

### What is your frame of reference?

A compare/contrast essay should start with a specific, clear frame of reference. For example:

*In the Apology, Socrates defines knowledge, saying that the greatest wisdom one can possess is knowing that he does not know everything. Similarly, Jonathan Swift expresses his theory of knowledge in Gulliver's Travels, especially in Part III, Voyage to Laputa. During this voyage, Swift criticizes the Royal Academy of London, stating that "merely that constitutes progress, invention or innovation alone does not constitute*

*knowledge or wisdom.*

These first few sentences frame the paper. From them we learn that the paper will primarily address the relationship between knowledge and wisdom as illustrated by two different authors in two very different texts. The next sentence introduces the grounds for comparison:

*As both men embark upon their search for wisdom, they encounter groups of people who help define what constitutes a knowledgeable person.*

### What are your grounds for comparison?

Another appropriate introduction begins:

*There is a difference between obsession and passion. When one becomes intrigued and enlightened by studying a subject, s/he may become passionate about pursuing*

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Dr. Anne Fernald's English 130 Lecture, Fall 2000

## So What?

Why are we interested in how your chosen texts work together?

Beware of several common traps of the compare/contrast essay:

... it's not very interesting and