

Essay

“Young Goodman Brown”
“The Cask of Amontillado”

In an essay, I'd like you to analyze these two stories: individually and in terms of each other.

* In “Young Goodman Brown,” the main question **seems** to be whether his experience was real or not. What evidence can you offer (from the text) to prove whether or not it was real or a dream? Once you've done that, tell whether you think it ultimately matters or not. Explain your answer.

* In “The Cask of Amontillado,” one of the strongest elements present may be that of irony (a contrast or discrepancy between appearances and reality). Tell what is ironic about this story. It is most obvious in the perception of the relationship between Montresor and Fortunato.

* Look at both works in terms of what I said in class about the two authors' theories of the short story: Hawthorne - expressing a theme, or moral, and relying on exposition; Poe - creating a central effect, relying mainly on plot to achieve it. Tell which is more successful at achieving his goal (if one is more successful than the other) and tell which you like better (if you like one better than the other). Is one writer more “modern” than the other? How?

As I said in class, I want this to be one essay, not a series of short answers. Plan what you're going to say before you begin. This is a paper of comparison and contrast. Try to set it up like one. Talk about both stories in your introductory paragraph and let the reader (me) know what you plan to do in the essay (your thesis). If you have concluded after you read these questions that one story was better than the other, that will be your thesis, and your point will be to prove it in the paper. If your point is that they were both successful stories, that's what you will show in your essay. Don't forget a concluding paragraph that ties all of your ideas together and reaffirms your main point (thesis).

I know this may seem like a lot, but it really isn't, especially if you take some time to plan this out and organize what it is you're going to say and form your opinions before you start writing. We've discussed many of these points in class, so what I'm really interested in seeing is how you put them all together in a paper.

It is an exploratory paper as it is a first attempt to go beyond the type of papers that you wrote in ENC 1101, especially in terms of subject matter. I am looking for how you combine your analyses to make a unified paper. As I said above, how you plan and organize this will have a lot to do with how successful you are.

On the next page, I've put a sample outline for a comparison-contrast paper on works by Hemingway and Fitzgerald (you didn't expect me to use Hawthorne and Poe, did you?). This is one approach you might take to this paper. Note further: you may decide this is all comparison; you may decide this is all contrast; you may decide that there are things similar and different in these two works. That's up to you. Just be sure to make this clear in your thesis.

Sample “outline” for a literary comparison-contrast essay

INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH

Though contemporaries, Hemingway and Fitzgerald may seem like very different men and writers. In a superficial analysis of their lives and work, one might conclude that there is very little common ground between them. Yet, once we go below the surface, particularly in an analysis of their two masterpieces: *The Old Man And The Sea* and *The Great Gatsby*, we see evidence both of their individual greatness and the common view of man and his nature that they both shared.

BODY PARAGRAPHS

I. Analysis of *The Old Man And The Sea*

II. Analysis of *The Great Gatsby*

III. Comparison of the two works

CONCLUDING PARAGRAPH

Through an analysis of their individual works, *The Old Man And The Sea* and *The Great Gatsby*, we can see why Hemingway and Fitzgerald have been considered two of America’s greatest writers. Further, through an analysis of those two major works, we have seen how they had similar views of man. Both Santiago and Gatsby had ideal visions of what life was supposed to be and pursued them despite the personal cost. Both authors also showed a belief in the triumph of the human spirit even in the face of material loss.

As I said, this **could** be the approach you want to take in your paper.