



# MY Access! Writer's Workshop

## High School Literary Analysis

**Prompt: “Everyday Use” by Alice Walker**

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## **My Writing Process**

- Think about what I need to write. Think in my sleep, while driving, while cleaning, etc.
- Eventually I get the guts to start writing. Sit at my computer and agonize over my first sentence.
- Get frustrated and push myself to just start writing. Write and write without letting myself look back. Just get the ideas down.
- At some point, usually when I'm not sure where I'm going next, I do go back and re-read. I immediately start to make changes to what I've written.
- If I still don't know where I'm going next I step away from the computer. Sometimes I take notes or I just keep thinking.
- Return to writing. Push on. Get a draft finished. Revise on the computer, often cutting and pasting to reorganize.
- Have somebody, usually my husband, read it. Get mad at him when he finds fault!
- Think about his suggestions and I go back to write more and make changes.
- Continue this process until I'm as close to done as I can get.

## How “Real” Writers Write

“The beautiful part of writing is that you don’t have to get it right the first time, unlike, say, a brain surgeon. You can always do it better, find the exact word, the apt phrase, the leaping simile.”

Robert Cormier

“By the time I am nearing the end of a story, the first part will have been reread and altered and corrected at least one hundred and fifty times...Good writing is essentially rewriting. I am positive of this.”

Roald Dahl

“I rewrote the ending to *Farewell to Arms*, the last page of it, thirty-nine times before I was satisfied.”

Ernest Hemingway

## **Persuasive Writing**

### **Purpose:**

- To convince
- To state a problem and propose a solution
- To analyze cause/effect relationships
- To discuss controversial issues

### **Characteristics:**

- Logically supports a clear position or perspective with relevant evidence
- Provides convincing arguments and counterarguments
- Reflects analytical thinking and/or evaluation
- 1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> person point-of-view

### **Examples:**

- Persuasive essay
- Persuasive letter or letter to editor
- Editorial
- Compare/contrast essay
- Political speech
- Critical reviews
- Character analysis

## **Response to Literature**

Shares the same purpose and characteristics as above, but demonstrates an understanding and interpretation of literary work and supports viewpoint through specific references to text

## Teaching Ideas for “Everyday Use” by Alice Walker

### Pre-Reading: Into the Text

- Have students complete the “Mini Web Quest” to gain background information about quilts. If you have a quilt, bring it in!
- You may want to read “A Baby’s Quilt to Sew Up the Generations” on page 97 in Holt. Discuss the significance of quilts—why are they important and valued?
- THINK, PAIR, SHARE: Ask students to spend a minute thinking about traditions and heirlooms in their family. Have them share what comes to mind with a partner and then share with the whole class. Draw the following T-Chart on the board and fill it out as a whole class:

Family traditions and heirlooms	Why they are important

- Discuss if they value family traditions and heirlooms. Why or why not?

### Reading: Through the Text

- As you read “Everyday Use,” assign half the class to “Maggie” and the other half to “Dee.” They should underline their character’s thoughts, actions, words, etc. as you read.
- When you are done reading, pass out the “Character Study of Maggie/Dee” handout (**pp 8-9**) A similar graphic organizer, the “Narrative Wizard” can be found in the MY Access! under the PREWRITING tab on the student drafting page. Have students work in groups to share their highlighted portions and discuss each of the categories. For their expert category, each student needs to write down the best quote from the text on the left side and their **inferences** about their character on the right side. For more information about inferences, read pg. 76 in **Holt (Grade 10)**
- You may want to have students complete the “Understanding the Plot” handout (**p. 12**) individually or in groups (you may use the **PLOT** section of the MY Access! Narrative Wizard for this activity)
- Optional activity: Have students write a letter from the point-of-view of the sister they studied to the other one. What would they say?

### Post-Reading: Beyond the Text (writing the essay)

- Begin by “attacking the prompt” with students and discuss what they must write.
- As a whole class, complete a Venn Diagram under the “PREWRITING” tab in MY Access! or use the Venn Diagram template (**p. 10**)
- Use a class period to log on to MY Access! and use “Looping” as a way to get ideas flowing (see handout on **pp. 13-14** entitled “Looping in MY Access!”). Tell students to just begin writing about Dee and Maggie—anything that comes to mind. They can refer back to their charts and look at the highlighted portions of their story, but they shouldn’t worry about organization or thesis writing at this time. The goal is that by the end of the second “loop” students will be close to a thesis.
- Help students write a thesis statement (see thesis handout, **p. 15**). Begin by discussing what a thesis is. Give students time in class to play around with writing a thesis. You must approve it before they can move on to planning their essay!
- Complete the “Planning the Body of Your Essay” worksheet (**p. 17**). Revisit the Venn Diagram and make a list of all the characteristics you can use for the point-by-point comparison (their personalities, appearance, motivations, points-of-view, beliefs, values, etc.)
- Use the “Organizing Your Essay” (**p. 18**) worksheet to plan out their essay. Do NOT let students continue writing their essay until you have approved this handout!

### **Prompt: Comparing Characters in “Everyday Use”**

Everyday Use by Alice Walker is a short story exploring one particular culture's historical traditions. The two sisters, although raised in the same family, have very different ideas of how to best preserve their heritage. In a multi-paragraph essay, compare and contrast Maggie and Dee based on their motivations, personalities, and points of view with respect to preserving their heritage. Make sure to include specific details and examples from the story in your analysis.

As you write, remember your essay will be scored based on how well you

- develop a multi-paragraph response to the assigned topic that clearly communicates your thesis to the audience.
- support your thesis with meaningful examples and references from the text, carefully citing any direct quotes.
- organize your essay in a clear and logical manner, including an introduction, body, and conclusion.
- use well-structured sentences and language that are appropriate for your audience.
- edit your work to conform to the conventions of standard American English.

Use any of the tools available to you, such as the **Checklist**, **Spellchecker**, or **Graphic Organizer**.

### **Attacking the Prompt:**

- Underline what the prompt is asking you to **DO** (look for verbs).
- Circle **WHAT** the prompt asks you to produce.

## Mini Web Quest

### “Everyday Use”

- Topic: Quilts
- Directions:
  - Go to [www.iseek.com](http://www.iseek.com)
  - Search for “quilts” or “history of quilting” or “African American quilting.”
  - Answer the questions below. Be sure to cite the website(s) you used to get your answers.
  - **You can use Wikipedia, but you must also get information from at least one other website.**
- Helpful Tips:
  - Be sure to read the description of each website before visiting. Many of the sites only give instructions for making or buying quilts, and these won’t help you.
  - Be sure to look at photos of quilts!

What is a quilt and how is one made?

What are some uses of quilts—historically and today?

List at least three facts about African American quilting (use back of page if needed):

***Works Cited:***

## Character Study of MAGGIE in “Everyday Use”

As we read “Everyday Use,” highlight the following:

- Maggie’s thoughts. What goes on in her mind?
- Maggie’s words. What does she say out loud?
- Maggie’s actions. What does she do? How does she behave?
- Descriptions of how Maggie looks.

Inference: An intelligent guess based on evidence in the story and on what you already know. When making inferences about characters, you’ll base many of your guesses on what they say and do.

### ONE QUOTE FROM TEXT

### YOUR INFERENCES ABOUT MAGGIE

Maggie’s Thoughts	
Maggie’s Words	
Maggie’s Actions	
Maggie’s Appearance	



## Character Study of DEE in “Everyday Use”

As we read “Everyday Use,” highlight the following:

- Dee’s thoughts. What goes on in her mind?
- Dee’s words. What does she say out loud?
- Dee’s actions. What does she do? How does she behave?
- Descriptions of how Dee looks.

**Inference:** An intelligent guess based on evidence in the story and on what you already know. When making inferences about characters, you’ll base many of your guesses on what they say and do.

### ONE QUOTE FROM TEXT

### YOUR INFERENCES ABOUT DEE

Dee’s Thoughts	
Dee’s Words	
Dee’s Actions	
Dee’s Appearance	



## Venn Diagram

Teacher's Name:

Student Name:

Class:

Prompt:

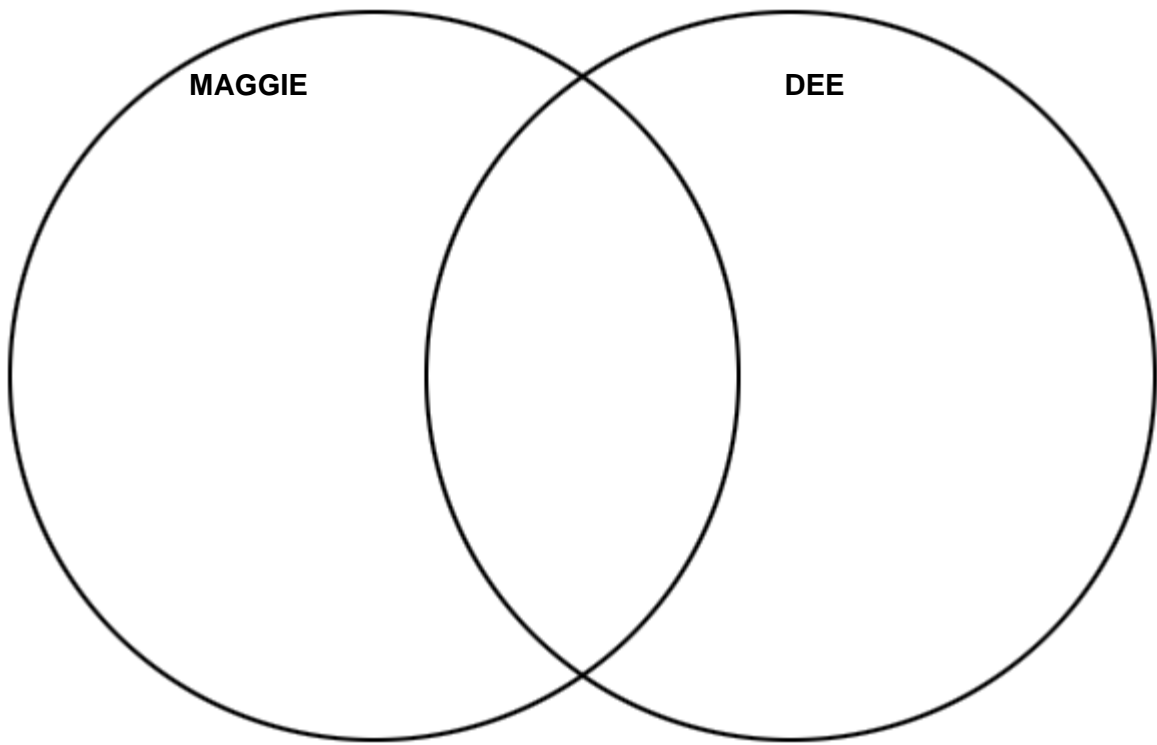
Select Number of Circles:

[Back to Graphic Organizer](#)

"Everyday Use"

2 or 3

[Print](#)



## “Everyday Use” Understanding the Plot

- 1.** Describe the major conflict in the story and why it occurred.
- 2.** Describe how the conflict affected Maggie and Dee.
- 3.** Describe the climax, or turning point, of the story.
- 4.** Describe the outcome, or resolution, and how Maggie and Dee were affected.

## **LOOPING**

*Looping is an exercise many writers use to narrow the focus of a piece. Often, in early drafts we write anything and everything that comes to mind about our topic (and this is okay!). As we revise, we want to “zoom in” on only the most important and interesting parts of our narrative. We need to discover our PURPOSE for writing.*

***Tell students:***

**Step 1:** Re-read your entire piece.

**Step 2:** Choose one line that stands out to you. Maybe it is an extremely important moment in your story, maybe it is the most exciting point, or maybe you just like the idea you are trying to express.

**Step 3:** Underline or highlight that line.

**Step 4:** On a blank piece of paper, write ONLY that line at the top of the paper.

**Step 5:** Now, for next ten minutes, write as QUICKLY as you can about only that line.

**Step 6:** Think about what happened. Do you like what you just wrote more than your first draft? If so, you now have a NEW and more specific focus for your story. At the very least, one part of your story has been “exploded.”

## **LOOPING in MY Access!**

*Here is a powerful way to use Looping while logged in to MY Access! This exercise will help students process and understand the power of revision.*

***Tell students:***

- Step 1:** Give students 10-15 minutes to write quickly about their prompt in MY Access! Do not allow them to use tools and encourage them to keep typing without thinking too much!
- Step 2:** Stop students. Have them re-read their piece and choose one line that stands out to them to highlight.
- Step 3:** Write that line down on a piece of paper.
- Step 4:** Submit the draft you just completed and receive a score.
- Step 5:** Back at “assignments,” begin a “revision” of the piece. When you get to “My Writing Space,” delete everything you just wrote (don’t panic—your first draft is already saved).
- Step 6:** Write the line from “Step 2” at the top of your writing space. Now, for next ten minutes, write as QUICKLY as you can about only that line.
- Step 7:** Submit this response.
- Step 8:** Think about what happened. Compare your two scores. Do you like what you just wrote more than your first draft? If so, you now have a NEW and more specific focus for your story. At the very least, one part of your story has been “exploded” and this will add to the overall purpose of your first draft.

## Writing a Thesis Statement

MY Access! “Everyday Use”

Your **thesis** is a sentence or two that tells the reader the **main argument** you will be making in your essay. It cannot simply be a fact from the story, but it needs to include *your opinion* of Dee and Maggie’s relationship. In a compare/contrast essay it is okay to choose one character as the primary focus of your essay—just make sure you continually compare her to the other character.

**Take a look at all the notes we took while reading the story, your Venn diagram, and re-read your looping in MY Access! Try one (or more) of the formats below to write a first draft of your thesis. If one of these formats doesn’t appeal to you, write your own or adapt one of these.**

Although Maggie and Dee are both \_\_\_\_\_,  
they are different in how they \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

This shows \_\_\_\_\_.

Even though Maggie/Dee is sometimes \_\_\_\_\_,  
she \_\_\_\_\_,  
and will never agree with her sister.

Maggie/Dee can be \_\_\_\_\_, but more often is  
\_\_\_\_\_,  
and so will \_\_\_\_\_.

As long as Maggie/Dee remains \_\_\_\_\_.  
she will never \_\_\_\_\_ and  
so her sister will not \_\_\_\_\_.





## Planning “The Body” of Your Essay

The **body** of your essay follows your introduction, and it is the part where you “prove” to the reader through explanations, analysis and evidence from the text that your thesis is true. You need to put some thought into how to organize your body paragraphs so they reach your audience in an effective manner.

Below are some suggestions for how to organize the body of your essay.

### The Block Method

For this method you discuss each character, one at a time. It looks something like this:

- Paragraph 1: You discuss one character and analyze her thoughts, decisions, etc.
- Paragraph 2: You discuss the other character, focusing on similar characteristics.
- Paragraph 3: You discuss how these characters are different, and you explain why this is.

Here is how you might organize an essay comparing and contrasting Cinderella and her step sisters:

#### **Thesis:**

*Although Cinderella and her Step Sisters share the same goal—they want to marry Prince Charming—Cinderella distinguishes herself because she has to work hard to achieve what she wants. The sisters, on the other hand, expect everything to be given to them.*

**Paragraph 1:** Describes the Step Sisters and uses evidence from the text to show how demanding they are even though they don’t do any work. Explains the significance of this.

**Paragraph 2:** Describes Cinderella and uses evidence from the text to show how sweet, hardworking and motivated she is.

**Paragraph 3:** Explains to the reader why these differences prove that Cinderella is set apart because she isn’t spoiled. This is the heart of your argument!

### The Point-by-Point Method

With this organization you discuss the *characteristics* of the two characters you are discussing, one at a time. Each paragraph will need to discuss both characters being compared and contrasted.

Here is how you might organize the same essay discussed above:

**Paragraph 1:** Cinderella and her Step Sisters share a similar goal: they want to go to the ball. If there are any differences you also need to discuss them (for example, her sisters seem focused on marrying the Prince, whereas Cinderella seems more interested in just getting there. Explain why this is).

**Paragraph 2:** The differences between Cinderella and her Step Sisters are striking: Cinderella is sweet and hardworking compared to her lazy and mean-spirited Step Sisters. Explain why this evidence is significant and what it tells us about each character.

**Paragraph 3:** Cinderella’s ultimate reward of the Prince proves that if parents do not expect anything from their children, they do not develop into the type of people who deserve a “happy ending.” The Step Sisters tried to “win” by torturing Cinderella; what they didn’t realize is that Cinderella’s hard work and lesser status shaped her into a better person.

# ORGANIZING YOUR ESSAY

**Thesis Statement**

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**Support for Thesis/Topic Sentence**

**Examples from Text as Evidence**

1.	
2.	
3.	

### MY Access! ® 6-Point Literary Writing Rubric

	The extent which the response demonstrates understanding of the text and the purpose of the task, and makes connections between them through a controlling or central idea.	The extent to which the response develops ideas fully and artfully using extensive, specific, accurate, and relevant details. <i>(facts, examples, reasons, anecdotes, prior knowledge)</i>	The extent to which the response demonstrates a unified structure, direction, and unity, paragraphing and transitional devices.	The extent to which response demonstrates an awareness of audience and purpose through effective sentence structure, sentence variety, word choice that create tone and voice.	The extent the response demonstrates control of conventions, including paragraphing, grammar, punctuation, and spelling
6	<b>Very effective Focus &amp; Meaning</b> Establishes an <i>in-depth analysis</i> of the text(s) and makes <i>insightful connections</i> among the <u>task</u> , the ideas in the <u>text(s)</u> , and <u>literary elements</u> or <u>techniques</u> through a controlling or <u>central idea</u> .	<b>Very Effective Content &amp; Development.</b> Develops ideas <i>fully and artfully</i> , using a wide variety of <i>specific</i> and <i>accurate</i> evidence and <u>literary elements</u> or techniques from the <u>text(s)</u> .	<b>Very Effective Organization.</b> Demonstrates a <i>cohesive and unified structure</i> with an <i>engaging introduction</i> and a <i>strong conclusion</i> ; <i>effective</i> use of <u>paragraphing</u> and <u>transitional devices</u> throughout.	<b>Very Effective Language Use, Voice and Style</b> Demonstrates <i>precise</i> language and <u>word choice</u> , a <i>defined voice</i> , and a <i>clear</i> sense of <u>audience</u> ; uses <i>well-structured and varied sentences</i> .	<b>Very effective control of Conventions &amp; Mechanics.</b> <i>Few or no errors</i> in <u>grammar</u> , <u>mechanics</u> , <u>punctuation</u> and <u>spelling</u> .
5	<b>Good Focus &amp; Meaning.</b> Establishes a <i>thorough</i> analysis of the <u>text(s)</u> and makes <i>clear connections</i> among the <u>task</u> , the ideas in the <u>text(s)</u> , and <u>literary elements</u> or techniques through a controlling or <u>central idea</u> .	<b>Good Content &amp; Development.</b> Develops ideas <i>fully and clearly</i> , using a variety of specific and accurate <i>evidence</i> and <u>literary elements</u> or techniques from the <u>text(s)</u> .	<b>Good Organization.</b> Demonstrates a <i>mostly unified structure</i> with a <i>good introduction and conclusion</i> ; <i>consistent</i> use of <u>paragraphing</u> and <u>transitional devices</u> .	<b>Good Language Use, Voice and Style.</b> Demonstrates <i>appropriate language</i> and <u>word choice</u> , with <i>some evidence</i> of <u>voice</u> and a <i>clear</i> sense of <u>audience</u> ; uses <i>well-structured</i> sentences with <i>some variety</i> .	<b>Good control of Conventions &amp; Mechanics.</b> <i>Few errors</i> in <u>grammar</u> , <u>mechanics</u> , <u>punctuation</u> and <u>spelling</u> that <i>do not interfere</i> with the message.
4	<b>Adequate Focus &amp; Meaning.</b> Establishes a basic analysis of the text(s) and makes implied connections among the <u>task</u> , the ideas in the <u>text(s)</u> , and <u>literary elements</u> or techniques through a controlling or <u>central idea</u> .	<b>Adequate Content &amp; Development.</b> Develops ideas <i>adequately</i> , using some <i>specific</i> and <i>accurate evidence</i> and <u>literary elements</u> or techniques from the <u>text(s)</u> .	<b>Adequate Organization.</b> Demonstrates a <i>generally unified structure</i> with a <i>noticeable introduction and conclusion</i> ; <i>inconsistent</i> use of <u>paragraphing</u> and <u>transitional devices</u>	<b>Adequate Language Use, Voice &amp; Style.</b> Demonstrates <i>appropriate language</i> and <u>word choice</u> , with an <i>awareness</i> of <u>audience</u> and control of <u>voice</u> ; generally uses correct <u>sentence structure</u> with <i>some variety</i> .	<b>Adequate control of Conventions &amp; Mechanics.</b> <i>Some errors</i> in <u>grammar</u> , <u>mechanics</u> , <u>punctuation</u> and <u>spelling</u> that <i>do not significantly interfere</i> with the communication of the message.
3	<b>Limited Focus &amp; Meaning.</b> Establishes a basic analysis of the text(s) and makes only few or vague connections among the <u>task</u> , the ideas in the <u>text(s)</u> , and <u>literary elements</u> or techniques through a controlling or central idea.	<b>Limited Content &amp; Development.</b> Develops ideas <i>briefly and inconsistently</i> , using <i>little specific</i> and accurate evidence and <u>literary elements</u> or techniques from the <u>text(s)</u> .	<b>Limited Organization.</b> Demonstrates <i>evidence</i> of structure with a <i>poor introduction and conclusion</i> ; <i>lacks</i> paragraphing and <i>some transitional devices</i> .	<b>Limited Language Use, Voice &amp; Style.</b> Demonstrates <i>simple language</i> and <u>word choice</u> , with <i>little awareness</i> of <u>audience</u> and control of <u>voice</u> ; relies on <i>simple</i> sentences with <i>insufficient sentence variety</i> and <u>word choice</u> .	<b>Limited control of Conventions &amp; Mechanics.</b> <i>Several noticeable errors</i> in <u>grammar</u> , <u>mechanics</u> , <u>punctuation</u> and <u>spelling</u> that may <i>interfere</i> with the communication of the message.
2	<b>Minimal Focus &amp; Meaning.</b> Establishes a confused or incomplete analysis of the text(s) and makes <i>no</i> connections among the <u>task</u> , the ideas in the <u>text(s)</u> , and <u>literary elements</u> or techniques through a controlling or <u>central idea</u> .	<b>Minimal Content &amp; Development.</b> Develops ideas incompletely and <i>inadequately</i> , using <i>minimal</i> references to the <u>text(s)</u> .	<b>Minimal Organization.</b> Demonstrates <i>little evidence</i> of structure with a <i>poor introduction and conclusion</i> ; <i>little evidence</i> of <u>paragraphing</u> and <u>transitional devices</u> .	<b>Minimal Language Use, Voice &amp; Style.</b> Demonstrates <i>poor language</i> and <u>word choice</u> , with <i>little awareness</i> of <u>audience</u> ; makes <i>basic errors</i> in <u>sentence structure</u> and usage.	<b>Minimal control of Conventions &amp; Mechanics.</b> <i>Patterns of errors</i> in <u>grammar</u> , <u>mechanics</u> , <u>punctuation</u> and <u>spelling</u> that <i>substantially interfere</i> with the communication of the message.
1	<b>Inadequate or no Focus &amp; Meaning.</b> <i>Fails</i> to establish an analysis of the text(s) and makes <i>no connections</i> among the <u>task</u> , the ideas in the <u>text(s)</u> , and <u>literary elements</u> or techniques through a controlling or <u>central idea</u> .	<b>Inadequate or no Content &amp; Development.</b> Fails to develop ideas, using <i>no</i> meaningful references to the <u>text(s)</u> .	<b>Inadequate or no Organization.</b> Demonstrates <i>no evidence</i> of structure with <i>no introduction or conclusion</i> ; <i>no evidence</i> of <u>paragraphing</u> and <u>transitional devices</u> .	<b>Inadequate Language Use, Voice &amp; Style.</b> Demonstrates <i>unclear or incoherent language</i> and <u>word choice</u> , <i>no awareness</i> of <u>audience</u> , and <i>major errors</i> in <u>sentence structure</u> and usage.	<b>Inadequate or no control of Conventions &amp; Mechanics.</b> <i>Errors so severe</i> in <u>grammar</u> , <u>mechanics</u> , <u>punctuation</u> and <u>spelling</u> that they <i>significantly interfere</i> with the communication of the message.

### **Sample Essay #1 (point-by-point organization)**

In the short story, "Everyday Use," by Alice Walker, Dee visited her mother and her sister, Maggie. There are differences and also some similarities between Dee and Maggie. The two sisters can be compared and contrasted in many ways. The first comparison that can be made is by their personality. Second, there are differences and some similarities in their motivations. The last is their point of view on preserving their heritage. Although, Dee and Maggie have great differences in many ways, there are still some similarities between these two sisters.

The first way to compare and contrast between Dee and Maggie is by their personality. For instance, Maggie is a shy girl who seldom talks to anyone. She would rather be doing her own things than socializing with others. As for Dee, she is an opened person and would socialize with anyone without problem. Although Dee is open-minded, she is a hypocrite. In the story, Dee said, "Maggie can't appreciate these quilts!?" In truth, Dee isn't going to do anything with the quilts except to hang them. She also hated the quilts before and did not want them until now. Unlike Dee, Maggie actually wanted the quilts because she wants to remember her Grandma who made the quilts. Also, their sense in style is quite different. Dee loves to wear colorful dresses with weird styles. As for Maggie, she wears a simple dress without considering the styles. Besides the differences, there are some similarities between them. For instance, both Maggie and Dee want the quilts except they have different reasons for wanting them.

Second, Dee and Maggie have similarities and differences in their motivations. Both Dee and Maggie want to have grandma's quilts. But, they have different reasons on why they want the quilts. For instance, Dee wants to hang the quilts and Maggie wants to use the quilts. Besides using the quilts, Maggie also wants to remember her Grandma that made the quilts. Unlike Maggie, Dee just wanted the quilts because of their designs. Their motivations are quite different but they both have similar motivations because they wanted the quilts.

The last way to compare and contrast between the two sisters is by their point of view on preserving their heritage. Both Maggie and Dee have a different point of view in their heritage. For instance, Maggie appreciates her heritage because her mother is the only person she has. She does not hate her family the way Dee does. Unlike Maggie, Dee despises her family and her heritage due to many reasons. She is ashamed of her family because they are not educated and rich. She did not like her own mother for not being beautiful. Dee also hated her name and changed her name to Wangero because it was dull and was passed down by her ancestors.

These are the similarities and differences between Dee and Maggie. Maggie and Dee's personality, motivations, and their point of view on their heritage can be differed in many ways. Although there are more differences between these two, some similarities are still shown. For instance, they both wanted the quilts but for different reasons. Also, they both think that the quilts are priceless although both had different reasons why they think it was priceless.

### **Sample Essay #2 (block organization)**

Alice Walker's "Everyday Use" is a short story about heritage and the conflict of a mother and her two daughters. Most children raised by the same person grow up with a lot of the same interest. For sisters Maggie and Dee, that is not the case they differ in personality, appearance, and their beliefs about family values. The conflict they have involves quilts that are passed down in their family and who will get them next.

Maggie, is the youngest of the two daughters, she is described as quiet and respectful. Due to their first house burning down Maggie now has burn scars down her legs and arms which she is ashamed of. Maggie is very self-conscience with the way she looks and keeps her head down whenever she walks. Her mother describes her as, "Walking as a lame dog run over by a careless person". Whenever her big sister Dee comes around she gets nervous. Due to her low self-esteem she speaks very low and you can hardly hear her. Standing up for herself is something she has never done because she likes to keep quiet. In this story Maggie is just a hidden character who has no control over herself.

Dee, the oldest of the sisters is full of herself. She is secure, confident, beautiful, smart, and she is a high demanding young woman. Dee is used to getting everything her way. She is afraid of nobody and looked anybody in the eye. Style, was a big part of her life, she wanted the nicer things in life. When Dee comes back

from school she wants to be called Wangero instead of her original name Dee, because she couldn't bear being named after the people who oppressed her. Dee was really named after her aunt and grandmother which she didn't know until her mother told her. The reason for her name change is because she learns about her African roots and decides to be a part of her culture.

Even though both Maggie and Dee have the same mother many things are different about them. Maggie is shy and self-conscious, while Dee is confident and would look anyone in the eye. Dee was lighter than Maggie with nicer hair and a fuller figure. Dee is the oldest and only cares about style and how everything looks. In Dee's point of view, if anything was pretty or looked nice she wanted it. Maggie, being the youngest stays home to help her mother clean and just live life. The reason for Dee wanting the quilts was to hang them up because they were fashionable, and her grandmother sewed them herself.

All in all at the end of the story Maggie ends up getting the quilts. Dee is used to getting everything she wants, so when she does not get the quilts she leaves in anger. Dee didn't appreciate her heritage enough to get the quilts, besides Maggie was supposed to get them when she gets married. Dee only wanted them because they were fashionable and would look good hung up somewhere in her house. The purpose of the quilts were to be passed down from generation to generation. When Dee leaves, Maggie finally starts to open up and even smiles but this time she's not scared.

### **Sample Essay #3**

The story "Everyday Use" by Alice Walker compares two sisters. The story shows their personalities, motivation and respect to preserving their heritage. Dee likes nice things and Maggie has a heart. Even though they are completely different from one another they still have conflicts with each other.

Dee's personality shows that she's an anti-culture, she thinks she's better than everybody. Even thinks she's better than her family. Dee dresses in fancy African-style clothing and when Dee decides to take two family quilts, a conflict arises.

Families should keep something in value and in importance around with them till generations, and generations. When their future ancestors want to remember the past they can look at the family emblem. Importance and meaning of an item can influence other families to do the same thing. It brings families together and tells a story.

### **Sample Essay #4**

Maggie and Dee are different, but they do share some similarities.

First, Maggie is always intimidated of her sister Dee. She is filled both with envy and awe as she looks at her sister. She is embarrassed of the burning scars she has on her arms and legs since their house burned down years ago. Her mother describes her as a lame animal that is run over by some careless person rich enough to own a car. To preserve her heritage, Maggie would rather put them to everyday use. Because she learned to quilt, she can always make new ones if the others are ever damaged.

Maggie and her sister Dee, do have some, but few similarities. They both obviously want to preserve their heritage. Likewise, they want to preserve it through the family's quilts.

However, there are many obvious differences between the two. Although they both want to preserve their heritage, Dee would rather do it by hanging the quilts up. Maggie, on the other hand, would rather use the quilts. If they are damaged, she can always make more because she knows how to quilt. Dee, however, has not learned the craft. Dee is a very confident individual, and is very comfortable with herself. Maggie is very cautious of her burns and is both envious and admirable of her sister.

As a whole Maggie and Dee have few similarities. However, they are as a whole different. Maggie is more the shy, anxious individual. Dee, however, is very confident and secure. Nonetheless, they both want to uphold their heritage, but in different ways.