

LEQ #1: Comparison ~ Classical Civilizations

Thoughts to Consider: Use the information below to help in organizing and writing your essay. It is important for you to find your own historical voice and work to improve your argumentative writing skills. If you want some more information about writing comparison essays check out **UNC-Chapel Hill's Writing Center** <https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/comparing-and-contrasting/>

(Quick) Introduction Paragraph

- Big Picture Context / 3 Good Statements to Set the Table (“Previously on...”)
 - o Time: Classical Era, 600 BCE to 600 CE
 - o Topic: Civilizations
 - o Themes:
 - Political Organization/State Building, Cultural Development/Religion, and Social Hierarchy
 - o Continuities and/or Changes:
 - Size, Span and Strength of Civilizations; Complexity and More Formal Organization of Systems and Structures; Growing Trade and Exchange; More Direct Influence on Modern World
- Claim / 2 to 3 Sentence Argument
 - o The Thesis Formula: **X. However A and B. Therefore Y.** (note: these are not necessarily stand alone sentences but concepts that need to be organized into an argument)
 - X = represents the strongest point against your argument (counter or qualified)
 - However A and B = represents the two strongest points of your argument
 - Therefore Y = represents the position you will be taking – in other words your stand on the prompt

Organizational Themes: (note: body paragraphs can be structured around these ideas, but you must analyze at least two regions, which could also form the organizational structure of the essay)

- **Political / State Building**
 - o **Similarities:** new techniques of political administration with the goal of gaining, keeping, and extending political power and control
 - o **Differences:** political structures varied from region to region due to geographic influences, existing traditions, and population needs
- **Religious and Cultural Traditions**
 - o **Similarities:** provided community bonds and moral codes, merged with political rulers to justify their reign, and led to conflict and disunity
 - o **Differences:** religious principles and cultural practices represented the divergent views, traditions, and needs of peoples around the world
- **Social Hierarchy**
 - o **Similarities:** reinforced existing patriarchy and social stratification
 - o **Differences:** the extent of social mobility, opportunities and freedoms varied from region to region

(Quick) Conclusion Paragraph

- Restate and Recap: synthesize your paper’s main points and pull it all together
- Relate: connect the time, topic, and themes of your paper to parallel concepts from within the same time period (though not the focus of the essay) or to the time period immediately after, or recognize future issues (“On the next episode”)
 - o Time: Post-Classical Era, 600 CE-1450 CE, sees the rise of Islam, expanded trade and contact, shifting centers of regional power
 - o Topic: Decline of Civilizations, unrest and disunity creates new opportunities
 - o Themes: As political systems and religious structures formalize, and in combination with increasing contact, more conflict and diffusion will occur

Possible Historical Examples and Evidence List (note: you are not expected to include all or even most of the items listed, ideally your essay will incorporate appx. ten to fifteen pieces of historical evidence in support of your claim)

East Asia: China

- Analects of Confucius
- Bureaucracy
- Civil Service Exams
- Confucianism
- Dao or "The Way"
- Dao de Jing
- Daoism
- Empress Wu
- Filial Piety / Ancestor Veneration
- Hundred Schools of Thought
- Laozi
- Legalism
- Mandate of Heaven
- Meritocracy
- Patriarchy
- Qin Dynasty
- Qin Shihuangdi
- Warring States Period
- Yellow Turban Rebellion
- Ying Yang
- Zhou Dynasty

South Asia: India

- Aryan migration
- Ashoka
- Bhagavad-Gita
- Buddhism
- Caste System (Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Shudras, Untouchables)
- Gupta Dynasty
- Hinduism
- Karma
- Mauryan Dynasty
- Nirvana
- Reincarnation
- Sanskrit
- Siddhartha Gautama
- The Middle Way or Enlightenment
- Vedas / Upanishads

Mediterranean: Persia, Greece, and Rome

- Achaemenid Dynasty
- Alexander the Great
- Aristocracy
- Augustus
- Christianity
- Citizenship
- City-states
- Cyrus and Darius
- Democracy
- Hellenism
- Jesus
- Judaism
- Monotheism
- Mythology
- New Testament
- Oligarchy
- Patricians and Plebeians
- Plato, Aristotle
- Rationalism
- Roman Empire
- Roman Republic
- Satraps
- Slavery
- Socrates
- Sparta, Athens
- Spartacus
- Stoics
- Ten Commandments
- Torah or Old Testament
- Zoroastrianism

Comparative Language and Vocabulary Conventions: Your thesis, topic sentences, and transitions should give the reader an idea of the points you are making, but the following words will be helpful to demonstrate historical reasoning to frame and structure your argument.

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|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ➤ like | ➤ in contrast to | ➤ but |
| ➤ similar to | ➤ in like manner | ➤ nevertheless |
| ➤ also | ➤ contrasted with | ➤ conversely |
| ➤ unlike | ➤ on the contrary | ➤ at the same time |
| ➤ similarly | ➤ however | ➤ regardless |
| ➤ in the same way | ➤ although | ➤ despite |
| ➤ likewise | ➤ yet | ➤ while |
| ➤ again | ➤ even though | ➤ on the one hand...on the other hand |
| ➤ compared to | ➤ still | |