



**3rd Grade**

# **Compare/Contrast**

- Recognize and describe similarities and differences of plot across literary works
- Compare and contrast information between texts and across subject areas



## What Students Need to Know:

- similarities
- differences
- plot
- literary works
- information



## What Students Need to be Able to Do:

- Recognize (similarities and differences of plot across literary works)
- Describe (similarities and differences of plot across literary works)
- Compare (information between texts and across subject areas)
- Contrast (information between texts and across subject areas)

# Comparing and Contrasting

When students compare and contrast, they are finding similarities and differences in what they are reading. Help students understand the concept of comparing and contrasting by making analogies to synonyms and antonyms, how things are alike and how they are different and identifying similarities and differences.

Some nonfiction text is organized used a compare/contrast framework. In this type of writing, a writer compares two ideas, events, or phenomena, showing how they are similar and different. The writer states the issues or concepts being compared and explains them in enough detail to help the reader understand why the comparison is significant. Within the text the writers use description as well as comparison/contrast to make points. There are some words that often signal such a text:

- while
- yet
- but
- rather
- either
- like and unlike
- some
- as opposed to
- as well as
- on the other hand
- although
- the same
- similarly

In *Effective Reading Strategies* Rasinski and Padak state “One important aspect of comprehension is the ability to make thoughtful comparisons across texts, between events within stories, and across other aspects of stories that students read. For many students making comparisons can be a daunting task, and neither textbooks nor teachers always explain the process sufficiently.” If this is true, then we must work even harder at providing those sufficient explanations.

Fountas and Pinnell say, “Help students compare texts. Students are often expected to respond to a series of questions that require reading several different texts, sometimes of different genres. Because your students are reading many different texts in guided reading, literature study and independent reading, you can easily guide them to compare and contrast those texts. They can compare characters’ appearance, actions, motives, points of view, and so forth; plots or events; and settings. They can compare fiction, nonfiction and poetic texts on the same topic or with the same setting (geographical or historical). Comparing texts helps them delve into the deeper meaning of complex concepts such as “heroism” or “voyages.”

## Test Questions from Past Tests

How is Julia's blanket different from Billy's?

- a. Her blanket is cotton.
- b. Billy's blanket is green.
- c. Her blanket is very small.

# BIBLIOGRAPHY—COMPARE AND CONTRAST

A good book to teach comparing and contrasting characters, setting and plot is Lon Po Po: a Chinese version of Little Red Riding Hood.

Other books: Borregueta and the Coyote; The Girl who Loved Horses, Solomon and the Rusty Nail

Books to help students compare and contrast the Underground Railroad

Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt by Deborah Hopkinson

The Secret to Freedom by Marcia Vaughan

Following the Drinking Gourd

Compare and contrast two characters in the same book using a Venn Diagram

Miss Nelson is Missing by Harry Allard and James Marshall

Compare and contrast different versions of famous fairy tales-Princess and the Pea, Snow White, Rose Red, The Ugly Duckling

Compare and contrast “Cinderella” Stories

Cinderella

Cinderella’s Rat by Susan Meddaugh

The Rough Faced Girl

Have students read the three versions of *Cinderella*. The Egyptian Cinderella, Rhodopis, is thought to be the oldest Cinderella story, dating back nearly 2000 years. Yeh-Shen, (also spelled Yeh-hsien), the Chinese version, is thought to be the first written Cinderella story dating approximately from the year 850 A.D. The Hidden One, (also known as The Rough-Face Girl) is the Native American story told by several tribes of the Northeast. Explain to students that the story they are most familiar with is based on the fairy tale by the Brothers Grimm. (*Note: there are many versions of this story; feel free to select a different variation to reflect the cultural makeup of your classroom.*)

The Three Princes a fable retold by Eric Kimmel

Compare to other fables written from/about the Mid East including Aesop’s Fables and Grimm’s Fairy Tales

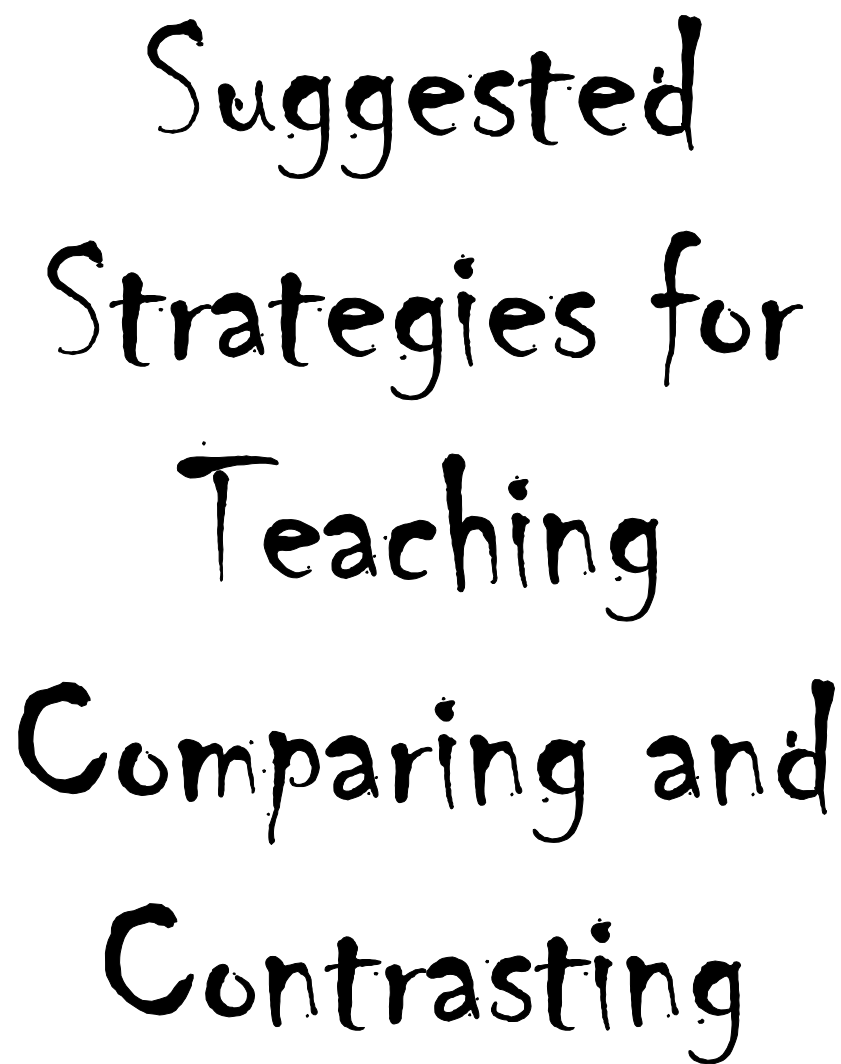
The Three Little Pigs

True Story of the Three Little Pigs by Lane Smith

- Compare and contrast books by the same author
- Compare and contrast fiction/non-fiction books about the same concept including biographies and historical events,

Compare and contrast books to movies (read the books first)





Suggested  
Strategies for  
Teaching  
Comparing and  
Contrasting

## **VENN DIAGRAMS**

Venn diagrams are perhaps one of the best graphic organizers to use in helping students learn to compare and contrast information. When beginning to use Venn diagrams, determine first of all what two things you want to compare. It might be two versions of a story, two characters found in the same story, or changes in a character from the beginning to the end of a story.

Model for the students how to complete a Venn diagram to compare and contrast, explicitly talking about the types of information that go in the circles and the intersection of the circles. Then guide students through the process by having them tell you information to put on the Venn diagram. Eventually, your goal is that students can complete a Venn diagram on their own, placing information in the correct places. This final step is one that is often omitted. Teachers commonly use Venn diagrams to compare and contrast, but students many times have no experience creating one by themselves.

Following are some suggestions for using Venn diagrams:

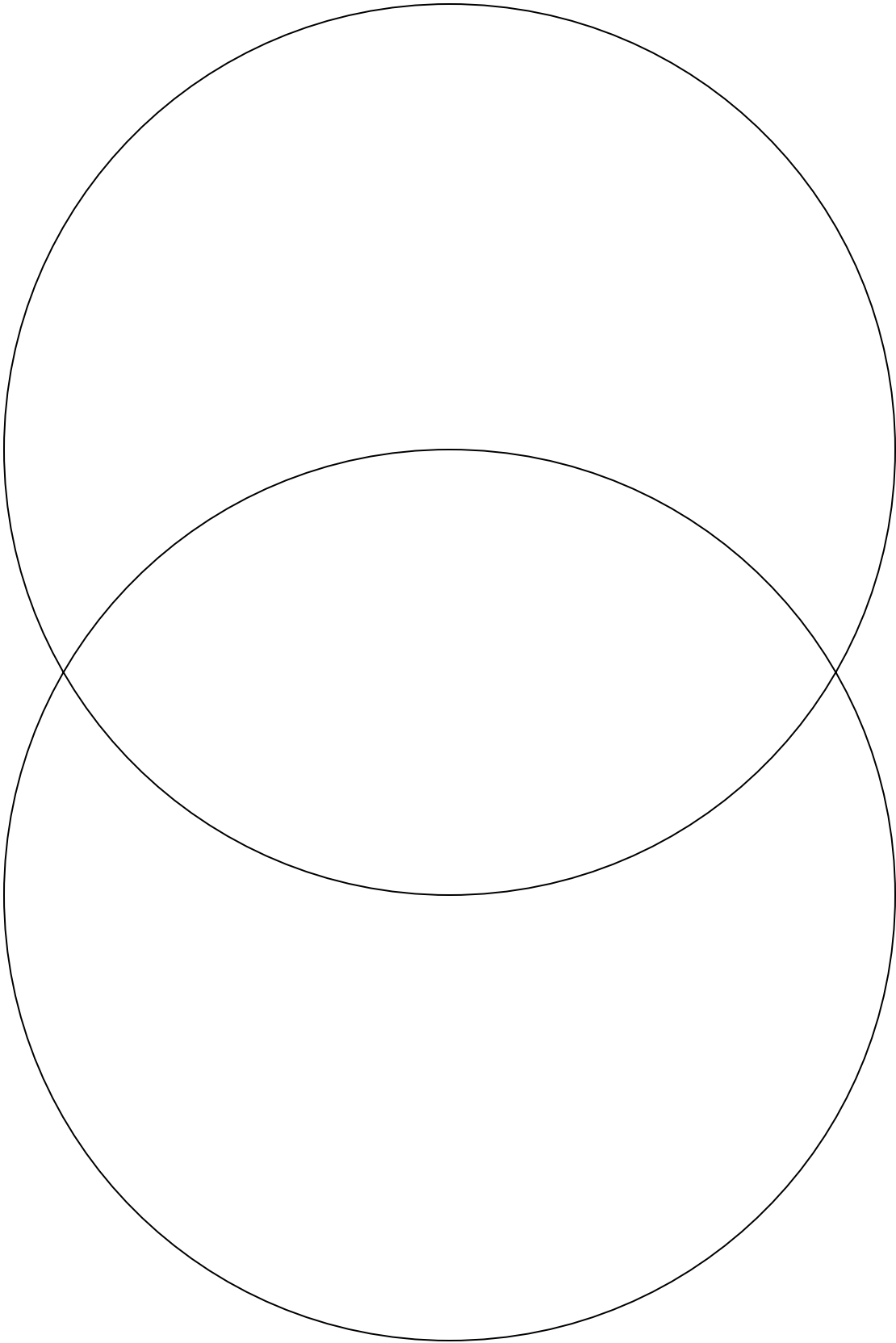
- to compare a character before and after an event in his/her life
- to compare two different stories with the same theme
- to compare a short story and a novel
- to compare a student's life to that of a character in a book
- to compare a time period of a novel to present-day times

## **T-CHARTS**

T-charts are another common graphic organizer used to help students learn to compare and contrast elements of fiction. T-charts have been found more than once on achievement tests. These charts have compare/contrast questions at the top of each column, and the students are asked to supply answers to the questions in each column. Typical questions might be "How are Mary and John alike?" and "How are Mary and John different?"

Other types of T-charts might simply be labeled with characters' names, names of places, or titles of stories. Students are then asked to make notes about the selection under the correct headings.





## **SAME OR DIFFERENT BOOK**

Select a familiar story for which there are several versions. Fairy tales work well for this activity. Students create a book that illustrates how the versions are either alike or different. Follow these steps to make the book:

- Divide the paper into halves, labeling each half with one of the book titles
- If students are making a “different” book, they draw a picture of something that is different in each of the stories
- If students are making a “same” book, they draw a picture of something that was the same in each of the stories
- Students may include as many pages as they like, or you may suggest topics for the pages such as characters, setting, problem, etc.

## **CHARACTER CHARTS**

When analyzing characters, students are often taught to look at their physical appearance, their actions, their feelings, and the reactions of other characters to them. By closely examining these aspects of characters, students can make inferences about them.

If you want students to compare characters to each other, create a chart similar to the one included in this section that will lead students to examine multiple aspects of each of the characters.

## **STORY MAP SHOWING CHARACTER CHANGE**

Characters often change during the course of a story. These changes are usually the result of some specific event or events. Encourage your students compare characters in a story from the beginning to the end. The attached chart may be helpful with this.

**Character at Beginning of  
Story**

**Events That Caused Change**

**Character at End of Story**

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## **WRITING—A POWERFUL WAY TO COMPARE/ CONTRAST**

Many students learn through writing. Following are some possible writing topics to help students learn to compare and contrast:

- Rewrite a story, changing the setting. Students must think about whether the original setting worked for the plot and theme. In making the change, they will have to consider how the new setting affects these and other aspects of the story and will have to accommodate accordingly.
- Strengthen students' understanding of how point of view shapes a story by asking them to tell the story from a viewpoint of a different character.
- Changing the beginning or ending of a story or adding another episode to the story will give students an opportunity to grapple first hand with aspects of plot.
- If a story goes back and forth in time, have students tell the story sequentially. This will help them see that flashbacks are an effective literary mechanism.
- Rewrite a story as a folktale or fairy tale, change poetry to prose, or make a short story into a play. These activities will give students insights into different genres.
- Change adjectives and/or the formality of the language to help students see how these changes can alter the mood of a story.
- Students can learn about author style by modeling the writing of a story after a particular book. Pattern books work well for this activity.
- Encourage students to practice using similes, metaphors, personification, irony, hyperbole and understatements so they will have a better understanding of these literary devices when they are reading.

## **MORE WAYS TO EXAMINE CHARACTERS**

Try one or more of the following to help students compare/contrast characters they encounter while reading:

- Make a progressive list of words/phrases to describe a character while reading a story. Examine the list to determine how the character has changed throughout the story.
- Write a description of, or opinion of, or feelings about a character at the beginning of a book. Then write the same when the book is finished. Compare the two and tell how the character has changed and your feelings about the character have changed.
- Make a timeline of a character's life or development as a story progresses.

## **HOW TO COMPARE/CONTRAST SETTINGS**

Following are some activities to use when working on comparing and contrasting settings:

- Present the setting visually as a map showing a journey, a grid map or pictures built up progressively as the story is read, a travel brochure or poster, or a class mural, collage or montage.
- Describe a setting from different viewpoints.
- Discuss descriptive passages to see how a writer has made them vivid, then encourage students to use the same devices in their writing.
- Make progressive charts of descriptive words to use later as the basis for writing.

## **COMPARING AND CONTRASTING THEMES**

The indicator that specifically addresses identifying the theme of a selection is found in the summarizing power standard. However, the goal of this activity is to help students compare themes of two or more selections.

Have students read a variety of books centered on the same theme. Create a class chart that summarizes the main points of each story. Lists of words used to describe similar characters might also be listed on the chart. These can help in defining relationships among characters in the books.

Summarize the theme study by asking questions similar to the following:

- What is the author's intention?
- What have we learned about . . . that we didn't know before?
- Which books remind us most of ourselves? How?
- How do different people cope with . . . ?
- How can our "stereotypes" . . . be misleading?

## SEMANTIC FEATURE ANALYSIS CHART

Another useful device is a semantic feature analysis chart. List characteristics to look for across the top of the chart and the items to be compared down the left-hand side of the chart. Record information for each item in the appropriate box. A sample is included.

## COMPARE AND CONTRAST SIGNAL WORDS

Teach students that there are certain words that usually indicate a need to compare or contrast information. When they see these words, they should know what they are expected to do. In addition, the wording in questions addressing these skills does not vary a great deal.

### Compare Signal Words:

- All
- As well as
- At the same time
- Both
- Like
- Same as
- Similarly, similar to

### Compare Questions:

- How are \_\_\_ and \_\_\_ alike?
- What is the same about \_\_\_ and \_\_\_?
- Compare \_\_\_ and \_\_\_.
- How was \_\_\_ like \_\_\_?

### Contrast Signal Words:

- Although
- As opposed to
- Compared with
- Different from
- Either . . . Or
- However
- Nevertheless
- Not only . . . But
- Though
- Unlike

### Contrast Questions:

- What are the differences between \_\_\_ and \_\_\_?
- How is a \_\_\_ different from a \_\_\_?





# COMPARE AND CONTRAST CHARTS

Proficient readers naturally compare and contrast reading as part of their interaction with various texts. In classrooms, we want to provide opportunities for our students to do this in ways that are natural outgrowths of their reading experiences. One way to accomplish this is through compare and contrast charts. Using a typical grid, a list is made of the texts that are to be compared or contrasted. These can include various types of books (fantasy, historical fiction, picture books), authors (Katherine Paterson, Tomie DePaola), or characters in a particular series of books. On the other side of the grid, the students record key characteristics that distinguish one item from another. These grids can be completed individually, in pairs, or by groups, and they can be used by students at any grade level.

## Compare and Contrast Books by Kevin Henkes

Title	Main Characters (how they are special)	Lesson (important idea)	Our Feelings
<u>Chester's Way</u>	Chester and Wilson – like same things; Lilly – tries new things	New kids can be fun to know	It's funny like in real life
<u>Chrysanthemum</u>	Chrysanthemum – unusual name; Mrs. Twinkle – teacher whose name is Delphinium	Everyone's name is cool; unusual names are interesting	Funny but happy for Chrysanthemum at the end
<u>Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse</u>	Lilly – wants to be a teacher someday; Mr. Slinger – a wonder teacher	We shouldn't be mean when we are angry; we should apologize when we're wrong	We know Lilly felt bad; Mr. Slinger makes us feel safe and happy

Consider having students compare elements of the author's craft such as use of language, humor, emotions, etc., found in a variety of books. The attached chart may be helpful.

# COMPARING TEXTS ON MY OWN

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Look for examples of the eight strategies listed on the chart below as you are reading. When you notice an example of an author's use of one of the strategies in a book, list the title in one of the boxes at the top of this page and then check off the strategies you noticed. Be prepared to share with others as you compare and contrast books you are reading.

Date	Strategy							
	Describe something so clearly the reader can see it							
	Use precise, vivid language							
	Show action rather than tell about it							
	Use humor, drama, or suspense to grab the reader's attention							
	Show your feelings and emotions							
	Give a slow-motion, play-by-play of a main event							
	Use selected monologue or dialogue							
	Let your reader know your characters							