

Harlan County Public Schools

Non-Traditional Instruction

English II

Compare/Contrast Unit

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Introduction:

A comparison/contrast essay shows the similarities and differences between two subjects. In class, we have discussed methods of prewriting, editing, and formulating a final draft. Over the course of this unit, we will discuss the compare/contrast essay. Each day will have an assignment that will be due. The final project is your own compare/contrast essay on NTI day 4 and a small EOC version of compare/contrast questions on NTI day 5. This unit is designed for NTI days 1 thru 5.

Standard:

CCR: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

Strand: Writing Cluster: Text Types and Purposes Grade: 10 Standard #: 2

Standard: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

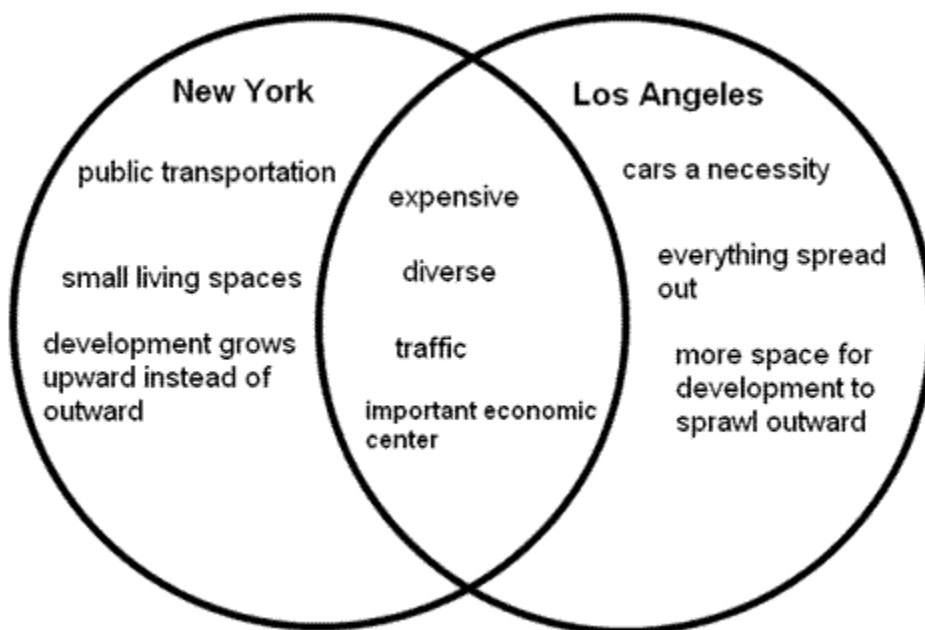
- a. Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections and distinctions; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
- b. Develop the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.
- c. Use appropriate and varied transitions to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.
- d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic.
- e. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
- f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).

Content/Lesson Introduction:

Compare and Contrast

Compare and contrast is a concept that is used to examine information in order to show the similarities and differences between two or more thoughts or ideas. It is important to be able to see the similarities and differences between items and ideas within a passage and between multiple passages.

Compare and contrast organization can show the relationships between items, people, or ideas. Look at this Venn diagram to get a visual picture of what comparing and contrasting looks like.



Compare = similarities

Look for words like the following:

- similar

- in the same way
- likewise
- just like
- as well
- in addition

Contrast = differences

Look for words like the following:

- different
- in contrast
- on the other hand
- however
- on the contrary
- instead
- although
- but

When you have to compare passages you have to use your comprehension skills to show that you can compare and contrast the information presented in more than one text. Look for similarities and differences in the following:

- main idea
- point of view
- purpose
- characters
- setting

- problems/conflict
- themes

Example:

Life on the Bayou

Passage 1

Riding my bike on the bayou with my father was one of my favorite pastimes growing up. Those memories are probably the most unforgettable ones I have. We were inseparable then. The bayou was our special place. The concrete trails surrounded by deep dark bayou water and the lush green foliage were like a second home to me. When I have children, I would like to move back there and share those experiences with them.

Passage 2

Our hometown of Houston, Texas, is also known as the Bayou City to its inhabitants. There are more than 2,500 miles of waterways located here. The Bayou Preservation Association is a group of citizens who have made it their mission to protect and preserve these beautiful waterways. We spread public awareness about the streams and promote conservation. BPA believes the concrete bayous most Houstonians know and love destroyed animal habitats and countless trees. We hold town meetings, review policy, and plant trees. All of our work is done in the name of saving the bayou for our children's children to enjoy.

Can you see the differences between these passages? Think about the main ideas, purposes, and points of view of the two passages. Both have a fondness for the Houston bayou and would like to see them preserved for future generations. However, one is more about nostalgia, and the other passage is aimed at convincing people to save the bayou.

Activities:

NTI Day 1:

The following comparison/contrast essay discusses the experiences in shopping in two different places – the experience of shopping in an old-fashioned American downtown and the experience in shopping in a modern mall. Read the essay and create a Venn diagram like the one above showing the similarities and differences of the two shopping experiences. Then answer the questions over the essay. The Venn diagram and questions will be your grade for “NTI day 1.” Finally, begin brainstorming possible ideas for a compare/contrast essay at the end of the unit.

Shopping in America

Since the 1950s, American shoppers have been spending their money in suburban malls instead of in downtown business districts. This is even true of shoppers who have to go out of their way to shop in the malls; they will bypass downtown stores (which they might have gotten to by convenient bus) to drive to the brightly bedecked and weather-free meccas of shopper-heaven. The result, some people claim, is the demise of the central urban commercial district, Downtown, a process leading inevitably toward more widespread urban blight. But why are Americans so easily lured to shop in malls in the first place?

First, Americans don't like weather. They like to be indoors whenever possible, even on nice days, and they're willing to pay a premium to be protected from the elements. If they can find someone who can afford it, they will even put their sports stadiums under a gigantic bowl, and they love to stay indoors for a day of shopping, perhaps never seeing the sun from the time they first enter until they leave, hours later, relieved of money, oxygen, and much money. Second, Americans love convenience and, except during the crush of major holidays, malls offer plenty of convenient parking. A happy, enormous island of commerce in a sea of asphalt, the mall offers plenty of docking points — usually next to major commercial outlets — for cars that circle in search of the closest slot and an easy entrance.

Third, the mall offers an extraordinary variety of products under its one gigantic roof. Specialty stores and boutiques offer items that people don't realize they need until they're put under the spell of brightly lighted, beautifully furnished window after window of beguiling wares. Malls are built to respond to Americans' insatiable desire for stuff; either that, or a generation of Americans has been genetically engineered to respond to the sellers of stuff. Either way, it works.

And finally, the mall feels safe: it is lighted, warm, dry, busy. Senior citizens are invited to do their walking exercises there in the early hours; physically challenged people easily meander the smooth floors of curbless, stairless businesses in motorized carts; children are amused by clowns and fed at convenient cafeterias in Food Court.

America's Downtown, on the other hand, is often in sad repair. Parking is difficult, if not dangerous, and until you get through the door, it's all outdoors. To get from store to store, you must expose yourself to heat, cold, rain, snow. There are sometimes solicitors to fleece you of change before you even get into a store. If there is a plan here, it is not evident to most shoppers. Where is the information kiosk with a cordial, well-informed attendant to direct you to the nearest clothier, jeweler, fast-food outlet, or bathroom? *Is there a bathroom?*

What is left in the American Downtown to recommend it to shoppers? Practically nothing. Nothing, that is, unless you regard as important the notion that the businesses you give your money to should be owned by people, families, in your own community. Yes, there may be chain-stores; it seems there has always been a W. T. Grants, a J. C. Penneys, a Whackers. But the people who owned the franchise and worked behind the cash register were people you might meet in your own neighborhood. When you walk into the Downtown hardware store, you often feel wood, not vinyl linoleum, beneath your feet. And some old guy, who seemed old when he sold your father the hammer you use today, will sell you nails in a paper bag, weighing them out by the handful until you get the exact number you need, not the arbitrary number that comes in a hermetically sealed plastic box.

Next door, in the department store, there will be two women who know you by name and who can't wait to help you find what you need or will let you ruminate among the shelves if you want. In the drug store across the street, the pharmacist knows your aches and pains and what you've been taking for them the last five years and what upsets your stomach and knows to call your doctor when the prescription doesn't make sense. If there is a soda fountain there — naah, that's asking too much.

The truth is that the American mall grows where it does because someone with enormously deep pockets decides to plunk it down where there used to be woods or a golf course. He surrounds it with hundreds of acres of parking and waits for people to come spend their money, as he knows they will because people will do what mass advertising tells them to do. Downtown, on the other hand, grew where it did because there was an organic need for it. It was a community's response to a community's needs — neighbors responding to neighbors — and it flourished as the community flourished. If the mall can replace this sense of community, then so be it; it deserves our affection as well as our dollars. If it can't, then we have gained convenient parking and freedom from the weather at an awful price.

Answer the following:

1. What is the thesis statement and main idea for this essay?
2. Is the contrast between the mall and Downtown adequate? Fair? Overdone? Explain.
3. Discuss where the writer's preferences, if any, lie or does the author actually give a preference.

NTI Day 2:

Compare and contrast the theme of the following two poems about life's struggles and the fate of our future. Then answer the questions. Use a Venn diagram or brainstorming technique to compare and contrast the two author's view. The Venn diagram and questions over the poem will be your grade for "NTI Day 2."

"All" By Bei Dao

Poem translated from Chinese by Donald Finkel & Xueliang Chen

All is fated,
all is cloudy,
all an endless beginning,
all a search for what vanishes,
all joys grave,
all griefs tearless,
every speech a repetition,
every meeting a first encounter,
all love buried in the heart,
all history prisoned in a dream,
all hope hedged with doubt,
all faith drowned in lamentation.
Every explosion heralds an instant of stillness,
every death reverberates forever.

Also All

Also All (in answer to Bei Dao's "All")

Not all trees are felled by storms.
Not every seed finds barren soil.
Not all the wings of dream are broken,
nor is all affection doomed
to wither in a desolate heart.

No, not all is as you say.

Not all flames consume themselves,
shedding no ling on other lives.
Not all starts announce the night
and never dawn. Not every song
will drift past every ear and heart.

No, not all is as you say.

Not every cry for help is silenced,
nor every loss beyond recall.
Not every chasm spells disaster.
Not only the weak will be brought to their
knees,
nor every soul be trodden under.

It won't all end in tears and blood.
Today is heavy with tomorrow—
the future was planted yesterday.
Hope is a burden all of us shoulder
though we might stumble under the load.

--Shu T

1. What is Bei Dao's attitude about life and the future? Contrast that with the attitude of Shu Ting's attitude about the present and future.
2. What does the repetition of the words "all" and "every" represent in Bei Dao's poem?
3. Discuss the concept of optimism and pessimism between the two poems.

NTI Day 3:

Today you will choose a topic for your own compare/contrast essay. You may choose one from the list or create one of your own. Make a Venn diagram of the similarities and differences of your topic. Then begin to draft your essay. The Venn diagram and first draft will be your grade for "NTI Day 3."

Possible topics:

- Halloween night to prom night.
- Your best friend to your archenemy.
- Weeds to flowers.
- Being the president to being a homeless person.
- Being a snob to being a nerd.
- Christopher Columbus to early astronauts.
- School bullies to dictators.
- Writing essays to going to the dentist.
- Acting to lying.
- Hurricanes to blizzards.
- The 1980s to another decade.

- Making an apple pie to making a mud pie.
- Being afraid to being bored.
- The influence of music to the influence of books.
- The influence of celebrities to the influence of parents.
- Learning to ride a bike to learning to drive a car.
- Going to a movie to watching a movie at home.
- Spending time with your friend to spending time with your dog.
- *The Three Bears* to *The Three Little Pigs*.
- Snowfall to rainfall.
- A big college campus to a small college campus.
- Living on a farm to living in the city.
- Being a teen to being a toddler.
- Nascar to Formula One.
- Reality TV shows to high school.
- Working as a waitress to working as a flight attendant.
- Washing dishes to washing laundry.
- A female friend and a male friend.
- The life of a dog to the life of a cat.
- Camping in the deep woods to sleeping in a motel.
- Physical beauty to inner beauty.
- Being rich to being famous.
- Talking to your mom and talking to your friends.
- Your best birthday to your worst birthday.
- Your happiest day to your saddest day.

NTI Day 4:

Today, you will complete the editing process of your final compare/contrast essay. Be sure each of the questions has been covered in the body of your paper. The final draft of your essay will be your grade for "NTI Day 4."

- Does the introduction grab the reader's attention?
- Is the main idea clear?
- Is the essay clearly organized?
- Does the essay contain information that will interest the reader?

NTI Day 5:

Answer the following questions about compare/contrast.

Compare and Contrast

Passage 1

Living Bridges

The Khasis tribe of India grows bridges out of tree roots. The tribe dwells in a very wet area of the world. The Khasis people use the roots of the ficus tree to create bridges over bodies of water and ravines. Ficus trees grow along riverbanks or even in rivers. They produce a secondary root system from higher up on the trunk than the primary root system, which grows downward into the ground. The higher roots grow out across the ravine. The bridges may take 15 years to become stable enough for use. The living root bridges gain strength as they grow over the years. Some of the living bridges still used by the Khasis tribe are thought to be over 500 years old. Some of the mature bridges are strong enough to hold about 50 people at one time.

Passage 2

Suspension Bridges

Suspension bridges are known for their ability to span long distances with less building material than most other bridges. They are designed to have long, straight sections between towers with suspension cables that distribute the force down to the ground. Suspension bridges are mostly built out of steel and concrete. The cables give the bridge support. One of the most famous suspension bridges in the world is the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco. The Golden Gate Bridge is 1.7 miles long and stretches over San Francisco Bay. It weighs over 880,000 tons and cost \$35 million to build. The construction of the Golden Gate Bridge was started in 1933 and completed in 1937.

1. Living bridges and suspension bridges both

- A. are built from natural materials.
- B. are found in many parts of the world.
- C. provide dry routes over water.
- D. cost a lot of money to build.

2. Unlike living bridges, suspension bridges

- A. are built in less than a year.
- B. do not require support.
- C. do not last very long.
- D. are made of concrete and steel.

Passage 1

Laslow roamed the countryside by himself. He believed that it was better for him to remain out of sight. Laslow was a large, strong man with a muscular physique. However, it wasn't his huge muscles that made him a freak. Laslow's ears looked like rabbit ears attached to the sides of his head. The strange ears were narrow and stretched up above his head. Laslow could hear the slightest sound from miles away. He was always the first living being to know when a storm was coming. Laslow could also hear distant cries for help. He was too compassionate to do nothing when he heard these. Laslow was in great shape and could run very fast. He would rush to the rescue of anyone in danger. He saved people from floods, fires, snowstorms, bear attacks, and from being lost. Time and time again, the people he saved were startled by his strange appearance. They stared at his ears in disbelief. But, Laslow couldn't blame them. He knew that he was weird-looking. As soon as Laslow got the victims to safety, he disappeared back into the woods or the mountains.

One day, Laslow heard the cries of a woman. The cries were sad, but they did not indicate fear or physical pain. He was curious about why the woman was so full of sorrow. Laslow followed the sounds of her sobbing and remained out of her view. He watched her walking along the stream and saw that she only had one arm. She carried a basket in her single hand. Her tears flowed freely down her cheeks and her sobs poured unrestricted from her mouth. Eventually, her cries subsided and she sat down to rest. Laslow felt drawn to the hurting woman. Before he could think about what he was doing, he cleared his throat loudly to announce his presence and stepped out of the shadows. The woman jumped up and turned around to face Laslow.

"I'm Laslow. I mean you no harm," Laslow said softly.

She must have sensed his sincerity, because she answered without fear, "I'm Elizabeth, and I also mean no harm."

Laslow and Elizabeth gazed at each other in the clearing by the stream. Finally, Laslow spoke, "I don't mean to be rude. But I heard you crying. May I ask why? Perhaps there is something I can do."

"I'm sorry. I thought I was alone. Well, I guess it would be okay to tell you why I was crying," Elizabeth replied. "I try so hard to be strong. I face the stares and pitying glances of the townsfolk. Yet, I am told that my services are not needed. No one wants a one-armed horse trainer, a one-armed seamstress, a one-armed cook, a one-armed maid, or a one-armed store clerk. No one wants me. I struggle to make a living for myself. I am out here picking herbs and wild berries to sell. Would you like to buy

some?" Elizabeth asked with a humorous smile. Never once did Elizabeth's eyes remain on Laslow's ears. She treated him as if he were completely normal.

"My, my, Elizabeth, you do have a burden on your shoulders. I admire how brave you are to keep trying. I have chosen to live outside of society, because I can't deal with the stares, the whispers, the pity, and worst of all- the rejection," Laslow explained. The two outcasts talked for hours and became close friends. They understood each other in a way that no one else could. Laslow and Elizabeth started visiting with each other every day. Somehow, just having one other person who understood life as an outsider began to heal and change both Laslow and Elizabeth.

Laslow began going into town to visit Elizabeth. He learned to talk about his unusual ears and his supernatural hearing ability. People started to accept Laslow and Elizabeth for who they were instead of for the way they looked.

After a year of getting to know one another, the two got married. They had the most beautiful wedding and invited the entire town. Many of the people that Laslow had rescued were there, too. Laslow continued to help people. He and Elizabeth built a horse ranch and lived a long and happy life together.

Passage 2

Marvin was very different from his peers, but he never let it stop him. In fact, Marvin welcomed challenges. He found ways to do everything that normal-sized kids could do. And if anyone acted unfriendly towards him, he would try extra hard to become friends with him or her. Marvin was the most popular guy in school. So far, he had won over all of the teachers, the principal, the office staff, the school nurse, the cafeteria workers, the custodians, the librarian, the counselor, and all of the students from kindergarten to the sixth grade.

When Marvin was in the fifth grade, Ashton moved to town and joined his class. Ashton was the tallest kid Marvin had ever seen. He had to be at least six feet tall. Marvin reached out to Ashton the first chance he got, which was at recess.

"Hi, I'm Marvin. I'll be happy to show you around the school. If you need anything, just let me know," Marvin said with his most blinding smile.

"I don't think I'll be getting help from you, shrimp. Shouldn't you be in the kindergarten class, Baby Marvin?" Ashton wasted no time in taunting Marvin.

Marvin had dealt with bullies and name-callers before. He was confident that he could turn Ashton around, just as he had done with others in the past.

"Ha! That's really funny, Ashton! I'll just catch you later," Marvin graciously said. Marvin and his friends walked away and played basketball. Ashton stood alone by the fence.

During the next few weeks, Marvin tried to befriend Ashton. He invited Ashton to sit at his table in the cafeteria. Ashton rudely rejected the invitation. Marvin also picked Ashton first to be on his soccer team in gym class. Ashton intentionally kicked the ball at Marvin's head and knocked him down. To add insult to injury, Ashton constantly called him "Baby Marvin."

In reading and English class, Ashton always kept his eyes on his desk when the teacher was calling on people to answer questions. One time, the teacher called on Ashton. The tall boy turned bright red and stuttered something incomprehensible. After

what seemed like an eternity, the teacher called on someone else, leaving Ashton to slump as far down in his chair as possible. Marvin also noticed that when the teacher passed back the graded papers, Ashton often crumpled his into balls and threw them into his desk. Marvin started to understand why Ashton was so belligerent. He couldn't read or write very well. Marvin was about out of patience with Ashton, but he was willing to try one more tactic. After school one day, Marvin caught up to Ashton on his way home.

"Hey, Ashton, how's it going?" Marvin asked.

"What do you want, Baby Marvin?" Ashton gruffly asked.

"I have a proposal for you. If you stop calling me 'Baby Marvin,' I will tutor you in reading and English. And I won't tell anyone," Marvin offered.

Ashton's face went blank. Then, it turned red, and his hands clenched into fists. For a moment, Marvin was afraid that Ashton was going to hit him.

Marvin pleaded, "I'm a straight-A student. I can help you. And I won't say a word. Just stop picking on me."

Ashton exhaled, unclenched his fists and conceded, "Fine. You have yourself a deal."

"Great! Let's get started this afternoon. My house or your house?" Marvin asked excitedly.

After a couple of weeks, Ashton's grades—and consequentially his attitude—improved. He stopped harassing Marvin and actually started hanging out with him and his friends. Marvin had worked his magic once again. He never let the size of his body get in the way of the size of his heart.

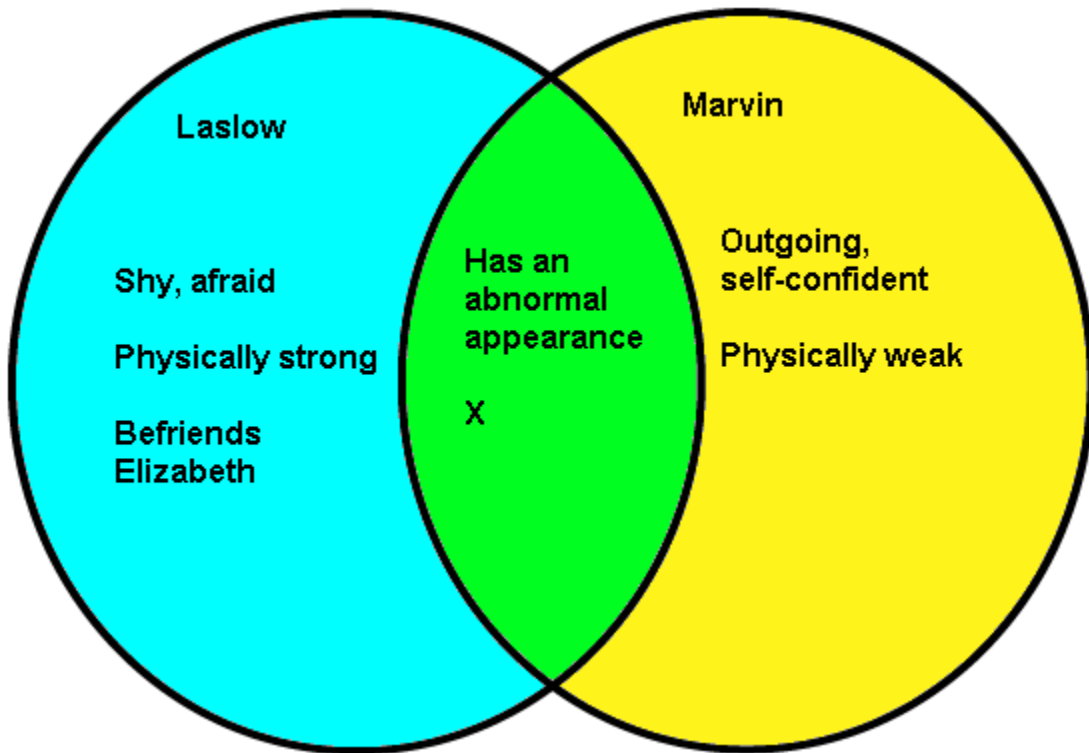
3. How is the solution to the problem different in each of the two passages?

- A. In the first passage, Elizabeth and Laslow become friends and learn to face their troubles together; in the second passage, Marvin finds a solution without help from a friend.
- B. In the first passage, Elizabeth and Laslow find a way to overcome their strange, physical appearance; in the second passage, Marvin never finds a way to overcome his physical appearance.
- C. In the first passage, Laslow helps Elizabeth; in the second passage, Ashton helps Marvin.
- D. In the first passage, Elizabeth and Laslow have to work out their differences; in the second passage, Marvin and Ashton unite right away to solve their problem.

4. What do Laslow, Elizabeth, and Marvin have in common?

- A. They are all from the same part of the United States.
- B. They all have parents that care a lot about them.
- C. They all find a way to get even with the people who treat them badly.
- D. They are treated differently because of their physical appearance.

5. Look at the Venn Diagram to compare and contrast Laslow and Marvin.



Which item that describes both Laslow and Marvin belongs in place of the "X"?

- A. Kind-hearted
- B. Great at reading
- C. Retreats from society
- D. Befriends Ashton