

Comparative

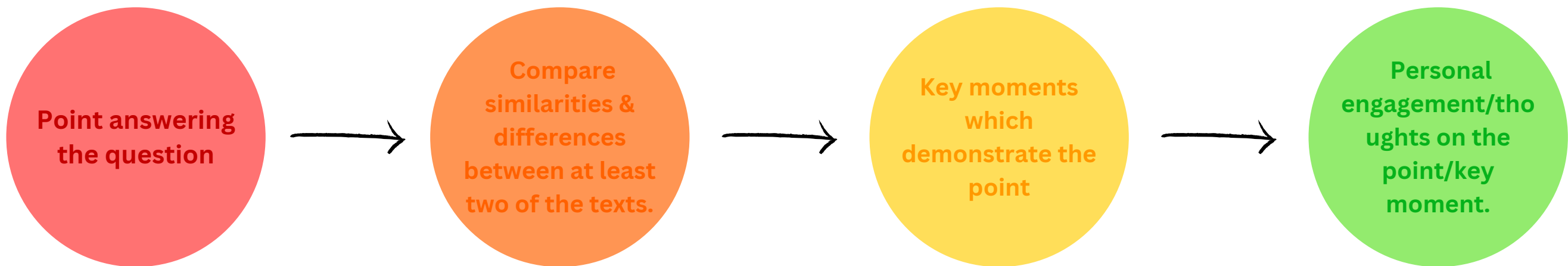
key elements that must be present in your answer:

- The name and authors of each of your texts.
- A very clear understanding of the heading you are discussing, whether it is Cultural Context, Theme or Issue. write a brief introduction explaining their understanding of their chosen heading.
- Regular reference to the question.
- Regular comparisons of the texts – develop a grid of key similarities and differences, but also your opinion about them.
- Well-formed personal opinions in light of the question asked.
- Regular use of key moments to support your opinions – 4 detailed key moments for each comparative heading in each text.
- ANALYSIS. Your answer is actually an analysis of each text, not a summary or a list of similarities and differences. In order to analyse the texts, consider why these similarities and differences exist within them.
- Comparative link words. These words show the examiner that you are comparing the texts.

Introduction: Name the texts you’ve studied, give them abbreviations. Explain the definition of theme/issue. Explain how you will structure your answer.

Main Body: As a rule of thumb, you should aim for three points in the main body. Three long paragraphs. Within each paragraph you should be discussing all texts at the same time. (See keywords to use at the bottom of this post). Topic sentences are extremely important. Stick to the question as much as possible, and also refer to the three texts, weaving them into one discussion.

Basic paragraph structure of your comparative essay



Conclusion: Length is not important in a conclusion. It is important that you give a brief summary of what you did, as this is the last part the corrector reads before marking you. Short and sweet is the trick.

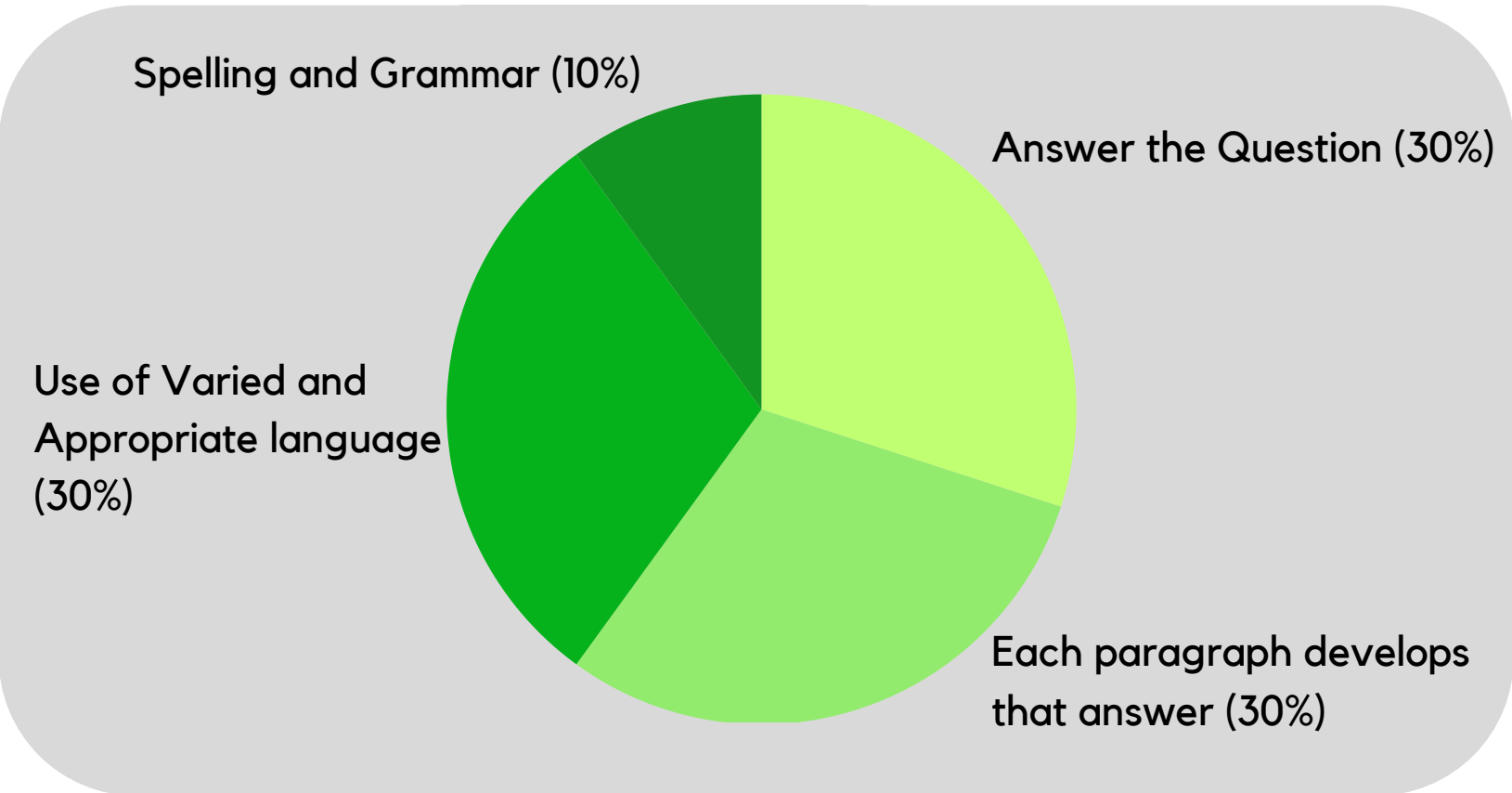
- Topic Sentences are essential.
- Use keywords
- The number of comparisons is irrelevant. It is about the quality & relevance to the question.
- Be consistent: If you answer on three texts in the first point, do so in all three.
- Refer to the question.

Key points in answering the questions

- When you read the question, underline the key words, 'one of the texts', 'key moment', 'describe', 'explain' etc.
- Think in terms of key moments; this will ensure that you refer to the text and will help you to keep the sequence of events in the right order.
- When you are planning your answer, think of five key moments which illustrate the theme.
- In your introductory paragraph, name the **text**, the **author** and the **mode** you have chosen.
- You must compare your texts and answer on the mode you have chosen.
- Do not summarise the plot.
- Do not write a separate paragraph for each text. You must constantly compare one with the other.
- Use a selection of the link words and phrases when comparing texts.

Checklist

Name and Author	<input type="checkbox"/>
Introduction of “theme” as a mode of study	<input type="checkbox"/>
Key words and regular reference to the question	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regular use of personal opinion	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use of link words	<input type="checkbox"/>
Analysis and comparison of each text	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use of key moments to back points (Min. 4-5)	<input type="checkbox"/>



VIDEOS

- Comparative Essay How To's for Leaving Cert English-625 points (19:50)
- Leaving Cert English 'The Comparative Study-Mr Tobin LC English (7:54)
- Comparing texts at A Level English Language and A Level Literature and Language- A level English language (9:07)
- Compare and Contrast Part 1: Brainstorming | Introduction-Amal Mansour (2:48)

Theme/issue

For theme or issue you might consider some of the following:

- How is this theme introduced?
- How does this theme affect the central character/characters?
- How is this theme developed?
- Do the central characters embrace or fight against it? How?
- Do other characters influence how this theme unfolds?
- How does the text end & what are our final impressions of this theme as a result?

Past questions have tended to focus on:

- What insights you gained from studying the theme
- How the study of a particular text changed or reinforced your view of the theme
- The way in which key moments can heighten your awareness of a particular theme
- How the presentation of the theme can add to the impact of the text
- How the theme helps to maintain your interest in the text

A theme is an issue or concern in the text which the writer is trying to explore. **The theme is not the plot: don't confuse the two.** It does not matter what theme you choose, as long as it is central to the text. You will not be able to develop your answer properly if you choose a minor theme.

e.g. ESCAPE.

- When you are reading the text and thinking about this mode of comparison, ask yourself:
- How is the theme introduced?
- Is there a key moment that gives us an indication of the message the author is trying to explore?
- Does one of the central characters say or do something that sets us on the path of understanding the theme?
- Or is it conveyed by the minor characters or even the setting?
- How does the author develop this theme?
- Is it through a series of small events?
- Do we see situations developing that we know must lead to a crisis of some sort?
- How does the author interest us in the theme?
- Is it through a central character with whom we can empathise?
- Is there a moment of crisis or a turning point in the text?
- Does the central character have to make a difficult decision?
- Does the character do the right thing?
- How is this decision linked to the theme?
- How is the theme resolved?
- Are you very clear on the author's view of the ideas explored in the theme?
- Have we learned anything about human behaviour or society in general from the exploration of this theme?
- Does the author's use of setting, imagery, motifs, lighting, costumes, special effects or music (if it's a film) add to your understanding of the theme?



Good answer

"Studying the general vision and viewpoint of my three texts offered me a fascinating insight into the quiet lives of desperation many people lead and I found myself on tenterhooks, rooting for the central characters as they attempted to create a better life for themselves. The opening scene of DAL is full of nostalgia as Michael the narrator launches into a flashback of the summer when Fr. Jack returned from the missions. Despite the closeness of the family unit (Michael remembers his aunts dancing wildly to the music from the wireless) there is an aura of mystery and foreboding, an awareness "of a widening breach between what seemed to be and what was". This aura makes DAL in many ways similar to HMB (from the beginning of both texts the reader feels something bad is about to happen) but the atmosphere of fear and foreboding are much more pronounced in HMB. The opening scene fills us with unease as Alec waits to die. Unlike the Mundy sisters (DAL) we have no sense that he feels close to his family – in fact he bluntly admits "I love no living person, I am committed to no cause...I have not communicated with either my father or mother". I found his indifference to his plight deeply unsettling. Thus although I felt compelled to read on, I cannot say I 'enjoyed' watching him suffer.

The same is true of IID, where the central character's difficulties fill the reader with sympathy. Michael's cerebral palsy and speech impediment isolate him from the other residents but what makes this film subtly (yet significantly) different to HMB is that in IID we can see Michael's frustration, through a series of close-ups of his face as he tries to communicate with Eileen and warn her of the impending accident (he has seen a vacuum cable snag and knows it will trip someone up). By contrast Alec (HMB) expresses no desire to escape the awful situation he finds himself in. Yet there are also interesting similarities between HMB and IID , for example the complete lack of family support and in some ways this makes DAL the most positive of the three – no matter what their difficulties at least the Mundy sisters have each other. Thus I can honestly say that all three texts captured my imagination, roused my curiosity and engaged my sympathy for the central characters in the opening scene, thus adding to my enjoyment and compelling me to read (or watch!) on.

Why is this good?

- The question is fully engaged with throughout by the writer.
- Sentences are complex but highly controlled (writer uses brackets if adding something significant that would make the sentence unwieldy).
- Formal language of critical analysis is used at all times.
- Details are accurate and specific, including occasional use of quotes (perhaps four or five in total in your essay is more than sufficient).
- Texts are interwoven; links are complex, recognising obvious similarities and differences but also going further to establish subtle distinctions



Bad answer

"I really enjoyed studying the general vision and viewpoint of my three texts. The opening scene of DAL is quite nostalgic as Michael looks back on his childhood in Donegal but it's also pessimistic because he says things weren't really what they seemed and he mentions Fr. Jack coming home but not being nearly as impressive as they expected. We then see the Mundy sisters together, they are a close family but Kate tends to boss them around and the others resent this, particularly Agnes. When she decides they can't go to the harvest dance the sisters are pissed off but Kate thinks it wouldn't be right. Similarly the opening scene of IID is quite pessimistic. Michael sits on his own in Carrigmore home for the disabled and he can't communicate because he is handicapped and can't speak properly. He tries to warn one of the workers that there's a cable that might get snagged and someone will trip but they don't understand what he's trying to say. He seems really frustrated and I would hate to be in his situation. The first scene in HMB is also pessimistic. Alec is waiting to die and he won't get in touch with anybody in his family to tell them what's happening. He doesn't seem to even care and when the priest comes in he sends him away after making jokes about his own death. So I enjoyed seeing how awful some people's lives can be because mine is way better and that made me happy"

What's wrong with this answer?

Question is thrown in at the beginning and end of the paragraph but no effort is made to actually engage with the question. Sentences go on – and on – and on. The writer clearly has no control over what they're trying to say. It comes out in a stream of consciousness onto the page. Informal conversational language and slang "she bosses them around" "pissed off" "he doesn't even care" "mine is way better" Inaccurate and vague details: "handicapped" instead of "cerebral palsy", "can't speak properly" instead of "has a speech impediment", "he says things weren't as they seemed" instead of including the quote "I had an awareness of a widening breach between what seemed to be and what was", reference to the "priest" instead of the "padre". Texts dealt with separately with superficial links barely established "similarly" "also".

Linking Phrases

Addition

Further
Furthermore
Moreover
In Addition
Additionally
Then
Also
Too
Besides
Again
Equally importantly
First, Second
Finally, Lastly

Comparison

Similarly
Comparable
In the same way
Likewise
As with
Equally
Just as ... so too
a similar X
Another X like

On the contrary
Also Whereas
In the same way Differs from
In the same manner However
Just as In contrast
Both texts/characters This is different to
Each text While

Contrast

However
Nevertheless
On the other hand
On the contrary
Even so
Notwithstanding
Alternatively
At the same time
Whereas
Otherwise
Instead
Nonetheless
Conversely

Time

Meanwhile
Presently
At last
Finally
Immediately
Thereafter
At that time
Subsequently
Eventually
Currently
In the meantime
In the past

Result

Hence
Therefore
Accordingly
Consequently
Thus
Thereupon
As a result
In consequence
So
Then

Summary

In short
On the Whole
In other words
To be sure
Clearly
Anyway
On the whole
In sum
After all
In general
It seems
In brief

Example

For example
For Instance
That is
Such as
As revealed by
Illustrated by
Specifically
In particular
For one thing
This can be seen in
An instance of this

Place

There
Here
Beyond
Nearby
Next to
At that point
Opposite to
Adjacent to
On the other side
In the front
In the back

Comparing Similarities

- Similarly
- Likewise
- ... is common in...
- Equally noticeable is...
- In the same way
- Furthermore
- Both authors take the same approach in...
- A common feature of all the texts are...
- This is mirrored in...
- This can also be observed in...
- ... is equally important in both texts.

Contrasting Phrases

- Unlike
- The texts are different in the area of...
- On the other hand
- This is contrasted in...
- On the contrary...
- However, the opposite is seen in...
- In contrast/contrastingly...
- Nothing like this occurs in...
- Whereas
- Quite the reverse is seen in...
- This is the only text where we notice...

Philadelphia Here I Come! -Brian Friel

Key Moments	
Moments of Conflict	
Moments of Resolution	
Moments which shows Freedom	
Pivotal moments in a friendship	
Climax	
Setting	

Shawshank Redemption

-Directed by Frank Darabont based on the book written by Stephen King in 1982

Key Moments	
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Moments of Conflict	
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Moments which shows Freedom	
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Climax	
Setting	

Freedom				
	Philadelphia Here I Come	Shawshank Redemption	Educated	
Freedom as an illusion				
Freedom to leave				
Freedom from abuse				
Learning to handle Freedom				
Freedom from the state				
Freedom of expression				
Freedom to rebel				

Freedom				
	Philadelphia Here I Come	Shawshank Redemption	Educated	
Freedom to be ones-self				
Freedom of movement				
Freedom to love				
Freedom in Conformity				
Freedom to choose				
Freedom from societal expectations/standards				
The cost of Freedom				

Shawshank redemption

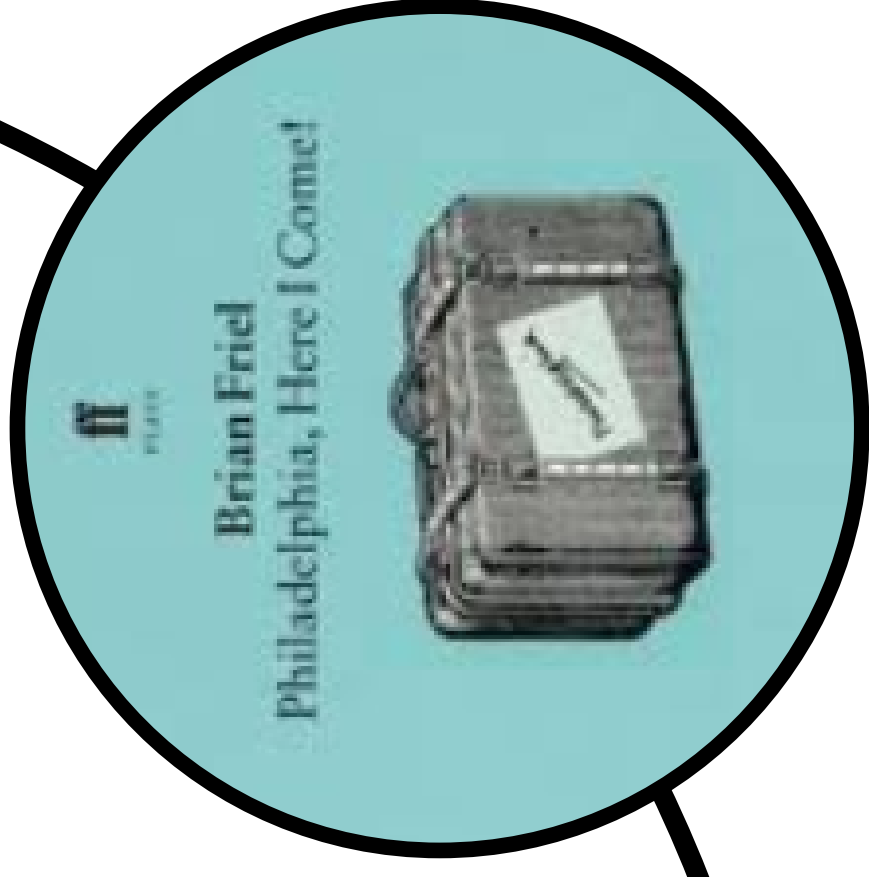


Philadelphia Here I Come!



Philadelphia Here I Come!

Educated



Shawshank redemption



Educated





Philadelphia Here I Come!



Educated



Shawshank redemption