

# Compare and Contrast Essay



## Levels 8-9

Solomon and Socrates were two men renowned for their intellect and wisdom. Solomon was the king of ancient Israel who was known as the wisest man in the world while Socrates came later, from Greece. **The most important difference between them was what each considered central to life.**

Solomon was a man with the gift of wisdom, given to him by God. He chose to teach his wisdom to others through brief proverbs and other written works. People from all over the world visited Israel just to talk to Solomon. Solomon put the focus of his wisdom on God, saying, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.” He believed that everything was meaningless, including wisdom, apart from God. Wisdom was certainly desirable, but it was not the ultimate focal point. Solomon’s view was that the one and only way to have wisdom was through God.

Socrates, a man of equal stature and fame, took a very different stand on wisdom. To him, wisdom was extremely important, and if you had wisdom you would be able to understand God and matters of the soul. He decided that it was important to rely on oneself and not on God. However, he thought that it was impossible to be truly wise, and anyone who was wise was only wise because he understood that he knew nothing. Concentrating on the understanding of morals, Socrates tried to comprehend what is truly good, what is right, what is our purpose in life, and what is death. He believed that science was foolish, because it did not matter—only matters of the soul really had consequence. In order to prove these points, he persuaded others by using his unique “Socratic method.” This method allowed the questioners to persuade the others by asking them to answer specific questions, and therefore think for themselves. This convinced several listeners, because they were able to see the whole problem “worked out.”

Solomon and Socrates were both well-known lovers of wisdom; however, they had little in common. Their methods were entirely different, Solomon relying mostly on books and proverbs, while Socrates preferred an oral method. Both men agreed that wisdom was admirable, but Solomon dwelled on the need to know God and Socrates focused more on the need to know oneself and to learn to distinguish right from wrong. Though they were so different, both Solomon and Socrates were widely admired and sought-after.

In this sample, the student has a lot of nice things happening. One thing that is not particularly well done, though, is the thesis. There is no debatable point here that the student is trying to prove. We’ve supplied one, in red ink.

Also, I would have sought to pad the introductory paragraph a little more with facts, perhaps saying when each man lived so the reader feels well oriented.

This last paragraph is a summary, but it introduces new points, too. We would teach that the student should tell the reader what she has already said here, and perhaps make one closing point.