**Compare and Contrast Formats**

Assume that you are asked to write a comparison of Herman Melville’s Moby-Dick and Jack London’s Sea Wolf. Since that is a very large topic, your first task would be to decide what you want to say about the subject. You decide that your thesis will be the following: Although both Melville’s Moby-Dick and London’s Sea Wolf are about the sea, Moby-Dick is the more complex of the two novels. You decide that to support your point, you will compare and contrast the minor characters, the major characters, and the themes in both books. Here are the two ways to set up an outline for a compare-contrast paper.

**Subject by subject outline:**

Introduction

Sea Wolf

Minor characters

Major characters

Themes

Moby-Dick

Minor characters

Major characters

Themes

Conclusion

**Point by point outline:**

Introduction

Minor characters

Sea Wolf

Moby-Dick

Major characters

Sea Wolf

Moby-Dick

Themes

Sea Wolf

Moby-Dick

Conclusion

Remember that your introduction should include the complete names of the authors and the titles of what you are comparing and contrasting, as well as your thesis. After using the authors’ full names in the introduction, use only their last names (no Mr. etc.) to refer to them thereafter. Since this is formal writing, use only third person, no contractions, and no slang.

Your conclusion should reiterate your thesis using different words or some other appropriate way of concluding an essay. Refer to Introductions and Conclusions in your Comp I Study Guide for help (p. 18-22) in creating strong introductions and conclusions, as well as examples of what **not** to do.