

GCSE Examiner's Top Anthology comparison Tips

How to construct a comparative paragraph

For me, the best students compare the poems **simultaneously (at the same time)**. So they have a point which they're comparing a similarity or difference about both poems

- This could be in the form of a similarity e.g. *'Both poems explore the way conflict impacts mental state.'* OR *'Whilst 'POEM' explores the impact of conflict on mental state, 'POEM' explores the way conflict impacts people physically.'*
- Then you provide a piece of evidence from each poem and deal with each piece one at a time. Analyse each piece thoroughly before giving your second piece of evidence.
- In your analysis, don't just say 1 short sentence about the quote. Make sure you explain why (**technique, what it does, what it shows and why - on essay skills course on how to analyse if you want it in more detail**)

Bonus tip: Language like 'furthermore,' 'also,' 'not only this,' even 'and' are your friend!

- Consider the writers and their intentions and impact on the reader (not necessary for every paragraph and only add if it extends your point of view.)
- Link in relevant context AO3 to your analysis - I will go into this in a lot more detail later on.

Use the structure provided on The Lightup Hub to achieve this:

PETAETA C ETAETA C

- **Point about both poems (stating the similarity or difference)**
- **Evidence, Technique + Analysis for poem A**
- **2nd Evidence, Technique + Analysis for poem A (link to reader)**
- **Comparative sentence to the second poem**
- **Evidence, technique + analysis for poem B**
- **2nd Evidence, Technique + Analysis for poem B (link to reader)**
- **Compare similarity/ difference of both (if compared similarity before do a difference)**

Words and phrases that signal to the examiner you are a top-grade student;

You don't actually need loads of jargon/ technical terms in your essays. The most important thing is **fine-grained, detailed analysis of language and methods**, particularly poetic devices (look on the poetic technique sheet on the Lightup Hub for this)

- Students talking about structure and form meaningfully is always a **massive green light!** (A volta, anaphora, caesura, enjambment, refrains etc)

- Try to sound academic: **no** 'I think'

Utilise high-level phrasing such as:

- *'The writer explores the notion...'*
- *'This elucidates the idea that...'*
- *"Consequently, resoundingly, irrefutably, undeniably"* - these adverbs are useful for your opinions.
- *"Possibly, perhaps, it is likely, this could suggest, this could imply"* - the examiner likes to see when students use these kinds of words (a fancy way of calling it is tentative language) as it should you're considering what it could show not saying it 100% shows it

TOP TIP



- Always be asking **why** a poet has done something – nothing is in a poem by accident. Every word/ piece of punctuation is there with a function – it's your job to talk about that.

When and how to talk about structure and form;

Form and structure shows us as examiners that you are of a high level and have considered the writer's methods more deeply

Form examples:

- Stanza lengths
- Rhyme
- Rhythm
- Volta (turning point in a poem)
- See poetic technique sheet for more

Structure:

- Enjambment (no punctuation at the end of a line)
- Caesura (punctuation in the middle of the line)
- Anaphora (repeated word/phrase at the beginning of 2 or more lines)
- End-stops (punctuation at the end of the line)
- See poetic technique sheet for more

Use the Lightup Hub paragraph structure but use it to compare form instead

PETA FACFA ETA C

- Point about both poems (stating the similarity or difference)
- Evidence + Structure technique + Analysis for poem A
- Form + Analysis for poem A (link to reader)
- Comparative sentence to the second poem
- Form + analysis for poem B
- Evidence, structure Technique + Analysis for poem B (link to reader)
- Compare similarity/ difference of both (if compared similarity before do a difference)

How to impress examiners

- As mentioned previously... structure and form number 1 - the VAST majority of students overlook this, particularly form!
- Offering alternate interpretations with longer quotes, and one word quotes - *Alternatively, conversely, however, yet...*
- Considering the poem through different lenses (*modern/ contemporary/ upper class/ working class etc.*)
- Use **multiple references to the text to support ideas** - students moving into levels 5 & 6 are using **2-3+ pieces of evidence per paragraph** - these only need to be brief and can be one word bits of evidence

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- 2nd Evidence, Technique + Analysis for poem A (link to reader)
- Comparative sentence to the second poem
- Evidence, technique + analysis for poem B
- 2nd Evidence, Technique + Analysis for poem B (link to reader)
- Compare similarity/ difference of both (if compared similarity before do a difference)

What counts as context for poetry;

All the things you'll have covered with your teacher count, such as:

- **Relevant** historical context
- **Relevant** details about the poet
- **Relevant** social context
- **Relevant** political context

Examples:

- **Historical context:** poem referencing WW1
- **Poet context:** Blake was a Romantic poet
- **Social context:** society was patriarchal (male-dominated)
- **Political context:** criticism of the Irish government

The repetition of 'relevant' here - these details need to link to the evidence selected and further what you're saying.

TOP TIP



- But... because they don't expect you to remember all that for 15 poems, I have some fantastic news...
THEMES COUNT!

Rubric infringements - what to avoid?

What is a 'rubric infringement'?

Don't follow the rules/ task given by the exam - breaking the exam rules

How to avoid it:

- Make sure you only compare to one poem - do not be tempted to put another in thinking it will get you more marks!
- Make sure you refer to two poems - only referring to one could also be a rubric infringement
- Ensure that you reference the given poem
- Do not put a series of quotations/ references in without explaining them - deal with them one at a time and use the ETA (Evidence, technique, analysis) structure to ensure you analyse each one