Here are the directions for writing this essay:

The poems below, published in 1789 and 1794, were written by William Blake in response to the condition of chimney sweeps. Usually small children, sweeps were forced inside chimneys to clean their interiors. Read the two poems carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, compare and contrast the two poems, taking into consideration the poetic techniques Blake uses in each.

Analyze the prompt:
What information are you given about the two poems? When were they written, and why were they written?

The last sentence explains the tasks you must complete. You are to
- compare and contrast the two poems
- determine the overall meanings of the two poems (tones, themes, purposes, characterizations)
- take into consideration the poetic techniques Blake uses in each

Here are some “poetic techniques”, or P2s:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Textual Devices</th>
<th>Sound Devices</th>
<th>Forms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diction</td>
<td>Alliteration</td>
<td>Somet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imagery</td>
<td>Assonance</td>
<td>Ballad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figurative Language</td>
<td>Consonance</td>
<td>Free Verse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syntax</td>
<td>Onomatopoeia</td>
<td>Blank Verse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details</td>
<td>Rhyme</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tone</td>
<td>Meter</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Point of View</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Since you obviously cannot address all these techniques in only 40 minutes, your strategy should be to read the poems and decide on which two or three to write about. These will be your P2s.

The poems below, published in 1789 and 1794, were written by William Blake in response to the condition of chimney sweeps. Usually small children, sweeps were forced inside chimneys to clean their interiors. Read the two poems carefully. Then, in a well-written essay, compare and contrast the two poems, taking into consideration the poetic techniques Blake uses in each.

The Chimney Sweeper

When my mother died I was very young,
And my father told me while yet my tongue
Could scarce cry ’weep’ ’weep! ’weep! ’weep!’
So your chimney I sweep & in soot I sleep.

There’s little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head
That curl’d like a lamb’s back, was shav’d, so I said,
“Hush, Tom! ne’er mind it, for when your head’s bare,
You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair.”

And so he was quiet; & that very night,
As Tom was a-sleeping he had such a sight!
That thousands of sweepers, Dick, Joe, Ned, & Jack,
Were all of them lock’d up in coffins of black;

And by came an Angel who had a bright key,
And he open’d the coffins & set them all free;
Then down a green plain, leaping, laughing they run,
And wash in a river and shine in the Sun;

Then naked & white, all their bags left behind,
They rise upon clouds, and sport in the wind.
And the Angel told Tom, if he’d be a good boy,
He’d have God for his father & never want joy.

And so Tom awoke; and we rose in the dark
And got with our bags & our brushes to work.
Tho’ the morning was cold, Tom was happy & warm;
So if all do their duty, they need not fear harm.

* The child’s crying was the chimney sweep’s sweet cry.
  “Sweep! Sweep!”

The Chimney Sweeper

A little black thing among the snow
Crying “’weep, ’weep,” in notes of woe!
“Where are thy father & mother? say?”
“They are both gone up to the church to pray.

Because I was happy upon the heath,
And smil’d among the winter’s snow;
They clothed me in the clothes of death,
And taught me to sing the notes of woe.

And because I am happy & dance & sing,
They think they have done me no injury,
And are gone to praise God & his Priest & King,
Who make up a heaven of our misery.”

Start asking questions

What is the main difference you see in the poems? Is the difference in the Imagery? Diction? Point of view? Tone?

Make notes on the diction and imagery in each poem. Is there a difference in the diction and imagery in each, or is the diction and imagery about the same?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notes on Diction</th>
<th>Notes on Point-of-View</th>
<th>Notes on Tone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1789:</td>
<td>1789:</td>
<td>1789:</td>
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<tr>
<td>CATEGORY OF DICTION:</td>
<td>CATEGORY OF POV:</td>
<td>CATEGORY OF TONE:</td>
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<tr>
<td>1794:</td>
<td>1794:</td>
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</tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Writing the Introductory Paragraph

Now that you have analyzed some poetic techniques, put it all together in your introductory paragraph. Here is a template to use when you are comparing/contrasting two poems:

For poets of the Romantic period, the everyday working man held great interest; for poet William Blake, the struggles and characteristics of the chimney sweeper hold particular interest, as the subjects of two poems from 1789 and 1794. (good lead-in with only the essential context necessary to inform thesis)

Both Blake poems reflect on the subject of _______________ (what the poems have in common).

Despite these similarities, their (diction, imagery, point of view, tone)________[same P2s]____________are quite different.

Whereas in the first poem, Blake (employs, projects, uses, develops, creates)________[different P2]_______

________________ in order to advance ___________[P1]____________________ (overall meaning – theme, tone, characterization, purpose),

in the second poem he (employs, projects, uses, develops, creates)________[different P2]________________

_____________to support the theme/tone/purpose of _______________[P1]_________________.

Writing Analysis Rather Than Mere Paraphrase

Here’s what the scoring guide has to say about an “8” or “9” essay:

These essays offer a persuasive comparison/contrast of the two poems and present an insightful analysis of the relationship between them...in language appropriate to the analysis of poetry.

A well-developed body paragraph always consists of the following three elements:

I. **Assertion**: some insight you have about the poems

II. **Textual evidence**: quotations and/or paraphrase from the poems

III. **Analysis**: explanation of how the author uses poetic techniques (diction, imagery, tone, point of view, etc.) to create meaning in the poem

Read the following paragraph concerning the second poem. Remember that point of view has to do with the speakers in the poems.

In the second poem, the speaker fully realizes the woeful plight of the chimney sweep as the boy himself reveals what his life is like.

In the first two lines, the speaker notes the “little black thing among the snow.” In line 3, he asks the boy where his parents are. The rest of the poem is the boy’s answer. His parents are in church, “prais[ing] God & his Priest & King.”

The boy’s response reveals both the boy’s lack of awareness of his true condition and the heartless way his parents and the church have ignored his basic needs. The poem is basically an indictment of the church in valuing religious exercises over people’s lives.

### Transition Words

**Contrast:**
- On one hand
- A clear difference
- But
- Despite
- Even so
- For all that
- However
- In another way
- Instead
- Nevertheless

**Comparison:**
- Additionally
- In the same way
- By the same token
- Similarly
- In like manner
- Likewise
- In similar fashion
- ...have in common...
- Comparatively
- Moreover
- Still another

**Both:**
- By the same token
- Conversely
- Likewise
- On the other hand
- Rather
- Similarly
- Yet
- However
- Nevertheless
- While ___ ___
ORGANIZING THE COMPARE/CONTRAST ESSAY.

Compare and contrast essays are popular in academic writing. These essays will follow a specific question (such as compare/contrast two Victorian poets and their poems). The most important thing to remember for this kind of analysis is **structure**. Many wonderful essays fall victim to disorganization, digression, or lack of consistency, making any ingenuity fall by the wayside. Go over these steps, and then structure your compare/contrast essay in one of the following two formats:

**TYPE 1:**

1. **Introduction:** Your introduction should open with only the essential context of the poem, and lead into the thesis statement by the end of the paragraph.

2. **Topic 1:** This next portion of your essay (which may consist of one paragraph or several) should cover only the first topic of the comparison and contrast. Compare/Contrast essays take two topics and illustrate how they are similar and dissimilar. Do not mention Poem 2 in this first portion. Use an effective transition between poems 1 & 2.

3. **Topic 2:** This next portion of your essay (which may also consist of one or more paragraphs) should cover the second of the two topics. Do not discuss Poem 1 in this section. Since you have already gone into great detail about it, you may allude to Poem 1 briefly; however, do not analyze Poem 1 in this section. This portion of the paper is to analyze Poem 2 in great detail.

4. **Topics 1 & 2 Together (similarities or differences).** Now that you have analyzed both Poem 1 and Poem 2 independently, analyze them together. This section may also be one or several paragraphs for longer essays. Your goal here is to make a point about the significance of similarities or differences in the topics. Dig deep here and analyze.

5. **Conclusion.** The conclusion should be a generalization or restatement of the thesis. Express your certainty and absolute knowledge of the subject matter. Show how you've proven your thesis. Leave the reader with something significant or interesting to ponder. Answer the question: so what?

**TYPE 2:** (as above but with a different organizing tactic)

1. **Introduction**

2. **All Comparisons (Poems 1 and 2).** This section should consists of multiple paragraphs and should go through all similarities you find in the two topics on which you are writing. There should be at least two comparisons (essentially three body paragraphs) in which you give an example from both poems of comparisons in each.

3. **All Contrasts (Poems 1 and 2).** This section, again which should consist of multiple paragraphs, should go through all differences you find in the two poems on which you are writing. There should be at least two contrasts (essentially three body paragraphs) in which you give an example from both poems of contrasts in each.

4. **Conclusion.** Wrap up your analysis. Restate the thesis in a new way. Answer the question: so what?

**REMEMBER:** THIS IS STILL AN ANALYSIS ESSAY. YOU MUST CONNECT HOW PARTS OF THE POEM (rhyme scheme, POV, diction, imagery, tone, etc.) CREATE LARGER MEANINGS (theme, attitude, criticism/support, purpose, characterization, etc.) OF THE POEMS.