

Name _____
English 2 Mrs. Maloney

Date _____
Period _____

Sample Paper: Comparison of Two Poems

This is one kind of plan you might use for a short paper. It indicates the main idea of each paragraph.

INTRODUCTION

Paragraph 1

Thesis Through the gift of observation and imagination, both poets invest ordinary scenes with magic.

BODY

Paragraph 2

Both poems unite the commonplace and the sublime.

Paragraph 3

Both poems are rich in visual images, particularly images of color. Swenson sees the sunset creating decorative patterns along the street.

Paragraph 4

Like Swenson, Dickinson captures the dramatic splendor of the sunset, but she focuses on the brilliant colors of the sky.

Paragraph 5

Both poets use diction with suggestive meanings and associations.

Paragraph 6

Both poets adopt a whimsical tone toward their subject.

CONCLUSION

Paragraph 7

Although there are differences in the settings chosen by the poets and in their styles, both poems convey a sense of wonder and delight to be found in the simple, everyday beauty of nature.

Writing the Essay

Use your prewriting plan as a guide in writing your paper. Focus on expressing clearly the major points and evidence supporting your thesis statement. Include a topic sentence and supporting sentences in each paragraph. As you write, use language that is appropriate in tone. Include transitional expressions to make clear the relationships among your ideas.

Here is a model essay developing the thesis statement. For an earlier draft of this essay, see pages 901-903.

TITLE

A COMPARISON OF "ORNAMENTAL SKETCH WITH VERBS"
AND "SHE SWEEPS WITH MANY-COLORED BROOMS"

INTRODUCTION

Identify works by title
and author.

Thesis Statement

May Swenson, in "Ornamental Sketch with Verbs," and Emily Dickinson, in "She Sweeps with Many-Colored Brooms," have taken as their subject the beauty of a sunset. *Through the gift of observation and imagination, both poets invest ordinary scenes with magic.*

BODY

Topic Sentence	Both poems unite the commonplace and the sublime. The setting of Swenson's poem is an ordinary city street. Sunset spilling over the street transforms such common sights as a girl on skates, an iceman, gutters, and sooty roofs into a golden and fabulous scene. The setting of Dickinson's poem is a New England countryside, where the glorious colors of the western sky are compared to precious gems—amber and emerald.
Supporting Evidence	
Topic Sentence	Both poems are rich in visual images, particularly images of color. Swenson sees the sunset creating decorative patterns along the street. The street becomes a "gilded stagger" as the light zigzags across it. The golden light covers the walls of buildings with spots of sunlight that look like shiny "salamander-red" scales. The spotted and streaked light falls across the gutter in fine, hairlike lines. It covers the tops of cars and boys' heads with "helmets." The coal truck is ringed with light that looks like a halo. Even the coal sliding down its chute is transformed into "nuggets" racing "from a golden sled." Lampposts are wreathed with light so that they look like "fantastic trees." Ordinary creatures like pigeons and dogs are transformed into exotic flamingos and chows; ash cans become urns; and homely fire escapes are changed to elegant balconies.
Supporting Evidence	
Transitional Sentence	Like Swenson, Dickinson captures the dramatic splendor of the sunset, but she focuses on the brilliant colors of the sky. She compares the sunset to a housewife who sweeps the sky with multicolored brooms. As she sweeps, she leaves streaks of color across the sky. She is inefficient and leaves "shreds" of her brooms behind her. She forgets to "dust the pond," and she drops purple and amber threads. She litters the eastern sky with her clothing, "duds of emerald." The clouds become her aprons, which fly as she works. She continues to sweep until the sun settles behind the horizon and the stars come out.
Supporting Evidence	
Topic Sentence	Both poets use diction with suggestive meanings and associations. Swenson uses language with romantic or exotic associations. The word <i>salamander</i> , for example, calls to mind the mythological creature that lives in fire; <i>urn</i> has connotations of elegance and dignity. Dickinson, on the other hand, uses common words with rich connotative meanings. The word <i>sweeps</i> , for example, carries with it not only the commonplace meaning of clearing a surface, but that of a flowing, majestic movement. <i>Purple</i> is the imperial color used to symbolize royalty.
Supporting Evidence	
Topic Sentence	Both poets adopt a whimsical tone toward their subject. The underlying humor in Swenson's poem arises from the incongruity between each object and what it becomes: pigeons to flamingos; ash cans to urns. There is something playful and fantastic also in Dick-
Supporting Evidence	

CONCLUSION

inson's notion of sunset as an absent-minded, untidy housewife who neglects to dust and who litters the sky.

Although there are differences in the settings chosen by the poets and in their styles, both poems convey a sense of wonder and delight to be found in the simple, everyday beauty of nature.

Length: 534 words

Evaluating and Revising Papers

When you write an essay in class, you have a limited amount of time to plan and develop your essay. Nevertheless, you should save a few minutes to read over your work and make necessary improvements. When an essay is assigned as homework, you have more time to prepare it carefully. Get into the habit of evaluating and revising your work. A first draft of an essay should be treated as a rough copy of your manuscript. Chances are that thinking about and reworking your first draft will result in a clearer and stronger paper.

To evaluate an essay, you judge its content, organization, and style by applying a set of criteria, or standards. Your goal in evaluating is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the paper. Knowing this, you will be able to make the changes that will improve the essay. To evaluate an essay about literature, ask yourself the following questions:

Guidelines for Evaluating an Essay

Introduction	1. Have I included an introduction that identifies the subject of the paper?
Thesis Statement	2. Have I included a thesis statement that clearly expresses the controlling idea for the paper?
Thesis Development	3. Have I included convincing main points that develop the thesis in the body of the paper?
Conclusion	4. Have I included sufficient evidence from the work to support each main point?
Coherence	5. Have I included a conclusion that synthesizes the main ideas or that suggests additional ideas for study?
Style	6. Have I arranged ideas logically and related them clearly to one another?
	7. Have I varied sentence beginnings and sentence structure? Have I defined any unfamiliar words or unusual terms? Have I used vivid and specific words?
Tone	8. Have I used language that is appropriate for my purpose and audience?

She Sweeps with Many-Colored Brooms

EMILY DICKINSON

English 2
Mrs. Maloney

Poems used
in comparison

Sometimes a poem consists of one sustained metaphor. What is the comparison that underlies this entire poem?

She sweeps with many-colored brooms,
And leaves the shreds behind;
Oh, housewife in the evening west,
Come back, and dust the pond!

You dropped a purple raveling in,
You dropped an amber thread;
And now you've littered all the East
With duds^o of emerald!

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8. **duds:** clothes or belongings.

And still she plies her spotted brooms,
And still the aprons fly,
Till brooms fade softly into stars—
And then I come away.

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Ornamental Sketch with Verbs

MAY SWENSON

You have seen that poets can coin words and reverse standard word order. What kind of poetic license is evident in this poem?

Sunset runs in a seam
over the brows of buildings
dropping west to the river,
turns the street to a gilded stagger,
makes the girl on skates,
the man with the block of ice,
the basement landlady calling her cat
creatures in a dream,

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scales with salamander-red
the window-pitted walls,
hairs the gutters with brindled^o light,
helmets cars and boys on bikes
and double-dazzles
the policeman's portly coat,
halos the coal truck where
nuggets race from a golden sled,

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11. **brindled:** spotted and streaked.

festoons lampposts to fantastic trees,
lacquers sooty roofs and pavements,
floats in every puddle
pinks of cloud,
flamingos all the pigeons,
grands all dogs to chows,
enchants the ash cans into urns^o
and fire-escapes to Orleans balconies.

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