Marvel vs. DC: Which comics universe reigns supreme?

Task 1: Use the box below to answer this question. Support your claim with as many details as possible. *Remember that a claim is your argument + 3 supporting details.

Example: If society continues to mindlessly consume social media, we will become addicted, lazy, and isolated, slaves to our smartphones.

Which comics universe reigns supreme? Marvel or DC?

Task 1A: Read the article below and annotate the evidence it presents that supports your above claim.

The Marvel vs. DC debate has been raging for almost a century.

When it comes to comics publishing, there are two names that even the most casual fans can identify: It’s Marvel vs DC.

The storied rivalry between the two goes back nearly 80 years when they were known, respectively, as Timely Comics and National Alliance Publications. Fans have very different answers when asked which is superior, and the lack of a clear frontrunner is further proof that this debate isn’t going anywhere anytime soon.

Whether you’re firmly on either side of the line, looking to choose a side, or just curious as to where the rivalry even came from, we’re here to help. Here are the key differences in the Marvel vs. DC debate.

Marvel vs DC comics: 4 major differences
1) Marvel vs DC: Opposing themes

In the beginning, the two publishers showed distinct differences in their storytelling. On one hand, DC was known for telling colorful stories of gods who performed incredible feats to protect humanity and the greater good. Superman was the standard when it came to superheroes, and he was surrounded by other characters with innate godlike abilities—Aquaman, The Flash, Wonder Woman, and more. Batman, a human character, became extraordinary by pushing himself to the limit to keep up with these super-powered peers at every turn.

On the other, Marvel was known for having a more human approach. Average Joe characters like Peter Parker were suddenly granted superhuman abilities, while others overcame major flaws to do great things, giving everyday people hope that they too could reach their potential. Tony Stark was a jerk who learned the price of hubris and scientist Bruce Banner had to cope with his destructive alter-ego. Thor was a Norse god, but even his story fits the bill: Odin banishes him to Earth for a lesson in humanity.

As time went on, these lines began to blur. Some speculate that it was the result of the industry evolving in order to survive. Some feel it’s connected to the two publishing houses constantly swapping talent over the years. Either way, you can still find some of the old spirit that differentiated the two back in the day if you look close enough. You’re also just as likely to see plenty of similarities. (Think about the information presented in this paragraph, is there anything useful in supporting your claim? Highlight it if so)

2) DC vs Marvel: The copycat effect

They say that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. If that statement holds true, Marvel and DC have been flattering each other for years.
Whether you've realized it or not, many of the most popular comic book characters today are legitimate ripoffs of characters already in existence. Both publishers are guilty of stealing ideas from the other.

This happened for a variety of different reasons. Some were tongue-in-cheek copies made to poke fun at the competing publisher, while others were honest attempts at capitalizing on something that worked. A handful of these instances are so blatant that readers couldn’t believe how bold the moves were, while others are much more subtle.

Don’t believe me? This list from Comicsland sums it up: Deadpool (Marvel) is a blatant spoof of Deathstroke (DC). Doom Patrol (DC) teamed up three months before X-Men (Marvel). Namor (Marvel) hit the oceans three years before Aquaman (DC). Red Tornado (DC) came to life just two months before Vision (Marvel).

There are countless other examples—Elongated Man vs. Mr. Fantastic, Kingpin vs. Tobias Whale, and even Darkseid and Apokolips vs. Thanos.

So which publisher is the worst offender? After all of these examples, it’s safe to say that this use of “inspiration” goes both ways. (Think about the information presented in this paragraph, is there anything useful in supporting your claim? Highlight it if so. Are you still firm in your claim? Has any information changed your mind or made you question which is best?)

3) DC vs Marvel: Comics adaptations

Deciding who was the best in comics used to depend mostly on who wrote and illustrated the best stories. Then those stories started coming to life through television and film, sparking a whole new debate that continues to this day with every major theatrical release and television series.

Most people would say that Marvel is the clear favorite in this category because of recent box office and critical successes, but it’s worth noting that the MCU was only created 10 years ago. Before that, the victor was much more unclear.

We could spend days merely listing all of DC and Marvel movies, TV shows, animated series, before we get down to the business of who did it better. Instead, let's turn to the numbers.

According to Rotten Tomatoes, both publishers have their fair share of massive hits and major duds. At the end of the day, they're in good company with each other.

The average Tomatometer score for DC Comics products comes out to 67.7 percent while Marvel's average out to 64.1 percent. (Rotten Tomatoes calculated the scores based on 130 media properties in November 2017.)
The last decade may heavily favor Marvel’s MCU—especially with recent hits like *Black Panther* and *Thor: Ragnarok*. By comparison, *Justice League* received lackluster reviews. But let’s not forget the pedestal the *Dark Knight* trilogy still sits on, alongside decades of beloved screen adaptations featuring Superman, Batman, and Wonder Woman.

Marvel may be having its day in the cinematic sun right now, but DC has many years of great film adaptations under its utility belt. *(Think about the information presented in this paragraph, now highlight the convincing evidence for the opposing side)*

4) Marvel vs DC: Top comics sellers

When you take away the creative differences, friendly jabs, and film adaptations, the DC vs. Marvel rivalry comes down to one very important question: Who sells the most comics?

While comic book heroes are more popular than ever, that hasn’t translated to a boom in the number of issues moving off of comic shop shelves or even through digital retailers.

In 2017, the top-selling single issue was Marvel Legacy #1, which sold just over 300,000 copies. In 1969, that would have just barely cracked into the top 10. Back then, Superman led the group by averaging over half a million in sales, and just three years prior, Batman dominated with an average of 898,000 sales per issue.

This sharp decline in sales is the result of many, many factors—enough to be worthy of a dissertation. But, to cut to the chase, they include advancements in technology, the mishandling of representation in comics (both on the page and in the office), and just a general shift in public consumption of entertainment. But it’s still interesting to watch the numbers and see what they show.

For example, just four years ago, DC Comics didn’t have a single title crack the top 10, while Marvel claimed seven of the top spots. (The remainder went to smaller comics publishers.) But by 2017, DC held six of the top spots, while Marvel Comics took four.

After careful examination, you may be frustrated to find that there still isn’t a clear winner in this age-old rivalry between two publishing giants. When one gains the upper hand, it’s usually temporary. This is how it’s always been—and how it’ll likely be for a while. *(Think about the information presented in this paragraph, is there anything useful in supporting your claim? Highlight it if so. Are you still firm in your claim? Has any information changed your mind or made you question which is best?)*

Task 1B: Complete the chart. Clearly state your claim (your argument about DC V Marvel + 3 reasons to support) and **ONLY** use evidence from the article to support.
Your claim: | Evidence from the article | How does the evidence support your claim?
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Task 2: Evaluate the infographics carefully to determine which one provides the most evidence you can use to support your claim from above.
Is this information important to use to support your idea that DC or Marvel is the better comic?
Which information will help support your claim?

Is this information important to use to support your idea that DC or Marvel is the better comic?
Task 2A: Complete the chart where you clearly state your claim with three supporting reasons. This time, you will use evidence from the article and both infographics.

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<th>Evidence from the article</th>
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Task 3: Writing an introduction paragraph. You will write only the introduction paragraph to the question posed on page one: Marvel vs. DC: Which comics universe reigns supreme?

Remember that an intro contains:

- **THE HOOK** engages the reader. It should be interesting and relevant. *(Use direct information, quote, stats, from the text or infographic to hook your reader)*
- **BACKGROUND INFORMATION** focuses the reader on the subject by explaining critical background information and showing the importance of the subject *(Your knowledge on the subject, along with valid information or fact to support that knowledge)*.
- **THE CLAIM** presents an opinion and previews the main ideas/claims.**(where do you stand on the issue? Which comic is the best?)*

Use the space below for your paragraph. The thesis statement is started for you.

After examining *(source 1), *(source 2), and *(source 3) *(your choice) reigns supreme. Now fill in the blanks with your own words.

After examining _____________________, _____________________, and _____________________, _____________________ reigns supreme.

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