

Name: Mrs. Harbaugh Sample Essay

Date:

Graded Assignment

Composition Unit 9: Compare/Contrast Essay (final copy)

Score

Due: 5/28/14 - 50 points

Directions: For this essay you will choose **two things** to compare/contrast. You'll want to choose something that interests you, and you should be able to find at least three features you can compare and contrast for the two items.

You must complete and submit your pre-writing (Venn Diagram) with this assignment to receive full credit. Your final copy must be a minimum of 4 paragraphs (introduction, body, and conclusion), include a hook and thesis statement, and be in either block or point-by-point format. You may reference my website for information, downloadable templates, and examples. (<http://aharbaugh.weebly.com>)

Suppose one afternoon, as you're outside enjoying a lovely warm day with your family, a six-legged, winged creature happens to flutter down and land on your arm. As you admire the rarity of the occasion and the beautiful, bright color patterns on the wings, your brother waves it away screaming, "Ew, a moth!" You correct him that it was not a moth, but a butterfly and that in either case there was nothing to fear. He insists that it was indeed a moth and this kicks off a heated debate. It's obvious that the insect was either a butterfly or a moth, but which is it? Although moths and butterflies do appear to be very similar, there are several characteristics that can be observed to help one categorize them properly.

Moths and butterflies are a group of insects called *Lepidoptera*, meaning scale winged. Like all insects, their bodies are made up of a head, thorax, abdomen, antennae, and six legs. They both also undergo a complete metamorphosis in their life cycle. Each starts as an egg, turns into a voracious caterpillar, and then transforms into their flying, adult form. They also both require the same types of nourishment. You'll probably see each land from time to time on flowers. That is because both butterflies and moths drink nectar. They also both maintain a diet of standing mineral water and juice from rotting fruit.

As similar as they seem, they are still very different creatures. Those differences can be categorized into two areas: behavior and anatomy. Butterflies can be observed to have slender, smooth bodies due to being made up of small, powdery scales. They also have with brightly colored wings which tend to stay up pressed together above the body while the insect is resting. They are classified as diurnal, meaning that they are out primarily during the day time, and although they both have antennae, the butterflies are long, slender, and club-shaped at the ends.

On the other hand, moths have plumper, fluffier body shapes because their scales are larger and more feathery. This feature is also carried over into their antennae, making them appear feathery as well. Moths are primarily nocturnal creatures and rest with their wings spread out and most do not contain the vivid coloring patterns that butterflies have. Although there are some exceptions to the rule, we tend to find them with tan, brown, white, and black colorations.

Finally, the two transition to adulthood in similar but different ways. They do both go through their metamorphosis in a protective shell; however, moths will spin a silk cocoon around them, often camouflaging themselves with their surroundings or forming them underground. Butterflies instead become a chrysalis. A chrysalis is a smooth, hardened protein that has no silk covering, and you'll often find them hanging from a branch or other support. When each is fully formed inside its protective covering, they emerge in their adult form, flying off into the world.

As with most things, there are exceptions to the rule; some moths, like the Lunar moth, do have colorful body patterns. You can use the information provided here as a general guide to help you identify into which category those winged insects would most likely fall. So which landed on you that day, a butterfly or a moth? Based on the fact that it was daytime and you described the insect as having beautiful, bright colored wings, it was most likely a butterfly that dropped down to say, "Hello."

****This image was attached by capturing a screen image and pasting it as a picture file. You may submit as a separate file if you wish.

Name: Mrs. Harbaugh

Moths vs. Butterflies

