

English 10

Unit 2: Rebellion

COMPARE AND CONTRAST :

Using the Venn diagram, compare and contrast “The Average” to “Warren Pryor” both in terms of content and the way it is written (organization, devices, voice). You may want to consider how the character’s situations and reactions to it are similar or different.

“The Average” by W Auden

His peasant parents killed themselves with toil  
To let their darling leave a stingy soil  
For any of those smart professions which  
Encourage shallow breathing, and grow rich.

The pressure of their fond ambition made  
Their shy and country-loving child afraid  
No sensible career was good enough,  
Only a hero could deserve such love.

So here he was without maps or supplies,  
A hundred miles from any decent town;  
The desert glared into his blood-shot eyes;

The silence roared displeasure: looking down,  
He saw the shadow of an Average Man  
Attempting the Exceptional, and ran.

“Warren Pryor” by Alden Nowlan  
(Canadian poet, 1933-83)

When every pencil meant a sacrifice  
his parents boarded him at school in town,  
slaving to free him from the stony fields,  
the meagre acreage that bore them down.

They blushed with pride when, at his graduation,  
they watched him picking up the slender scroll,  
his passport from the years of brutal toil  
and lonely patience in a barren hole.

When he went in the Bank their cups ran over.  
They marveled how he wore a milk-white shirt  
work days and jeans on Sundays. He was saved  
from their thistle-strewn farm and its red dirt.

And he said nothing. Hard and serious  
like a young bear inside his teller's cage,  
his axe-hewn hands upon the paper bills  
aching with empty strength and throttled rage.

