Official Scoring Guide for the Comparative Essay:

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| *Basic Core: Competence* | *Points* | *Notes* |
| 1. Has acceptable thesis (Addresses comparison –similarity and difference—of the issues or themes specified.) | 1 |  |
| 1. Addresses all parts of the question, though not necessarily evenly or thoroughly.   [Addresses most parts of the question; for example, deals with differences but not similarities.] | 2  [1] |  |
| 1. Substantiates thesis with appropriate historical evidence. (9 pieces of evidence)   [Partially substantiates thesis with appropriate historical evidence.] ( 5 pieces of evidence) | 2  [1] |  |
| 1. Makes at least one relevant, direct comparison between/among societies. | 1 |  |
| 1. Analyzes at least one reason for a similarity or difference identified in a direct comparison. | 1 |  |
| **Subtotal** | **7** |  |
|  |  |  |
| *Expanded Core: Excellence* | *Points* |  |
| Expands beyond basic core of 1-7 points. The basic score of 7 must be achieved before a student can earn expanded core points.  Examples:  → Has a clear, analytical, and comprehensive thesis.  → Analyzes all parts of the question thoroughly (as relevant): comparisons, chronology, causation, connections, themes, interactions, content.  → Provides ample historical evidence to substantiate thesis.  → Relates comparisons to larger global context.  → Makes several direct comparisons consistently between or among societies.  → Consistently analyzes the causes and effects of relevant similarities and differences | 0-2 |  |
| **Subtotal** | **2** |  |
| **TOTAL** | **9** |  |

Step by step guide to writing the Comparative Essay:

Sample Comparative Essay topic

***Compare the social structures of Mesopotamia and Egypt from 3000 to 600 BCE.***

* Identify TWO SIMILARITIES—make a direct comparison:
* ***“Both Egypt and Mesopotamia were patriarchal societies.”***
* ***“Both Egypt and Mesopotamia had well defined social classes.”***
* Identify TWO DIFFERENCES—make a direct comparison:
* ***“Women were more equal in Egypt than in Mesopotamia.”***
* ***“In Egypt the Pharaoh was an absolute ruler so there wasn’t a class of aristocrats, but Mesopotamia had a series of urban kings with a class of aristocrats under them.”***
* Summarize these similarities and differences in the THESIS STATEMENT.
* ***“Socially both Egypt and Mesopotamia were patriarchal societies that also had well defined social classes, but women in Egypt were more equal than in Mesopotamia and Egypt didn’t have a class of nobles like Mesopotamia did.”*** (beginning of essay)
* Provide APPROPRIATE EVIDENCE for EACH comparison (“Evidence” is HISTORICAL FACT that you remember and apply to the thesis comparisons. For example if you write:
* ***“Women were more equal in Egypt than in Mesopotamia,”***

you must identify facts that support this claim, such as

1. ***“Women in Mesopotamia had to wear veils but women in Egypt did not.”***
2. ***“Women in Egypt could become scribes but women in Mesopotamia could not.”***
3. ***“Egypt had a woman pharaoh but Mesopotamia never had a woman ruler.”***

This is evidence for your comparison. You should have THREE PIECES OF EVIDENCE FOR EACH COMPARISON (SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES).

* ANALYZE EACH COMPARISON by giving a REASON why it was that way. You should use your own understanding and insight to think of reasons for the similarities and differences. For example:
* ***“Women were more equal in Egypt because the Nile River was gentler and more predictable than the Tigris and Euphrates in Mesopotamia, and so men didn’t have to assert their superiority as forcefully or harshly as they did in Mesopotamia.”***
* If you do all of these things in the essay you can earn 7 points (Basic Core: Competence). If you do these things REALLY WELL AND THOROUGHLY you can earn 1-2 extra points, but only if you get 7 points to start with (Expanded Core: Excellence).