THE COMPARE & CONTRAST ESSAY PACKET

UNDERSTANDING WORDS

Before students plan and write essays, they must understand the tasks that the prompts ask them to perform. This begins with understanding the words that prompts use.

Compare and Contrast prompts ask students to either compare and/or contrast. It is critical that students understand the difference so that they perform the correct tasks. The prompts may ask students to compare OR to contrast or to compare AND to contrast.

PART A
Using a dictionary, define these words. Include any close synonyms.

1. COMPARE

2. CONTRAST

PART B
Answer the questions and be prepared to discuss your answers.

1. If a prompt asks a student to compare, what must he or she do in the essay?

2. If a prompt asks a student to contrast, what must he or she do in the essay?

3. Predict what will happen on the grade of the essay if a student is asked to contrast but compares OR if a student is asked to compare and only does differences?
Compare and contrast essays begin with a prompt. The prompt will specify the actions a student is required to perform. It will also specify a definite chronological period from World History and provide two to three geographical or cultural regions from which a student may choose. All compare and contrast essays will follow this format. It will also designate a specific historical theme used within the AP World History course guide.

*In their essays, student must address all parts of the prompt.* This means that in the course of the essay, a student has to have a comparison, a contrast, mention both regions/countries, and the time period. If the prompt specifies themes to discuss, then students will also have to discuss each of the themes at least once. There is a higher and lower standard on the rubric.

Use the following Compare and Contrast essay prompt to assist with these exercises.

**Compare and contrast the treatment of women in any TWO Post-Classical societies:**

1. *East Asia*
2. *Southwest Asia and North Africa*
3. *The Americas*

**PART A: UNDERSTANDING THE PARTS OF A COMPARE & CONTRAST PROMPT**

Answer the questions in the provided space.

1. What action verbs are used in the specific prompt?

2. What synonyms for these verbs could you use to accomplish the same action?

**PART B: THE TIME PERIOD**

Compare and Contrast Essays for AP World History will specify a time period. Students are expected to not only recognize the time periods, which are based on the chronological perimeters of the AP World History Course Guide but major developments within each period.

a. What time period does the prompt specify?

b. Summarize any developments during this time period that you can remember. If you cannot remember, use your text or the College Board subject guide and summarize major developments which you might need to know.
PART C: THEMES

Prompts will also identify one or more of the FIVE overarching themes used in the AP World History course guide (see page 5 of the 2007-2008 Guide). Two acronyms or pneumonic devices (SCRIPTED or PERSIAN) help students remember these themes – you need to teach one or the other, or both. The prompt may specify one only theme or it may specify two or three. If the prompt specifies a theme, a student must address that in his or her essay. However, if the prompt only identifies one or two themes it is always best for the student to divide the theme into some of its parts or sub-themes related to the prompt.

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<td>• Labor, Labor Organizations</td>
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<td>• Demography, Disease</td>
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<td>• Human, Environment Interaction</td>
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<td>• Patterns of Settlement</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Geography, Region</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Agriculture, Pastoralism</td>
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1. Based on the prompt, what theme are required to discuss?

2. In the above prompt, there is only one broad theme. To fully discuss this theme it is best if you break it down into two or three sub-topics. What topics would you use to better discuss your answer from above?
PART D: THE GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

Failure to understand cultural and political geography can be disastrous during the Compare and Contrast essays (as well and the Change, Continuity over Time). If a student is asked to write about East Asia and includes Vietnam, a Southeast Asian country in the essay, the essay could be invalid. Or if a prompt specifies Southwest Asia and a student includes India, a country of South Asia it will change the focus of the essay. All compare and contrast essays specify geographic or cultural regions that a student should use. This requires students to understand the cultural regions included in the AP World History Course Guide. But that is not all. Students need to know that the College Board often alternates between asking for a cultural region such as Latin America and a physical region such as Southeast Asia. A student needs to be careful not to confuse the two types of regions. Additionally regions change over time, which students are required to know. And students need to know at least two countries within the region. If you are not sure, please consult the map in the AP World History course guide and a map of modern countries.

1. What regions does the above prompt ask you to use?

2. Identify at least two major countries in each region?

3. If the essay prompt asks a student to use Sub-Saharan Africa, what smaller regions exist within this broad term? What one major AP World History cultural region is NOT included in this geographic term?

4. How does the term Latin America differ from the term “the Americas”? What major countries could you use to support a thesis about Latin America but not the Americas?

5. If the prompt asks you to use the Southwest Asia, what countries would qualify for this essay? How would the use of the region “the Middle East” differ from Southwest Asia? Does this differ from saying Southwest Asia and North Africa?

6. Most textbooks speak of the West while also identifying a region called Western Europe? How do the two differ? What countries might you include in the West but not Western Europe?

7. When speaking of Eastern Europe, what major historical states should you remember to discuss?
WRITING A THESIS

All essays must have an acceptable thesis, which address the issues and themes specified in the prompt. One of the simplest and most successful ways is to use a format called WAHP3 – “What is it about, how will you prove it - give me three ways?”

For instance if the prompt was “Compare and Contrast the formation of empires in any two Classical civilizations (a) the Mediterranean; (b) South Asia; and (c) East Asia” an acceptable thesis sentence would look something like this: While both the Classical Roman and Han Empires centralized power and militarily expanded their frontiers, the Roman Empire did not utilize a political philosophy to structure and rule their empire while the Han Emperors used a blend of Legalism and Confucianism. The “WA” part of the thesis is empire formation in Rome and Han China while the “HP3” includes (1) both centralized power and (2) both used militaries to expand; and one difference (3) different political philosophies. Please note that this thesis contains themes specified in the prompt (empire building), two regions (Rome and Han China), at least one comparison (there are two) and at least one difference, and the time period. Please note that is critical to include the time period because without it an essay might not be historical valid.

It is best in the thesis statement to make at least two significant and direct comparisons – one should be a similar and one a difference (if the prompt asks you to compare). It is not acceptable to simply say “the two civilizations were similar and different.” This is paraphrasing or copying the prompt. A student must qualify the prompt by fleshing it out in detail.

A thesis may constitute two sentences but they must be next to each other. Many of my students have separate “WA” and “HP3” sentences.

Use the following prompt to assist with these exercises.

Compare and contrast the treatment of women in any TWO Post-Classical societies:

1. East Asia
2. Southwest Asia and North Africa
3. The Americas

PART A: WRITE A THESIS
1. Based on the prompt, write a thesis using East Asia and Southwest Asia/N. Africa.

2. Based on the prompt, write a thesis using Southwest Asia/N. Africa and The Americas?
THE INTRODUCTION PARAGRAPH

As are the Document Based Question and Change and Continuity over Time essays, the Compare and Contrast essay in AP World History is graded through a process called Core Scoring. Students must earn all points of the Basic Core before earning points of the Expanded Core. No matter how sophisticated an essay is if a student misses on indicator of the Basic Core, he or she cannot earn points of the Expanded Core.

Some teachers teach students to write a simple thesis sentence. While it is true that a single sentence can earn the thesis indicator point on the rubric, good teachers and good students demand a higher level of performance. In AP World History, teach the student to write a thesis or introduction paragraph.

The introduction paragraph is the single most important paragraph you will write; the second most important is the first body paragraph. These two contain the first ideas and proofs a grader will read. The quality or lack of quality of these sentences can prejudice a reader about your whole essay. Introduction paragraphs need contain only two sentences—a hook and a thesis sentence. But hook sentences or historical introductions add color and are the attention grabbers that start an essay. They most resemble newspaper headlines. The best hooks tell the history of the essay prompt's topic leading up to that essay prompt. A thesis paragraph usually begins with a historical introduction. Students should tell the history of the topic and region leading up to their thesis statement.

One student in particular, in her essay on who would win a war between Sparta and Athens used this hook and thesis:

Once upon a time two boys were born in Ancient Greece. One was born in Athens and given a quill, a scroll and sent off to gymnasium; the other born in Sparta was given a sword and shield and sent off to army camp. While some dreamers argue that the pen is mightier than the sword, in the Peloponnesian War, Sparta’s sword defeated Athen’s pen for military, social, and economic reasons.

Based on the prompt “Compare and Contrast the formation of empires in any two Classical civilizations (a) the Mediterranean; (b) South Asia; and (c) East Asia” a thesis paragraph would look something like this:

Both the Roman Empire and Han China were the products of processes and historical states which preceded them. After 509 BCE the Roman Republic began the imperial process by conquering neighboring lands and peoples and settling colonies across the Mediterranean; on the other hand, the Han Chinese inherited the ruling philosophy of Legalism and borders of China from the Qin Dynasty. While both the Classical Roman and Han Empires centralized power and militarily expanded their frontiers, the Roman Empire did not utilize a political philosophy to structure and rule their empire while the Han Emperors used a blend of Legalism and Confucianism.

I also suggest a pneumonic device called “Hook it, hit it, three times, go out.” “Hook it” means introduce your topic with a hook or historical introduction; “hit it” means write a thesis; “three strikes” means elaborate on the thesis in three ways; and “go out” means go into your body paragraphs and begin discussing the thesis.
PART A: WRITING HOOK SENTENCES OR HISTORICAL INTRODUCTIONS

Based on the essay prompt, can you think of some creative and interesting hooks or historical introductions about Post-Classical Women? Please write two below.

1.

2.

PART B: INTRODUCTION PARAGRAPH – BRINGING IT TOGETHER

Ideally hook sentences should act as signposts to the thesis. They should not be cryptic or difficult to understand. Using the thesis sentences and the hooks you wrote above, write out two introductory paragraphs.

Compare and contrast the treatment of women in any TWO Post-Classical societies:

1. East Asia
2. Southwest Asia and North Africa
3. The Americas
ORGANIZING OF YOUR ESSAY

The body paragraphs which follow should compare and contrast three themes or groups. Do not create two paragraphs solely on the two geographic regions. Nor is it quality writing to create one paragraph on similarities and one on differences. Create paragraphs using themes from the College Board Course Guide (see SCRIPTED or PERSIAN) and within each compare and contrast your two regions or states. Maintain parallel order as articulated in your thesis sentence. And each paragraph should have a detailed and specific topic sentence.

Based on the prompt “Compare and Contrast the formation of empires in any two Classical civilizations (a) the Mediterranean; (b) South Asia; and (c) East Asia” our thesis paragraph was:

Both the Roman Empire and Han China were the products of processes and historical states which preceded them. After 509 BCE the Roman Republic began the imperial process by conquering neighboring lands and peoples and settling colonies across the Mediterranean; on the other hand, the Han Chinese inherited the ruling philosophy of Legalism and borders of China from the Qin Dynasty. While both the Classical Roman and Han Empires centralized power and militarily expanded their frontiers, the Roman Empire did not utilize a political philosophy to structure and rule their empire while the Han Emperors used a blend of Legalism and Confucianism.

The second paragraph or first body paragraph would discuss the similarities of centralized power in the Roman and Han Empires; the third paragraph would discuss the similarities of military expansion; and the last paragraph would deal with the differences between Han and Roman political philosophies.

Students must substantiate the thesis with appropriate historical evidence. It is not sufficient to make a statement without use of proof or evidence. Students should use evidence, which is clear and detailed. In each paragraph, students should cite include key vocabulary, dates, historical events, persons, trends, and occurrences. The simplest formula is to have one fact per comparison category; if the paragraph is on centralized power in the Roman and Han Empires, your paragraph should have at least one piece of evidence on Roman and one on Han. More is always warranted AND use comparative vocabulary. An example is

“In Classical Rome Augustus Caesar attempted to centralize power through the creation of an emperor. He controlled the military, oversaw the appointment of governors and their operations and appointed members to the Senate. Similarly, Han China’s emperors also oversaw the bureaucracy and centralized all functions within the state under his control. Both dispatched embassies and received ambassadors, and commanded armies in battle. However, the Han centralization differed from the Romans in that the Han had a professional bureaucracy answerable to the emperor and a more secure idea of dynastic succession; in Rome bureaucrats often came from the Roman elite or the military and their loyalty was questionable. Their primary concerns were not to the state or emperor but personal aggrandizement or future glory and rank. Additionally, for the 400 years of Han rule with the single exception of the rule of Wang Mang, all emperors came from the same dynasty unlike Rome where Augustus and his successors never clearly established a method for picking the next emperor and dynasties changed regularly. Emperors were often made by the revolt of legions or through complex deals between contenders.”
MAKING COMPARISONS

Students must make two or more relevant, direct comparisons between or among societies. Students should organize their essays by grouping in a relevant manner. The acronym P.E.R.S.I.A.N. or S.C.R.I.P.T.E.D. will suffice, and they should use three major groups. Within the groups, the student should compare and contrast the two civilizations. They set up directed comparisons. Often students fail to make direct comparisons or contrasts. One of the simplest ways is to use vocabulary which sets it up. Listed below are words denoting “similar” and “different.” There are variations based on word combinations and tenses but this list should provide some assistance in making directed comparisons.

SIMILARITY

SIMILAR
SIMILARLY
THE SAME AS
IN COMPARISON
COMPARATIVELY
BOTH
ALSO
COMPARABLE

COMMENSURABLE
OF THE SAME ORDER
WORTHY OF
COMPARISON
MEASURE UP TO
MATCH UP WITH
PARALLEL
ANALOGOUS

ANALOGICAL
COLLATABLE
CORRELATIVE
LIKE
EQUAL
CORRESPONDING

DIFFERENCES

IN CONTRAST
DIFFERENTLY
ON THE OTHER HAND
EVEN THOUGH
ALTHOUGH
WHEREAS
BUT
INCOMPARABLE
INCOMMENSURATE

DISSIMILAR
UNLIKE
DISTINCT
DISTINCTIVE
OPPOSE
HETERODOX
DIFFERENCE
DISTINCTION
 DISSIMILARITY

VARIATES
VARIATION
DIVERGENCE
DISPARITY
INEQUALITY
CONTRARY
OTHERWISE
DISTINCT
PECULIAR

PART A: USE OF COMPARATIVE VOCABULARY

In the passage below, circle or underline words which set up a compare and contrast.

“In Classical Rome Augustus Caesar attempted to centralize power through the creation of an emperor. He controlled the military, oversaw the appointment of governors and their operations and appointed members to the Senate. Similarly, Han China’s emperors also oversaw the bureaucracy and centralized all functions within the state under his control. Both dispatched embassies and received ambassadors, and commanded armies in battle. However, the Han centralization differed from the Romans in that the Han had a professional bureaucracy answerable to the emperor and a more secure idea of dynastic succession; in Rome bureaucrats often came from the Roman elite or the military and their loyalty was questionable. Their primary concerns were not to the state or emperor but personal aggrandizement or future glory and rank. Additionally, for the 400 years of Han rule with the single exception of the rule of Wang Mang, all emperors came from the same dynasty unlike Rome where Augustus and his successors never clearly established a method for picking the next emperor and dynasties changed regularly. Roman emperors were often made by the revolt of legions or through complex deals between contenders.”
ANALYSIS

Within a Compare and Contrast Essay, students must analyze at least two reasons for a similarity or difference identified in a direct comparison. Remember: the analysis point must begin with a direct comparison and explain why the similarity or difference arose or occurred. Such a construction could be:

*France and Mali both had decentralized political structures yet for different reasons. France had to give local nobles power in order to repel Vikings and to halt invasions. Paris and the king were too distant to respond to local problems immediately and swiftly. Had power not been granted locally, France could have been destroyed in the early Post-Classical Age. Afterwards, the French kings tried to reclaim power. Mali however came about by conquest. The Sultan of Mali conquered an enormous area and established a tributary relationship with the defeated rulers. The defeated subjects had to pay yearly tribute but could continue ruling. The Sultan rarely intervened unless tribute was not paid. They had to fight to prevent their subject provinces from throwing off the sultan’s rule.*

PART A: ANALYSIS

Based on the thesis from previous exercises, write a comparative sentence with facts that analyzes why a similarity or difference occurred. In other words, prove what you write.

*While both the Classical Roman and Han Empires centralized power and militarily expanded their frontiers, the Roman Empire did not utilize a political philosophy to structure and rule their empire while the Han Emperors used a blend of Legalism and Confucianism.*

Explain a Similarity.

Explain a Difference.
CONCLUSION PARAGRAPH

This is the least critical paragraph you will write. National graders insist you can forget a conclusion and still receive the highest score. But when you write research papers later in college classes, you will learn you cannot do this. It is the last time you can tell your reader what your thesis or main idea was. Therefore, learn to conclude in some appropriate manner. Whatever you do, do not waste an inordinate amount of time concluding. The time is better spent on analysis and interpretation.

Most critically, however, a conclusion can function as a thesis IF your thesis is missing or does not meet the criteria of the rubric for the point. Consequently, a conclusion is critical.

PART A: SIMPLE CONCLUSION

Conclusions can be one sentence. You can restate the prompt or paraphrase your thesis, which is adequate but simplistic. Your conclusion should resemble your thesis and contain what your essay was about and what three ideas you used to prove it. Reread your thesis used in previous exercises. Write a simple conclusion.

PART B: LONG CONCLUSION

Reread your thesis from the Expanded Core. A superior conclusion of one sentence should mirror this type of thesis. As my students repeatedly point out, this may mean a “compound, complex sentence.” Write a long conclusion.

PART C: ELABORATE CONCLUSION

Because of time constraints, elaborate conclusions are often too time-consuming to write. Nevertheless, they have their value and place. The best writers tend to follow this pattern. Restate your thesis in a manner different than the beginning. And then tell what happens after the time period in question. For example

While both the Classical Roman and Han Empires created a centralized, militarily powerful state, Rome never relied on a philosophical framework for governance. In the end both Classical Rome and Han China experienced increasing decentralization and military decline as the center lost control of the provinces, in the Roman cases to Germans while the Han lost power to rebellious nobles and provincial governors. In the end, Legalism and Confucianism failed to save the Han state while a new philosophy, Buddhism began to spread in China. Likewise the Roman cultural idea of gravitas and veritas (seriousness and truthfulness) gave way to the Christian tenets of love God with all your heart, and your neighbor as yourself.
POLISHING TIPS

There are several other tips to writing a superior essay. Each is listed below. Read the following prompt and thesis sentence.

“Compare and Contrast the formation of empires in any two Classical civilizations (a) the Mediterranean; (b) South Asia; and (c) East Asia”

While both the Classical Roman and Han Empires centralized power and militarily expanded their frontiers, the Roman Empire did not utilize a political philosophy to structure and rule their empire while the Han Emperors used a blend of Legalism and Confucianism.

PART A: PARALLEL STRUCTURE AND INTERNAL ORDER

Parallel structure organizes subsequent paragraphs based on the internal order of ideas outlined in the thesis sentence. When students write thesis sentences, they should put their stronger points first and weaker points last. Read the thesis above. Circle and number the points. Write the exact order below.

PART B: NUMBER OF PARAGRAPHS

At the minimum, students need four paragraphs – the thesis, the conclusion, and at least two if not three body paragraphs. The body paragraphs should not conflate ideas into one paragraph. Different themes should be separated into their own paragraphs. The number of paragraphs should match the number of points in your thesis plus introduction and conclusion paragraphs. Also skip two lines between paragraphs. Based on the above thesis sentence, how many paragraphs would an essay require?

PART C: TIME TO PREPARE, TIME TO WRITE, TIME TO CORRECT

Students forty minutes to read, prepare and write Compare and Contrast essays. Spend five minutes organizing your essay with a brief outline. Use thirty minutes to write. But save five minutes to reread the essay and to make corrections. Check to see that you have addressed all portions of the prompt. If you have left something out, and want to add ideas, insert them in the margin or at the end of the essay but find some way to tell the reader where the new portion goes.

PART D: “I.E. vs E.G.”

In the prompt the College Board may use a terminology when identifying themes. In one recent essay it said “e.g. politics, social, and economics.” E.G means “for
example” in Latin. *I.E.* means “that is.” When the College Board prompt uses ‘e.g.’ it means a student may use the examples provide. *If the prompt says ‘i.e.’ then the student MUST use these examples.*
Name: ______