Comparing and contrasting assignments are common in the academic world. Below, some tips, and a definition to help you write a great paper that analyzes similarities and differences between two or more concepts, works, or events.

1. **Prewriting.**
   Visually note similarities/differences by creating charts and/or highlighting. For example,
   - Two pieces by the same author. Can you find an evolution of ideas over the course of her career?
   - Two approaches to the same subject. Why are the approaches different? Do the two authors differ in culture, age, or gender?

2. **Thesis.**
   Identify reasons for similar or different ideas in order to develop a significant thesis. Avoid the following:
   - "Text A and text B have many similarities but also have many differences." This elementary sentence merely recognizes the existence of similarities and differences.
   - "Text A states X while text B states Y." This elementary sentence merely states what is similar or different.
   Instead, concentrate on answering the “so what?”
   - What do you learn by drawing the comparison/contrast?
   - Mention the specific reasons why similarities and differences exist.

3. **Organization.**
   - Use outlining to sort your points of comparison or contrast.
   - Briefly summarize the texts themselves, emphasizing the grounds for comparison. Sometimes it helps to point out obvious similarities as a justification for writing about differences.
   Following the introduction and brief summary, choose one of two available routes of organization:
   1) **Text-by-text** (block method): discuss all of text A, then all of B. Text-by-text organization is often easy to control, but be careful that by separating your discussions of the two texts, you don’t essentially write two adjoining, but separate, papers.
   2) **Point-by-point** (alternating method): alternate between significant points about text A and analogous points about text B. Point-by-point organization is often more interesting and reader-friendly. But be careful when using this format that you don’t bounce back and forth too often. Avoid this tendency
during your outlining by grouping similar points together and addressing them in clusters in reference to one text at a time.