

“Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God” and “The Minister’s Black Veil” Handout

Activity 1: Analyzing a Prompt

Read the following prompt:

Jonathan Edwards’ sermon describes the sinful nature of his congregation in an attempt to convince them to change their ways. “The Minister’s Black Veil” is a parable by Nathaniel Hawthorne that illustrates sin and hypocrisy. Hawthorne, though he lived in the 1800s, set many of his stories in the time of his Puritan ancestors. Despite different methodology, both pieces provide insight into the Puritanical ideals upon which the United States was founded.

Compare and contrast the meaning and style of “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God” and “The Minister’s Black Veil.” How does each author convey his meaning to the reader? Which author’s style is more effective and why?

- 1.) Underline the two texts will you need to compare.
- 2.) Box the statement in the prompt that explains the subject of your comparison.
- 3.) As you read the texts, what kind of information will you need to identify to write your essay?

The authors’ purpose and style.

Activity Two: Guided Reading and Annotation of “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God”

Read the selected paragraphs from Jonathan Edwards’ “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,” which is a famous sermon credited with sparking a religious revival. As you read, use the question in the right margin to guide your annotations.

<p>(1) All wicked men's pains and contrivance which they use to escape hell, while they continue to reject Christ, and so remain wicked men, do not secure them from hell one moment. Almost every natural man that hears of hell, flatters himself that he shall escape it; he depends upon himself for his own security; he flatters himself in what he has done, in what he is now doing, or what he intends to do. Every one lays out matters in his own mind how he shall avoid damnation, and flatters himself that he contrives well for himself, and that his schemes will not fail. They hear indeed that there are but few saved, and that the greater part of men that have died heretofore are gone to hell; but each one imagines that he lays out matters better for his own escape than others have done. He does not intend to come to that place of torment; he says within himself, that he intends to take effectual care, and to order matters so for himself as not to fail.</p>	<p>Define the term in bold.</p> <p>The act of planning</p> <p>Highlight the central idea of this paragraph.</p>
<p>(2) But the foolish children of men miserably delude themselves in their own schemes, and in confidence in their own strength and wisdom; they trust to</p>	

<p>nothing but a shadow. The greater part of those who heretofore have lived under the same means of grace, and are now dead, are undoubtedly gone to hell; and it was not because they were not as wise as those who are now alive: it was not because they did not lay out matters as well for themselves to secure their own escape. <u>If we could speak with them, and inquire of them, one by one, whether they expected, when alive, and when they used to hear about hell, ever to be the subjects of misery: we doubtless, should hear one and another reply, "No, I never intended to come here: I had laid out matters otherwise in my mind; I thought I should contrive well for myself -- I thought my scheme good. I intended to take effectual care; but it came upon me unexpected; I did not look for it at that time, and in that manner; it came as a thief -- Death outwitted me: God's wrath was too quick for me. Oh, my cursed foolishness! I was flattering myself, and pleasing myself with vain dreams of what I would do hereafter; and when I was saying, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction came upon me."</u></p>	<p>Why would Edwards use a hypothetical example (underlined portion)? What is the consequent effect? What idea is he trying to communicate?</p> <p>He used a hypothetical example to better portray his ideas to get his listeners to connect and understand The effect is that the people will see themselves in this example, making them want to change their ways. He is trying to communicate that you need to repent as soon as possible.</p>
<p>(3) God has laid himself under no obligation, by any promise to keep any natural man out of hell one moment....</p> <p>So that, whatever some have imagined and pretended about promises made to natural men's earnest seeking and knocking, it is plain and manifest, that whatever pains a natural man takes in religion, whatever prayers he makes, till he believes in Christ, God is under no manner of obligation to keep him a moment from eternal destruction.</p>	<p>Define the term in bold. A morally bound act</p> <p>Highlight the central idea of the paragraph.</p>
<p>4) So that, thus it is that natural men are held in the hand of God, over the pit of hell; they have deserved the fiery pit, and are already sentenced to it; and God is dreadfully provoked, his anger is as great towards them as to those that are actually suffering the executions of the fierceness of his wrath in hell, and they have done nothing in the least to appease or abate that anger, neither is God in the least bound by any promise to hold them up one moment; the devil is waiting for them, hell is gaping for them, the flames gather and flash about them, and would fain lay hold on them, and swallow them up; the fire pent up in their own hearts is struggling to break out: and</p>	<p>Define the term in bold. Restraint</p> <p>Highlight examples of strong diction and imagery. What is the consequent effect?</p> <p>The consequent effect creates fear in the hearts</p>

<p>they have no interest in any Mediator, there are no means within reach that can be any security to them. In short, they have no refuge, nothing to take hold of; all that preserves them every moment is the mere arbitrary will, and uncovenanted, unobliged forbearance of an incensed God.</p>	<p>of the listeners. The words he uses portray misery and anger.</p>
<p>(5) The use of this awful subject may be for awakening unconverted persons in this congregation. This that you have heard is the case of every one of you that are out of Christ. --That world of misery, that lake of burning brimstone, is extended abroad under you. There is the dreadful pit of the glowing flames of the wrath of God; <u>there is hell's wide gaping mouth open</u>; and you have nothing to stand upon, nor any thing to take hold of; there is nothing between you and hell but the air; it is only the power and mere pleasure of God that holds you up.</p>	<p>Highlight Edwards' statement of purpose. Highlight examples of strong diction and imagery. What is the consequent effect? It creates a frightful and sad atmosphere.</p> <p>What literary device does he employ (<u>underlined portion</u>), and what is the effect? Personification. It makes it feel like Hell is a hungry man, waiting to devour you whole.</p>
<p>(6) You probably are not sensible of this; you find you are kept out of hell, but do not see the hand of God in it; but look at other things, as the good state of your bodily constitution, your care of your own life, and the means you use for your own pre-servation. But indeed these things are nothing; if God should withdraw his hand, they would avail no more to keep you from falling, than the thin air to hold up a person that is suspended in it.</p>	<p>What pronoun does Edwards repeat in this paragraph? What effect does this repetition have on the piece? You/your. It makes it feel like what the author is describing is about the reader.</p>
<p>7) Your wickedness makes you <u>as it were heavy as lead</u>, and to tend downwards with great weight and pressure towards hell; and if God should let you go, you would immediately sink and swiftly descend and plunge into the bottomless gulf, and your healthy constitution, and your own care and prudence, and best contrivance, and all your righteousness, would have no more influence to uphold you and keep you out of hell, <u>than a spider's web would have to stop a falling rock</u>. Were it not for the sovereign pleasure of</p>	<p>Identify the literary devices that are underlined and their consequent effect. Simile Metaphor Simile These literary devices are</p>

<p>God, the earth would not bear you one moment; for you are a burden to it; the creation groans with you; the creature is made subject to the bondage of your corruption, not willingly; the sun does not willingly shine upon you to give you light to serve sin and Satan; the earth does not willingly yield her increase to satisfy your lusts; nor is it willingly a stage for your wickedness to be acted upon; the air does not willingly serve you for breath to maintain the flame of life in your vitals, while you spend your life in the service of God's enemies. God's creatures are good, and were made for men to serve God with, and do not willingly subserve to any other purpose, and groan when they are abused to purposes so directly contrary to their nature and end. And the world would spew you out, were it not for the sovereign hand of him who hath subjected it in hope. There are the black clouds of God's wrath now hanging directly over your heads, full of the dreadful storm, and big with thunder; and were it not for the restraining hand of God, it would immediately burst forth upon you. The sovereign pleasure of God, for the present, stays his rough wind; otherwise it would come with fury, and your destruction would come like a whirlwind, and you would be like the chaff on the summer threshing floor.</p>	<p>used to compare things to show how bad the situation truly is.</p> <p>Highlight examples of strong diction and imagery. What is the consequent effect?</p> <p>The strong diction and imagery make the listeners feel guilty for living a life of sin.</p>
<p>(8) <u>The bow of God's wrath is bent, and the arrow made ready on the string, and justice bends the arrow at your heart, and strains the bow,</u> and it is nothing but the mere pleasure of God, and that of an angry God, without any promise or obligation at all, that keeps the arrow one moment from being made drunk with your blood. Thus all you that never passed under a great change of heart, by the mighty power of the Spirit of God upon your souls; all you that were never born again, and made new creatures, and raised from being dead in sin, to a state of new, and before altogether unexperienced light and life, are in the hands of an angry God. However you may have reformed your life in many things, and may have had religious affections, and may keep up a form of religion in your families and closets, and in the house of God, it is nothing but his mere pleasure that keeps you from being this moment swallowed up in everlasting destruction. However unconvinced you may now be of the truth of what you hear, by and by you will be fully convinced of it. Those that are gone from being in the like circumstances with you, see that it was so with them; for destruction came suddenly upon most of them; when they expected nothing of it, and while they were saying, Peace and safety: now they see, that those things on which they depended for peace and safety, were nothing but thin air and empty shadows.</p>	<p>Identify the literary device that is underlined and its consequent effect.</p> <p>The symbol/ metaphor of the bow and arrow represent the strength and power God has. This emphasizes the strength of God.</p> <p>Highlight examples of strong diction and imagery. What is the consequent effect?</p> <p>These devices show the reader what happens if they repent. They mix hope with fear.</p>
<p>(9) <u>The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider, or</u></p>	<p>Identify the literary device</p>

<p>some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked: his wrath towards you burns like fire; he looks upon you as worthy of nothing else, but to be cast into the fire; he is of purer eyes than to bear to have you in his sight; you are ten thousand times more abominable in his eyes, than the most hateful venomous serpent is in ours. You have offended him infinitely more than ever a stubborn rebel did his prince; and yet it is nothing but his hand that holds you from falling into the fire every moment. It is to be ascribed to nothing else, that you did not go to hell the last night; that you was suffered to awake again in this world, after you closed your eyes to sleep. And there is no other reason to be given, why you have not dropped into hell since you arose in the morning, but that God's hand has held you up. There is no other reason to be given why you have not gone to hell, since you have sat here in the house of God, provoking his pure eyes by your sinful wicked manner of attending his solemn worship. Yea, there is nothing else that is to be given as a reason why you do not this very moment drop down into hell.</p>	<p>that is underlined and its consequent effect? Simile: It shows how God thinks of sinners- how unworthy and horrible they are.</p> <p>Highlight examples of strong diction and imagery. What is the consequent effect? The devices make the reader feel regretful and scared.</p>
<p>(10) How awful are those words, <u>Isa. 63:3</u>, which are the words of the great God. "<i>I will tread them in mine anger, and will trample them in my fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.</i>" It is perhaps impossible to conceive of words that carry in them greater manifestations of these three things, ...contempt, and hatred, and fierceness of indignation. If you cry to God to pity you, he will be so far from pitying you in your doleful case, or showing you the least regard or favour, that instead of that, he will only tread you under foot. And though he will know that you cannot bear the weight of omnipotence treading upon you, yet he will not regard that, but he will crush you under his feet without mercy; he will crush out your blood, and make it fly, and it shall be sprinkled on his garments, so as to stain all his raiment. He will not only hate you, but he will have you in the utmost contempt: no place shall be thought fit for you, but under his feet to be trodden down as the mire of the streets.</p>	<p>What allusion does Edwards include in this paragraph? What is its effect? A Biblical allusion which shows the wrath of God.</p>
<p>(11) And you, young men, and young women, will you neglect this precious season which you now enjoy, when so many others of your age are renouncing all youthful vanities, and flocking to Christ? You especially have now an extraordinary opportunity; but if you neglect it, it will soon be with you as with those persons who spent all the precious days of youth in sin, and are now come to such a dreadful pass in blindness and hardness.</p>	<p>How does Edwards use rhetorical questions in this paragraph? What is its effect? He uses these question to get the audience to think about themselves which</p>

	connects the audience to what is being said.
(12) And you, children, who are unconverted, do not you know that you are going down to hell, to bear the dreadful wrath of that God, who is now angry with you every day and every night? Will you be content to be the children of the devil, when so many other children in the land are converted, and are become the holy and happy children of the King of kings?	<p>How does Edwards use rhetorical questions in this paragraph and what is its effect?</p> <p>He uses these question to get the audience to think about themselves which connects the audience to what is being said.</p>
(13) Therefore, let every one that is out of Christ, now awake and fly from the wrath to come. The wrath of Almighty God is now undoubtedly hanging over a great part of this congregation. Let every one fly out of Sodom: "Haste and escape for your lives, look not behind you, escape to the mountain, lest you be consumed."	<p>What is his final call to action?</p> <p>He calls for people who are not currently a part of the Christian faith and Puritan belief system to convert.</p>

Activity Three: Purpose and Tone

- Using the tone words handout, write down words that characterize Edwards' tone. Support your answer with evidence from the text.
Edwards' tone is angry, dramatic, scornful, and threatening. He says things such as, "...he will crush out your blood..." which creates these tones.
- In your own words, write a statement that communicates Edwards' overall purpose.
If you do not repent from your sins, God will send you to Hell directly.
- How does Edwards appeal to his audience's emotions? Do you think he is successful? Why or why not?
Edwards creates fear in his audience by using Biblical allusions and negative connotative diction. Yes, because I was scared of my sin while reading this.

Activity Four: Guided Reading and Annotation of “The Minister’s Black Veil”

With your partner, read your new version of pages 1-3 of “The Minister’s Black Veil”.

Step One: Highlight words and phrases with connotative meanings or strong imagery. What patterns emerge? In the margins of your text, note the effects of these words and phrases.

Step Two: Highlight words or phrases with figurative meaning. Label figurative devices. What patterns emerge? In the margins of your text, note the effects of these words and phrases.

Step Three: Highlight any syntactical patterns and note the effect of these patterns in the margins of your text.

Step Four: Write a brief **objective** summary of the passage below.

Mr. Hooper’s congregation is shocked and scared by his change in appearance. The black veil he now wears daily causes these emotions.

With your partner, read your new version of pages 4-6 of “The Minister’s Black Veil”.

Step One: Highlight words and phrases with connotative meanings or strong imagery. What patterns emerge? In the margins of your text, note the effects of these words and phrases.

Step Two: Highlight words or phrases with figurative meaning. Label figurative devices. What patterns emerge? In the margins of your text, note the effects of these words and phrases.

Step Three: Highlight any syntactical patterns and note the effect of these patterns in the margins of your text.

Step Four: Write a brief **objective** summary of the passage below.

Mr. Hooper’s black veil creates an atmosphere of fear that normally isn’t there. It completely changes everyday events, such as a simply wedding, for the worse.

With your partner, read your new version of pages 7-9 of "The Minister's Black Veil".

Step One: Highlight words and phrases with connotative meanings or strong imagery. What patterns emerge? In the margins of your text, note the effects of these words and phrases.

Step Two: Highlight words or phrases with figurative meaning. Label figurative devices. What patterns emerge? In the margins of your text, note the effects of these words and phrases.

Step Three: Highlight any syntactical patterns and note the effect of these patterns in the margins of your text.

Step Four: Write a brief **objective** summary of the passage below.

The black veil is bringing sadness into Mr. Hooper's life with the end of his engagement as well as other personal tragedies; however, he is professional life is flourishing.

With your partner, read your new version of pages 10-12 of "The Minister's Black Veil".

Step One: Highlight words and phrases with connotative meanings or strong imagery. What patterns emerge? In the margins of your text, note the effects of these words and phrases.

Step Two: Highlight words or phrases with figurative meaning. Label figurative devices. What patterns emerge? In the margins of your text, note the effects of these words and phrases.

Step Three: Highlight any syntactical patterns and note the effect of these patterns in the margins of your text.

Step Four: Write a brief **objective** summary of the passage below.

Parson Hooper's professional life improves as his parishioners react to his black veil by taking religion seriously.

With your partner, read your new version of pages 13-15 of "The Minister's Black Veil".

Step One: Highlight words and phrases with connotative meanings or strong imagery. What patterns emerge? In the margins of your text, note the effects of these words and phrases.

Step Two: Highlight words or phrases with figurative meaning. Label figurative devices. What patterns emerge? In the margins of your text, note the effects of these words and phrases.

Step Three: Highlight any syntactical patterns and note the effect of these patterns in the margins of your text.

Step Four: Write a brief **objective** summary of the passage below.

Parson Hooper was so dedicated to wearing the black veil that he refused to remove it, even in death.

Activity Five: Independent Analysis Questions

After reading, answer the following questions independently.

1.) What kind of minister is Parson Hooper? Use textual evidence to support your answer.

Parson Hooper is very dedicated. After he put on the black veil, no form of temptation could make him take it off. Mr. Hooper wouldn't remove it for his girlfriend or even after his death.

2.) How does the congregation respond to Parson Hooper's veil? Why? Use textual evidence to support your answer.

The congregation responded to the veil with fear. They became afraid because they saw the veil as something evil. In the text, an old woman said, "He has changed himself into something awful, only by hiding his face." The congregation was nervous around Parson Hooper because instead of seeing their minister, they saw their own guilt and shame.

3.) What is the narrator's tone in this story? Use textual evidence to support your answer.

The narrator's tone in this story is grim. Hawthorne repeatedly used words with negative connotation such as "obscurity," "deathlike paleness," and "horrors." His use of figurative language also portrayed a darker side of the story.

4.) What would you say is a possible central idea of this story?

The central idea of this story is that everyone has secrets that cause them guilty and shame.

Activity Six: Making Inferences and Writing Commentary

Using information found in both Jonathan Edwards' "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" and in Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Minister's Black Veil," complete the chart below in order to draw conclusions about each author's style. Compare Parson Hooper with Jonathan Edwards. Both are representative of Puritanical ministers, yet their approaches with their congregations are very different. What language, details, or elements in each text most contribute to their different styles and impact?

Category: Symbolism

You choose a category based on patterns of language, details, or elements in the text that most contribute to style and meaning.

<p>Inference:</p> <p>Jonathan Edwards uses symbolism to create fear in his readers.</p> <p>Textual Evidence:</p> <p>"...the arrow made ready on the string, and justice bends the arrow at your heart, and strains the bow."</p>	<p>Inference:</p> <p>Hawthorne uses symbolism to explain the deeper purpose and meaning of the black veil.</p> <p>Textual Evidence:</p> <p>Hawthorne writes, "Do not desert me, though this veil must be between us here on earth... It is but a mortal veil..."</p>

Category: Details

You choose a category based on patterns of language, details, or elements in the text that most contribute to style and meaning.

<p>Inference:</p> <p>Edwards uses specific details to show God's anger towards those who have sinned.</p> <p>Textual Evidence:</p> <p>Edwards states, "The wrath of Almighty God is now undoubtedly hanging over a great part of this congregation."</p>	<p>Inference:</p> <p>Hawthorne uses details to show the effects of the black veil on the community and Parson Hooper.</p> <p>Textual Evidence:</p> <p>Hawthorne writes, "...in order to deal with Mr. Hooper about the mystery before it should grow into a scandal."</p>

You choose a category based on patterns of language, details, or elements in the text that most contribute to style and meaning.

Hawthorne writes, "... his own antipathy to the veil was known to be so great that he never willingly passed before a mirror..."

of religion by explaining what happens to the unsaved when they die.

(Explain Edwards' purpose for his audience)

While I would characterize Jonathan Edwards as scary and angry,
(character trait) (character trait)

the character of Parson Hooper changes the reader's understanding of Puritan
(changes, adapts, adjusts, modifies, challenges)

ideals of religion by setting an example of what true Puritan religion is.

(Explain Hawthorne's purpose for his audience)

Activity Eight: Writing Introductions for Compare/ Contrast Essays

When writing compare/ contrast essays about a literature topic, you will want to follow some of the same organizational strategies for developing your introduction as you would follow when you write literary analysis papers. In your introduction, you will want to include some background information about the texts you are comparing and contrasting, as well as to provide reasons as to why the comparison is significant or how the comparison helps you understand the idea better.

- Background information (What is my subject?):

My subject is the similarities and differences between the 2 author's style as they describe Puritan beliefs.

- What are you comparing/ contrasting? (Identify the titles and authors of the texts you are comparing/ contrasting.):

"The Minister's Black Veil" by Nathaniel Hawthorne and "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" by Jonathan Edwards

- What points of comparison will you use? (Identify the common categories from the texts.):
 - Loyalty of beliefs
 - The effects of sin

- What is your purpose for writing this essay? (In general, what will you be discussing in this essay?):

My purpose is to demonstrate that Nathaniel Hawthorne has a more effective style in sharing the Puritan belief system.

- Thesis statement (Why is the comparison significant?):

Use your answers to the questions above to create your introduction paragraph here:

"The Minister's Black Veil" by Nathaniel Hawthorne and "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" by Jonathan Edwards show two different approaches towards Puritan beliefs. Both texts compare the loyalty of beliefs and the effects of sin. While I would describe Jonathan Edwards as angry and passionate, the character of Parson Hooper changes the reader's understanding of Puritan ideals of religion by setting an example of Puritans' beliefs.

Activity Nine: Organizing and Developing a Comparison

When organizing your compare/ contrast essay, you first need to determine the categories, or points of comparison you will discuss.

Next, you have to decide whether you are going to follow a **block** or **point-by-point** organizational strategy. In this essay, you are going to follow a **point-by-point** approach to organize your writing, which means that you will address both objects of your comparison in an alternating fashion.

Topic Statement: Edwards and Hawthorne appeal to different emotions to better portray their beliefs.

Evidence (with lead-in) from Text 1 (Either "Sinners..." or "The Minister's Black Veil"):

In "Sinners..." Edwards states, "There are black clouds of God's wrath now hanging directly over your heads, full of the dreadful storm, and with big thunder..."

Commentary:

The use of negative connotative diction allows Edwards to create fear and guilt in his audience.

Commentary:

Edwards' main goal is to get his audience to repent from their sins, and he believes he can do this by using fear.

Assertion/ Transition: While Jonathan Edwards uses negative words, Nathaniel Hawthorne tries to set an example of the Puritan beliefs.

Evidence (with lead-in) from Text 2 (Either “Sinners...” or “The Minister’s Black Veil”):

Hawthorne writes, “Swathed about his forehead, and hanging down over his face; so low as to be shaken by his breath.”

Commentary:

Hawthorne uses the character of Parson Hooper to ridicule the hypocrisy of the Puritans.

Commentary:

Paron Hooper believes in showing the way to repent instead of scaring his congregation into making that decision, but his congregation’s rejection of Hooper and his veil despite his holy devotion shows how hypocritical they were.

Conclusion Sentence: While both texts describe Puritan beliefs and sin
(subject) (author)
demonstrates that an example can create a bigger effect than words.
(indicates, reveals, demonstrates) (big thematic idea)

Following the same pattern, write on your own sheet of paper the next body paragraph that deals with an aspect of style.

Activity Ten: Writing a Conclusion for a Compare/ Contrast Essay

When writing conclusions for compare/ contrast essays, you want to avoid repeating the assertions or listing the similarities and differences you have already covered in your paper. Instead, focus on explaining what new connections readers can make between the two elements you are comparing. Why is one author’s style more effective than the other? Why is the relationship between these two ideas important? While conclusions do not need to be lengthy, they do need to tie together for readers the points of comparison made in the body paragraphs to the argument you presented in your thesis statement.

When thinking about your conclusion, consider the following questions:

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- Are the elements you are comparing and contrasting more alike, or are their differences more important?

Their differences are more important because they show two different approaches to sharing religion. The differences allow the reader to see different results and meanings.

- Why is it important for readers to think about your comparison?

Readers need to think about the comparisons because it allows the readers to understand the author's purposes.

- What important or interesting conclusion can you draw about these texts now that you have looked at their similarities and differences?

Setting an example of how you should act in religion is more effective than just using words without works.

Use your answers to the questions above to create your conclusion paragraph here:

The differences in the author's' approaches to sharing religion show the readers different ideas and results. These differences allow readers to better understand the author's' unique purposes. The effect of setting an example has a more prominent effect than words without works which proves Hawthorne's style to be more effective than Edwards'.