



DIGITAL THEATRE⁺

VIRTUAL CLASSROOM

Compare & Contrast Choices Guide

Below is a list of questions and tasks to guide your students as they compare and contrast multiple versions of the same scene/speech available on Digital Theatre+. There are different groups of questions depending on your students' area of focus.

All of these questions/tasks tie into key learning objectives and will aid students in building a deeper understanding of the text being studied.

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READING & TEXT

Before watching and comparing/contrasting multiple productions, it is advisable for students to be familiar with the written text of the scene or speech being studied. The written text can be referred to in all of the tasks listed below.

Read the scene/speech carefully and note down what **stage directions** are given and what the text tells you about the following:

- What time of day/year is it?
 - Is it set indoors or outdoors?
 - What is the weather like?
 - What is the social status of those on stage? How do we know this?
 - What is the relationship between those on stage? How do we know this?
 - What period has the writer set the scene?
 - What is the tone of the scene?
 - How is the tone of the scene expressed?
 - What is the key moment in the scene?
 - What does the writer want the audience to know at this point?
 - How have those on stage changed from the beginning of the scene/speech to the end?
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WATCHING & TEXT

Watch all versions of the scene/speech several times and answer the same questions as above in relation to each version, noting down how much is the same and how much is different.

To keep track of the following items, create a list, chart or Venn diagram of the differences and similarities for each of the performances.

- What time of day/year is it?
 - Is it indoors or outdoors?
 - What is the weather like?
 - What is the social status of those on stage?
 - What is the relationship between those on stage?
 - What period has the writer set the scene?
 - What is the tone of the scene?
 - How is the tone of the scene expressed?
 - What is the key moment in the scene?
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WATCHING & DESIGN

Watch each version of the scene/speech again and focus only on the **design and technical** choices that have been made. Using a list, chart, or Venn diagram, note down your thoughts in response to the following:

SET

- What world has the set designer created for the overall production?
- Is there a definite time period or not?
- How has this been reflected in the scene/speech?
- How does the framework for the production influence the scene or speech?
- What is the colour palette for the scene/speech?
- How does this impact mood/tone?
- How do props impact the moment or not?
- How does the setting for the scene/speech connect to the text on the page?

COSTUME

- How does the costuming connect to the overall design choice?
- What does the costume tell us about the character/s at this particular moment?
- How is fabric used – colour/texture – to add to the story of the scene/speech?
- How does the costuming enhance the meaning of the scene/speech and help make the moment clear for us?

LIGHTING

- What colour palette does the lighting designer use and why?
- What impact does this have?
- How does lighting affect the mood?
- What does the lighting tell us about the environment?





- What does lighting add to the scene?
- How does it do this?

SOUND

- What can you hear during the scene/speech?
 - Describe the soundscape of the scene/speech.
 - What effects are used?
 - How do these effects add to the scene/speech?
 - How is sound used to help place the scene/speech?
 - How do each of these elements contribute to the overall aesthetic and interpretation?
 - Do they work better in one production as opposed to another?
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WATCHING & CASTING

Watch all versions of the scene/speech and focus only on the **casting** (not the acting), noting down your thoughts in response to the following:

- How does the casting connect or not connect to the writer's description of the role?
 - How important is it to be faithful to this description?
 - How does the casting help our understanding of the scene/speech?
 - Who would be your ideal fantasy casting for this scene/speech and why?
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WATCHING & DIRECTION

Watch all versions of the scene/speech and focus only on staging from a **direction and movement** perspective, noting down what you observe in response to the following:

- How does the director use space to tell the story of the scene/speech?
 - What production elements does the director combine to give impact to the scene/speech?
 - How is the physical landscape of the scene/speech expressed?
 - What feeling has the director imposed or not upon the scene/speech?
 - Describe what impact this has on the scene/speech?
 - What in the scene/speech may have prompted this interpretive choice?
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WATCHING & PERFORMANCE

Watch all versions of the scene/speech and focus only on **performance/s**, noting down what you observe in response to the following:

- How do the performers express themselves physically?
 - Describe how this adds to our understanding of the role or not.
 - Describe the quality of the physical contact between those on stage.
 - How does this help or not to tell the story of the scene?
 - How does the performer use language to create meaning?
 - Does this feel faithful to the text on the page?
 - How does the performer express their status?
 - Why do they do this?
 - How does the performer make us believe in them at this particular moment?
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FINAL QUESTIONS

After students have completed the initial task(s) you have assigned to them, ask them to respond to the following:

- 1) Which performance did you prefer and why?
 - 2) What specific differences did you observe? Share your opinions on the decisions made and why they were chosen for that specific production.
 - 3) Did you notice anything missing from any of the performances? Has the text been altered for the specific interpretation? If so, what effect did this have?
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APPLYING THE DT+ COMPARE & CONTRAST CHOICES GUIDE

Here is a selection of productions that offer multiple versions of the same title. We've selected key moments from each text but, of course, you may prefer to set your own. This has been made more time efficient for you as the productions are now chaptered.

Romeo & Juliet:

- Act 1, Scene 5 – Romeo and Juliet first meet at the masked ball
- Act 3, Scene 2 – “Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds” speech

Hamlet:

- Act 4, Scene 4: “How all occasions do inform against me” soliloquy

Macbeth:

- Act 1, Scene 3: The first meeting of the Witches, Banquo and Macbeth
- Act 2, Scene 1: “Is this a dagger which I see before me?” speech
- Act 2, Scene 2: Macbeth and Lady Macbeth after the murder of Duncan

Julius Caesar:

- Act 3, Scene 2: Brutus’ “Romans, Countrymen and Lovers!” speech
- Act 3, Scene 2: Marc Antony’s “Friends, Romans, countrymen” speech

