

Amy L. Beck's "Struggling for Perfection" and Dave Barry's "The Ugly Truth about Beauty":
Comparing Larry and Farrah, Analyzing the Social Forces Causing Their Conditions

For this assignment you will co-author an essay based on the following two profiles of college students Larry and Farrah and the Dave Barry and Amy Beck "beauty" essays in your book. While you and your co-author will collaborate on an outline and a draft, you may part ways after workshopping the draft and then submit individual revisions. Remember, the purpose of co-authoring is

1. to teach each other more about writing, reading, and documentation;
2. to build on each other's strengths; and
3. to become more comfortable working as a team.

Please keep in mind Barry and Beck's "beauty" arguments when you re-read profiles 1 and 2 of Larry and Farrah, respectively:

Profile 1: Farrah

Farrah is a 19-year-old student at Fallacy College in San Francisco. Whether by means of television, newspapers, or magazines, she constantly looks for images of "perfect" faces and bodies. As a result, she is abnormally preoccupied with a real or imagined defect in her physical appearance. For example, she worries endlessly that her skin is too pale, her hair is too curly, her nose is too long, or something else is wrong with the way she looks. Farrah is so preoccupied with the shape of her thighs that every morning she stands in front of the mirror wondering if they look any thinner. Her morning ritual consists of staring into the mirror for an extended length of time while slapping her thighs with her hands in an unconscious effort to make them smaller or to make the fat she sees disappear. She often asks her sorority sisters if her thighs are fat.

Unfortunately, when others tell Farrah she looks fine or that the "flaw" isn't noticeable, she does not hear or believe it, convinced of her own imperfection. It doesn't help that Joshua, Farrah's boyfriend, has also become overly preoccupied with the rigidity of his abs and the thickness of his hair, constantly checking the mirror to make sure that he is not bald and puny.

Profile 2: Larry

Larry does not know Farrah, but he is also a twenty-year-old student at Fallacy College. Since his sophomore year of high school he has been at least ninety pounds overweight and has decided that wearing a backwards Giants baseball cap is much better than a shampooed head of hair; it matches his stained, unwashed Nike t-shirt usually worn three days in a row. His mother, a corporate lawyer, often too tired to argue at home, always found Larry's personal hygiene habits disturbing, especially since their home in Pacific Heights has three showers. In general, Larry, who lives in a Fallacy fraternity house, still showers maybe two or three times a week, never covers his mouth when coughing or sneezing, and thinks it is funny--maybe even macho--when he spits near a woman. Convinced that women enjoy his rugged exterior, Larry usually wastes no time asking women on dates, often before exchanging names with them. When these women act shocked or offended, Larry usually sustains a belch in their direction; sometimes he may even curse them. Regardless of the scornful glares women burn upon him, Larry sees a very different person when looking at himself in the mirror: a wonderfully proportioned, funny, unique man--a real chick magnet.

Your Task

Your argument will bring together various comparison, causation, and quotation strategies explored in your assigned reading and on your summary-response sheets. **The point of your essay will be to use Barry and Beck's essays not only to explain what has caused Larry and Farrah's obvious differences but to argue that ultimately they have something very important in common.** Since this will be a 2-3 page essay, plan on quoting Barry 2-3 times and Beck 2-3 times. Another goal for this task will be to show off your skill w/ transitions, parallelism, modifiers, coordination, subordination, and MLA style.

Organizational Possibilities

Your organization must take into account your **thesis**, of course, as well your requirement to include

- the Larry and Farrah profile material,
- an exploration of Larry and Farrah's differences,
- a stylish application of your knowledge of Barry and Beck's arguments to Larry and Farrah,
- an insightful unpacking of Larry and Farrah's similarity, and
- a closing that demonstrates social concern.

For example, this structure might have potential:

Opening—Illustration of or commentary on the issues of beauty, gender, and health in our society THAT leads to a thesis

Body ¶1—Restate the profile of Farrah

Body ¶2—Restate the profile of Larry

Body ¶3—Use Barry/Beck to explore a cause of Larry and Farrah differences

Body ¶4—Use Barry/Beck to explore another cause of Larry and Farrah differences

Body ¶5—Use Barry/Beck to explore another cause of Larry and Farrah differences

Body ¶6—Argue that ultimately Farrah and Larry have something important in common

Closing—Where do we go from here in our society?

**USE YOUR INSPIRATION
MAP/OUTLINE TO BUILD YOUR
ANALYSIS AND CONTENT! SHARE THE
MAP WITH YOUR CO-AUTHOR.**