

structure guarantees a tight arrangement. A writer could not reverse the two points, for instance, as he could with a classification structure.

Thesis: The basic theme of William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* is that if the trappings of civilization are removed, mankind will revert to his innate bestiality.

Point 1: Despite their initial efforts to recreate a civilization like the one they have been cut off from, the boys fail at building homes, finding food or establishing political order.

Point 2: As a result of their increasingly chaotic social structure, the boys abandon long-range planning for the more immediate rewards of impulse behavior, leading to unrestricted violence and savagery.

COMPARE/CONTRAST: The point of a compare and contrast structure is to clarify a specific concept by seeing its place in differing contexts. For instance, we might understand the concept of democracy by comparing and contrasting its development in Classical Athens and at the founding of The United States. Similarly, the nature of parent-child relationships would be clarified by comparing and contrasting such relationships in *The Joy Luck Club* and Chaim Potok's *The Chosen*. However, it is important that the comparison and contrast aim toward clarifying a central concept, in that looking at two differing treatments of a concept helps us deepen our knowledge of that concept. In this way, the argument is somewhat like the dialectic structure in that we are coming to a middle ground as a result of investigating two opposing ideas. Weak compare/contrast papers ignore this synthesis, focusing instead only on the differences. For instance, writing that fathers in Hispanic culture are more strong-willed than fathers in American culture tells us only that there are differences between the two cultures; such a thesis tells us nothing about the nature of fatherhood. Unless we use the contrasting information to arrive at a new insight, the argument is only informative, not analytical.

Thesis: While Sophocles and Shakespeare both wrote of the tragic nature of mankind, their treatments reflect a differing stage of insight.

Point 1: Reflecting the classical ideals of Greece, Sophocles saw man as limited by his circumstances and unable to surmount them.

Point 2: Shakespeare similarly saw man as limited by his circumstances, but reflecting the Renaissance's belief in man's elevated place in the universe, his tragic heroes are more glorious in their achievements, Prince Hamlet beautiful in his demise in contrast to the abject misery of Oedipus.

CONCENTRIC CIRCLES: Some literary works are structured concentrically, so that characters repeat themselves in increasing levels of awareness. T.S. Eliot symbolized