

Writing a body paragraph for a comparison essay

The approach that I teach, and that has worked for me and students in the exam, is **the semi-integrated approach**.

This is an easy enough paragraph structure, that also allows for students to make their paragraph **more integrated** if they wish – which only strengthens the comparison.

Basically, your topic sentence compares the text through a broad shared theme or idea (better if you can phrase it as an idea e.g. **‘The control of its citizens is carried out in broadly different, but uniquely similar ways’** rather than just **‘The theme of control is explored in both texts’**).

If it is relevant or possible, a connection to textual features will make your topic sentence better, e.g. **“The control of its citizens is carried out by the ruling parties of each system in broadly different but crucially similar ways.”** Note here “the ruling parties” function like a character (textual feature); I may discuss Mond and the World Controllers and compare them against Big Brother and perhaps O’Brien.

For more examples of topic sentences please see my essay planning document on **hope**.

Once your topic sentence has been stated, you discuss and analyse how **one** text explores the theme, making sure to include evidence: **two key-quotes for each text is good**; if you can work in more, shorter quotes – even better.

Tip: If there is a quote from the text that says the same thing you are writing, e.g. that Bernard is petty, then use it as a quote “petty” (so long as it’s in the text!). *You don’t need to use page numbers for your quotes!*

Then, around half-way through your paragraph, once you have discussed how the shared theme is explored in one text: **use a comparative connective** (e.g. similarly, dissimilarly, etc) and then discuss how the shared theme is explored in the **second** text.

THEN: In your link sentence (this will likely be a big sentence!):

- Summarise your discussion of each text into a key point for each text, comparing them.
- Usually at this stage, the comparison is a **difference** (not always!)
- It may be handy to connect your two key points with a semi-colon.
- **If you have not yet discussed the author/director’s VVCs – this can be an excellent place to do it. Frame the final idea as a view, value or concern of the author, e.g.**

“Therefore, while Huxley suggests that the uncontrollable forces of human and physical nature will forever challenge the stability of any system of control, Radcliffe seems to value the striving of the human spirit as the most cherished human hope, and thereby the only potential challenge to totalitarian control.”

How to improve your mark for ‘comparison’

The semi-integrated approach allows for comparison in three places: the topic sentence; the connective in the middle of the paragraph; and the **link** (which is the most important).

If you can: throw in some more mid-paragraph connections! If you are in the process of discussing your second (or first) text, and you realise there’s a good connection to make – throw it in! The more extra mid-paragraph comparisons, the more your paragraph will become

integrated – which is better. You may also choose to adopt a **full integrated approach**: *please see your Textbook, Chapter 10* for more.

For more information on how to structure and write a comparative essay, please read the 'Chapter 10: Writing a Comparative Text-Response' in your Textbook. There are sample essays as well using the different approaches.

If you think it easier to use a BLOCK APPROACH – go for it – but you will need to consult the Textbook for advice on how to do this.