

Met Museum Paper Assignment #2: Comparative Paper

Review the entire assignment including the alternative assignment before visiting the Met Museum.

Assignment Overview: In this comparative paper, you will analyze and explain the relationship between an artwork from the post-modern period with one from the modern period by an artist we've studied this semester.

Formatting Guidelines: typed, double-spaced, 12-point font, approx. 2 - 3 pages long. No images inserted in the text.

1. Viewing the Post-Modern Artworks at the Met:

Find Gallery 915 within the Met and walk around the entire length of this long gallery looking at each painting. Select two possible artworks as options and record your impressions about these artworks in person. Record your visual impressions and what is interesting about the artworks. Note all the information on the wall labels as well. (Note: The reason you are selecting two artworks now is so that you have some choice. If one becomes difficult to find information about or hard to make a comparison with, you can drop it and go with the other one.) If Gallery 915 is closed when you visit the Met, read the Alternative Assignment #2 information at the end to complete this assignment - you will be selecting different artworks and skipping steps 2 and 3 below.

2. Research and Analysis at Home:

Your material on the post-modern artwork will be based mainly on your visual analysis of this artwork and incorporate any additional information from the Met's wall label and website. After examining the post-modern artwork in person, read about it on the Met's website at home. Is there an essay about this artist on the Met's website? Are there more works in the Met's collection by this artist? If so, read about them. Is it part of a style or group in post-modern painting? If so, read about this.

3. Select a Modern Artwork for Comparison:

After selecting, analyzing and gathering information about the post-modern artwork, select your modern artwork for comparison. Think back over the entire semester about the styles and artists we have studied to select an artist or style that relates to the post-modern artwork you have selected, either in terms of a visual and stylistic influence that exists between the two artists or a similar social, political, or cultural theme or subject matter that connects these artworks. Select one artwork from this modern artist or style to serve as your comparative example. In this paper, you will analyze the appearance of both artworks and explain their art historical context and other ideas relating to both of them.

(Note: The modern artwork does *not* have to come from the Met. It can be an artwork we studied or it can be a new and different artwork by an artist we studied.)

4. Further Research:

Consult the following sources to see what information they have about both your artists. Keep notes of this information to use in your written comparison.

- Read relevant essays related to the modern artist or the movement/style in which they are categorized as assigned during the semester and from the Met's website to solidify the content for your comparison: from the Met's homepage (www.metmuseum.org), select the ART tab near the top; select the *Timeline of Art History* to find various timelines, thematic essays or essays about individual artists. You can also search by keyword.
- Read relevant essays related to the modern artist or style from Khan Academy's website: from the homepage (khanacademy.org), select 'Subjects' in top left; then 'Art history' in the Arts & Humanities column near the right. Some of these might have already been assigned during the semester, so this will be a review.
- Read relevant material from the website theartstory.org: On theartstory.org, you can search by styles and movements or by individual artists. Start with searching for your artists by their last names. If they are associated with a specific style or movement, read about this as well. Additional information on the post-modern artist might be found on this site too.
- To browse artworks, consult the database artstor.org. Artstor is a database of artworks sorted by artist, date, and other categories. From the Lehman library's webpage, find database list underneath the OneSearch box and find Artstor by selecting Database A-Z

List. Search for all the artworks by your artists. This might help you to find the best modern artwork example for your comparison. (You can download images from artstor.org with your Lehman college email address.)

Guidelines for Writing Your Paper:

- Include a thesis statement in the introductory paragraph that makes clear the reason you have selected these two artworks for comparison. For example, do the two artists' techniques appear similar, is the content similar, or has the post-modern artist been influenced by the earlier modern artist (as stated on the Met's label or from your reading)?
- Introduce both artworks in the introduction by stating the artists' full names, the artworks' titles, and their dates. If relevant to your discussion, you might be referencing the size and the materials they incorporate later in your paper.
- The body of your paper should explain how this influence or visual relationship is seen in either subject matter or the appearance and treatment of the formal characteristics or both. You will also explain how the overall goal or idea in the post-modern artwork is either similar or different to the comparative modern artwork and explain what this means in relation to the appearance of the artworks.
- Include separate paragraphs for the post-modern artwork and the modern artwork. Remember that this is a comparison paper, so if you discuss the subject matter of one work, you should be analyzing the second work in relation to its subject matter as well, and the same goes for technique and formal characteristics.
- You should not simply describe each artwork separately, but rather compare and contrast them to explain information that supports your thesis statement.
- This is a visual analysis paper. The text should be written in your own words, rather than relying on the use of quotations to explain what you should be saying yourself. If you are using information from the Met's wall label or their website, document the source of this information by indicating it like this at the end of the sentence (Met Museum label).
- In your conclusion, explain what you find interesting in regards to the similarities and/or differences between the two artworks after considering their relationship.

Alternative Assignment #2:

Sometimes, the Met closes galleries with no advance notice. If Gallery 915 is closed when you visit the museum, you will be doing the following comparison for this assignment:

Visit Galleries 919 (Clyfford Still) and 920, 921, and 922, each containing works by many of the leading Abstract Expressionists. From these 4 galleries, select two artworks by two different artists associated with Abstract Expressionism. Review the Further Research information above for where to read about both artists and review the guidelines for writing your paper above. (Note: This comparison is between **two Abstract Expressionists**, not one with a modern artist of your choice.)

In a comparison, explain what the works have in common and how they are different. In separate paragraphs, explain what the individual goal or idea of the artist was in making this work and how their idea or goal influenced the appearance of the artwork and their treatment of the formal characteristics (size, brushwork, color, organization). Each of these artists had philosophical ideas and influences they were exploring. They did not make these artworks to 'let the viewer decide what they wanted to see.' That is not good analysis and not supported by what you will have read. Compare and contrast the artworks thoroughly to analyze the ideas associated with them and the appearance of both artworks.

(If you would like to do this alternative question **in addition to** the post-modern/modern comparison, it will be graded and assessed for clarity and accuracy. If your grade on this question is then a 90 or above, you will receive 13 points added to either your first Met assignment or the midterm (whichever score is lowest). If your grade is between 80 – 89, you will receive 10 points; if your score is between 70 – 79, you will receive 5 points added to one of the assignments.)

Use the following worksheet and the checklist to prepare your written paper. Use this area below for notes during your museum visit and/or for making bullet points of content before you begin writing your paper.

Name:

Project Worksheet Page: Fill in this page with notes to organize the material for your paper.

Artwork in Gallery 915: Artist's name, title, date, size and material information from the label here: _____

Briefly explain why you selected this post-modern artwork:

Modern Artwork from the semester for comparison: Name of artist, title of artwork, date, style:

Briefly explain what led you to select the comparative modern artist or the style you are comparing it with? Something about them should be related to warrant this comparison either in terms of their styles or appearance or in the context or ideas with which they relate. Explain this here and state where you found the one modern artwork you used for your representative example:

From the Met's *Timeline of Art History*, list the titles of any essays you read and explain how they related to your comparison:

From the Khan Academy's website, what information did you find and how did it relate to your comparison:

From the website theartstory.org, what information did you find and how did it relate to your comparison:

Did you find your image on artstor.org?

Checklist for art historical comparison paper:

Use this as a guide for writing your paper and for preparing to turn it in.

Introduction

___ Thesis statement is clearly articulated – this is the basis of your comparison. Why are they brought together in this paper? Establish this here. What the paper is about should be made clear in the first paragraph.

___ The artworks under discussion are introduced properly:

Construction and other details:

___ correct punctuation, grammar, sentence construction - no sentence fragments!

___ text is free from spelling errors and typos – use Spell Check!

___ 12-point type; double spaced; no extra spaces between paragraphs

___ no images inserted in the body of the text – I will reference your artworks with the label information provided in the worksheet and from your introduction

Body of the Paper

___ Art historical terms and vocabulary are used correctly;

___ analysis of the artworks uses valid, clear and descriptive explanations rather than vague language. Do not say ‘it pops’ or ‘the artist takes it to a new level’

___ The text is a comparison. For example, if surface texture is discussed about one sculpture, compare and contrast the surface texture of the other sculpture and explain how the similarities or differences impacts the meaning in both artworks.

The discussion of the artworks is well-integrated into the overall discussion:

___ You are not just describing, you are analyzing what holds these two artworks together; and explaining what is different about their appearance or the ideas that go into their appearance

___ Be specific, using details from the appearance of the artwork and information from the label to support your analysis whenever possible.

___ text is not repetitious and stays on topic because it is organized by paragraphs (An outline before writing can be helpful for this!)

Conclusion

___ There is a conclusion that nicely wraps up the discussion. The conclusion does not have to be long, but it should quickly summarize without being overly repetitious.

It is a good place to incorporate your opinions or response to the analysis you have just undertaken.

Citations of sources (if/where required):

___ Text is written in your own words, rather than relying on long quotations from sources to explain the information for you. Put things in your own words!

(Since this is not a research paper, you most likely will not have any citations requiring footnotes. But, if you do take analysis from another source, you must cite it with a footnote, including the Met’s website or museum label.)

___ if any material did come from the wall label or the Met’s website, it is footnoted