMPARE AND CONTRAST ESSAY

Purpose

Now you'll compare two of the scientists that you read about in the "Changing Views" articles. (Note: If you took part in the debate, your teacher may ask you to compare the two scientists who were not part of your debate group).

You'll explore one of the core ideas of the unit by writing a short essay about how society changes its views about science. This is also an opportunity for you to get a sense of how you're doing with your own writing, and what you might need to work on to improve. Also, you'll get a clear understanding of how you'll be graded on writing for the rest of the course, because you'll use the Big History Writing Rubric to grade your own paper.

Process

You're going to write an essay comparing and contrasting two of the scientists that you learned about in this lesson. The idea is for you to describe and explain how each scientist had a different experience when presenting their new ideas to society. Some questions you might ask about the scientists are: How well were these ideas received? How long did it take society to accept their ideas? What proof did they have to provide to get people to accept their ideas? Did any political or religious ideals get in the way of their ideas being accepted?

These are the requirements for the essay:

1. It should be at least five paragraphs.
2. The first paragraph should be an introduction with a clear thesis statement.
3. The last paragraph will be a conclusion and wrap up.
4. The middle three paragraphs should have at least one comparison and one contrast.

After you write the paper, instead of just turning it in you'll grade it yourself using the Big History Writing Rubric. Your teacher will review the Big History Writing Rubric with you. Evaluating yourself might seem a little crazy, but it will help you really understand how you are supposed to be writing, what is expected of you, and how you can improve. It will also keep you honest—not everyone can write a perfect paper all the time!



WRITING RUBRIC

Directions: Read over this rubric carefully and decide how writing should be scored based on the descriptions provided. A blank scoring sheet is provided for your scores and comments.

Description	Below Standard (1)	Approaching Standard (2)	At Standard (3)	Above Standard (4)
<p>Focus</p> <p><i>The introduction text focuses on a topic and includes a thesis statement that communicates ideas, concepts, and information to the reader.</i></p>	The introduction text lacks an identifiable thesis and minimally communicates ideas, concepts, and information to the reader.	The introduction text has an unclear thesis statement that communicates some ideas, concepts, and information to the reader.	The introduction text has a thesis statement that communicates ideas, concepts, and information to the reader.	The introduction text has a clear and appropriate thesis statement that skillfully engages the reader's interest in addition to communicating ideas, concepts, and information.
<p>Development/Support</p> <p><i>The body of the paper presents relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, and examples that are supported by the use of claim testers and that connect to Big History concepts and ideas.</i></p>	The text contains limited facts and examples related to the topic. The use of claim testers is absent from the paper. The paper lacks connection to Big History concepts and ideas.	The text provides some facts, definitions, details, quotations, and examples that attempt to develop and explain the topic. The use of claim testers is inconsistent and not always correct. The connection to Big History concepts is sporadic.	The text provides sufficient relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, and examples to develop and explain the topic. The use of claim testers is evident throughout most of the paper. There are some connections to Big History concepts and ideas.	The text provides many relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, and examples to develop and explain the topic richly. The use of claim testers is evident and consistent throughout the paper. There are clear connections to Big History concepts and ideas.
<p>Audience</p> <p><i>The author anticipates the audience's background knowledge of the topic.</i></p>	The text lacks an awareness of the audience's knowledge level and needs.	The text illustrates an inconsistent awareness of the audience's knowledge level and needs.	The text takes the audience's knowledge level and concerns about the claim into consideration. The text addresses the needs of the audience.	The text consistently anticipates and addresses the audience's knowledge level and concerns about the topic, showing deep understanding of the reader. The text skillfully meets the needs of the audience.



WRITING RUBRIC

<p>Cohesion</p> <p><i>The writing uses appropriate and varied transitions to link the major sections of the text, creates cohesion, and clarifies the relationships among complex ideas and concepts. The conclusion ties to and supports the information or explanation.</i></p>	<p>The text contains few, if any, words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text. The text does not connect the topic to the examples or facts. The text may fail to offer a conclusion.</p>	<p>The text contains limited words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text. The text attempts to connect the topic and the examples or facts. The conclusion restates points already made and does not support the information.</p>	<p>The text uses words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text. The text connects the topic to the examples or facts. The conclusion ties to and supports the information.</p>	<p>The text skillfully uses words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text. The text identifies the relationship between the topic and the examples or facts. The conclusion provides the implications, significance, and future relevance of the topic.</p>
<p>Language and Conventions</p> <p><i>The text presents a formal, objective tone and uses precise language and topic-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic. The text also demonstrates Standard English conventions.</i></p>	<p>The text illustrates a limited or inconsistent tone and awareness of topic-specific vocabulary.</p> <p>The text contains multiple inaccuracies in Standard English conventions of usage and mechanics.</p>	<p>The text illustrates a limited awareness of formal tone and some awareness of topic-specific vocabulary. The text demonstrates some accuracy in Standard English conventions of usage and mechanics.</p>	<p>The text presents a formal, objective tone and uses precise language and topic-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic. The text demonstrates Standard English conventions of usage and mechanics along with discipline-specific requirements (for example, MLA or APA).</p>	<p>The text presents a formal, objective tone and uses sophisticated relevant language and topic-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic. The text demonstrates a high level of knowledge of Standard English conventions of usage and mechanics along with discipline-specific requirements (for example, MLA or APA).</p>



WRITING RUBRIC

Name:

Date:

Directions: Use this table to score and comment on the writing that you are evaluating. Put an X in the cell that denotes the grade. Use the other cells for comments.

Description	Below Standard (1)	Approaching Standard (2)	At Standard (3)	Above Standard (4)	Score
Focus					
Development/ Support					
Audience					
Cohesion					
Language and Conventions					
Total Score					



WRITING WORKSHEET

Name:

Date:

Directions: It's important to write well so that you can clearly communicate your understanding and ideas in Big History writing assignments. Your writing skills should build off of and complement your reading and vocab skills. Use this worksheet as a way to get started on your writing.

1. What is your thesis statement for your paper? _____

2. What resources will you use to support the claims in your writing? List them here along with a sentence about why the resource is important for your writing.

Resource 1: _____

How it supports your claims: _____

Resource 2: _____

How it supports your claims: _____



WRITING WORKSHEET

Name: Date:

Resource 3: _____

How it supports your claims: _____

3. Don't forget to look over the Big History Writing Rubric as you write. Make sure your writing covers all of the categories in the rubric and check them off as you go.

- Focus:** The text focuses on a topic to inform a reader with ideas, concepts, and information.
- Development/Support:** The text presents relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, and examples. The conclusion ties to and supports the information/explanation.
- Audience:** The author anticipates the audience's background knowledge of the topic.
- Cohesion:** The text uses appropriate and varied transitions to link the major sections of the text, creates cohesion, and clarifies the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.
- Language/Conventions:** The text presents a formal, objective tone and uses precise language and topic-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic. The text also demonstrates Standard English conventions.

