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# How to Compare Two Different Books or Poems

KS4 ENGLISH LITERATURE

Ages 13-16 ⌚ 4 min read

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## What Does It Mean to Compare Books and Poems?

When you **compare** two books or poems, you're looking at how they're the same and how they're different. It's like being a detective who spots clues about what the author is trying to tell you. You look at the **characters**, the **themes** (big ideas), the **writing style**, and the **mood** or feeling of each story.

Comparing isn't just about saying "I like this one better." It's about understanding **why** two pieces of writing work the way they do, and what makes them special or similar.

Think of it like comparing two video games. One might have amazing graphics but a confusing story, while the other has a great plot but old-fashioned visuals. You can enjoy both for different reasons.

## The Main Things to Compare

**Characters and people:** Who is the main character in each story? Are they brave, scared, clever, or kind? Do they learn and change? How are they similar or different?

**Themes:** What big ideas are the authors exploring? Is it about friendship, love, survival, growing up, or fighting against evil? Do both stories have the same message?

**Setting:** Where and when do the stories happen? In a magical kingdom, a modern city, the past, or the future? Does the setting matter to the story?

**Writing style:** Some authors use simple, short sentences. Others write in a flowery, descriptive way. One might be funny and another serious. Does the way it's written affect how you feel?

Think of it like two songs about love. One might be a fast rock song with angry lyrics, while the other is a slow, sad ballad. They're both about love, but they make you feel very different things.

## How to Start Comparing

Here's a simple method: read or re-read both pieces of writing. Take notes on what you notice. Ask yourself: **What surprised me? What made me sad or happy? What did the author want me to think about?**

Then write down the **similarities** (things that are the same) in one list and **differences** (things that are different) in another. You might use a **Venn diagram** - two overlapping circles where one circle shows unique things about book A, the other circle shows unique things about book B, and the middle shows what they have in common.

Remember: there's no single "right" answer when comparing. Your job is to use **evidence** from the texts - actual quotes and examples - to explain your ideas. That's what makes a really good comparison.