Planning Sheet for Comparison-Contrast Essay

Two works chosen:
“Miss Brill” by Katherine Mansfield
“The Necklace” by Guy de Maupassant

Basis for comparison:
The female characters and their possessions in “Miss Brill” and “The Necklace.”

Claim about the comparison (a.k.a. thesis statement):
Miss Brill and Mrs. Loisel are very similar female characters and seem defined by their possessions, but, they deal with the negative implications of their possessions in different ways.

Method of hooking readers in the introduction:
I plan on briefly describing the two stories and hinting at the similarities and differences I will discuss in the paper. This will get the readers interested in what I am going to tell them, without giving away too much of my essay in my introduction.

Textual evidence from primary source to support your claim:
“She dreamed of the perfume of dainty private rooms, which were designed only for intimate tête-à-têtes with the closest friends, who because of their achievements and fame would make her the envy of all other women,” (Maupassant pg 5).
“She burned with the desire to please, to be envied, to be attractive and sought after,” (Maupassant pg 5).
“…a modest every day wrap, the poverty of which contrasted sharply with the elegance of the evening gown,” (Maupassant pg 7).
“Mrs. Loisel soon discovered the horrible life of the needy…She learned to do the heavy housework…and this life lasted ten years,” (Maupassant pg 9-10).
“Miss Brill put up her hand and touched her fur. Dear little thing! It was nice to feel it again,” (Mansfield pg 177).
“And when she breathed, something light and sad – no, not sad, exactly – something gentle seemed to move in her bosom,” (Mansfield pg 177).
“The box that the fur came out of was on the bed. She unclasped the necklet quickly; quickly, without looking, laid it inside. But when she put the lid on she thought she heard something crying,” (Mansfield pf 179).
Insight/criticism secondary sources:
Insight from Charles E. May about “The Necklace”
“The story begins with a pretty young girl who thinks she is really a lady and feels that
she needs only the external trappings of her true status.”
“She acts as though she has fallen from her proper station; she feels that she was born for
luxuries but must endure poverty.”
“She borrows a necklace from an acquaintance to impress those not easily impressed and,
like Cinderella at the ball, has all of her desires fulfilled as she is transported into the
fairy-tale world about which she has dreamed.”
“Now that Madame Loisel knows true poverty, she shows herself to be made of
something more valuable than her petty desires for surface flash have suggested.”
“What looked rich on the outside is actually very poor. Yet Madame Loisel, who has
looked poor on the outside, turns out to be genuine inside.”

Insight from Gayatri Devi about “Miss Brill”
“For instance, she has an almost loving, tender relationship to this fur necklet: a
decorative fur piece worn about the neck like an ornament. She calls the animal “little
rogue” in the manner of someone addressing a beloved pet or a mischievous young child.”
“The tenderness that she shows the dead animal reminds us of the absolute loneliness
enveloping her life; the only emotional outlet for her affection is a dead animal. She is
rejected by the human world.”
“The fur is an important accessory to her sense of happiness and self-respect. It
contributes to her emotional well being; it even functions as an outlet for her to channel
her love. The young couple, in their thoughtlessness, makes her look shabby to herself.”
“The young couple drives home the fact that she is a nobody, a shabby old woman, who
sits alone in the public garden.”

Observation related to / implications of / significance of your claim:
This claim is significant because both characters share similarities in how much they
depend on their possessions for their happiness. However, each character experiences a
negative change due to their possessions. They each deal with this change in different
ways. One works for a decade to work off the debt incurred by her possession, and the
other pouts and has her day ruined by her possession.

Sample parenthetical citations for each of your sources:
(The Necklace May) (May) – Database Article titled “The Necklace” by Charles E. May
(Literary Contexts Devi) (Devi) – Database Article titled “Literary Contexts in Short
Stories: Katherine Mansfield’s “Miss Brill”
(Maupassant pg. 5) (Maupassant pg. 9-10) – “The Necklace” by Guy de Maupassant on
pages 4-11 of Literature: An Introduction to Reading and Writing
(Mansfield pg. 178) (Mansfield pg. 179) – “Miss Brill” by Katherine Mansfield on pages
177-179 of Literature: An Introduction to Reading and Writing

Comment [MSOffice5]: Excellent insight here.
Comment [MSOffice6]: Great work finding sources!
Comment [MSOffice7]: Great work synthesizing new ideas from your analysis. I would
suggest that you go even deeper in to this line of thought. For example, what does this suggest then?
That Mathilde has more gumption? That she is the better or more mature? That Miss Brill needs to
learn something?
Comment [MSOffice8]: OOPS—you need corrections to these parenthetical citations. Should
be author last name and page number. For example: (May 127) or (Devi 89). If you don’t have page
numbers, then it’s just author last name.
Works cited entries for each of your sources:


