

Comparing and contrasting texts is foundational to higher-level skills such as evaluating, analyzing, synthesizing, and making inferences because it requires students to pay close attention to key details and organization.

Why ask students to compare and contrast?

- Supports a deeper understanding of the characters and their adventures or experiences in a story.
- Draws attention to key details about characters, settings, or events in a story.
- Provides the foundation for students' ability to state, sketch, or write opinions or conclusions about characters, events, and/or stories.

Use a compare and contrast graphic organizer to:

- Organize or categorize information to compare and contrast narrative elements (e.g., characters, setting, events).
- Analyze how two characters (from the same story or different stories) react to similar challenges.
- Compare and contrast two or more versions of the same story.

Tips

- Engage students with graphic organizers in a whole-group or small-group setting.
- Pre-populate the labels in the graphic organizer.
- Extend learning by posing a question to students that requires them to use the notes captured in the organizer to formulate their answers with prompting and support.
- Encourage opportunities for students to utilize graphic organizers independently. This can include allowing them to sketch their ideas.
- Prompt and support students in completing graphic organizers as needed.

Standards and Research

Standards:

Kindergarten

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.K.9: With prompting and support, compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in familiar stories.

Grade 1

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.9: Compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in stories.

Grade 2

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.9: Compare and contrast two or more versions of the same story (e.g., Cinderella stories) by different authors or from different cultures.

Research:

Goodwin, B., Gibson, T., Rouleau, K., & Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning. (2020). *Learning that sticks: A brain-based model for K–12 instructional design and delivery*. ASCD.

Marzano, R. J., Pickering, D. J., & Pollock, J. E. (2001). *Classroom instruction that works: Research-based strategies for increasing student achievement*. ASCD.

Stowe, M. (2015, July). Graphic organizers: Guiding principles and effective practices considerations packet. Retrieved December 10, 2024, from William & Mary School of Education website: <https://education.wm.edu/about/search/?q=graphic+organizers+and+elementary+school+students#gsc.tab=0&gsc.q=graphic%20organizers%20and%20elementary%20school%20students#gsc.page=1>

EXAMPLES

Venn Diagram or Extended T-Chart

- Shows comparable relationships and overlaps between two criteria.
- Best for simple visualization.
- Many students find it easier to write in the cells of a table rather than in the circles of a Venn diagram.
- Students can orally respond to the task or question with peers or teachers until they can write responses independently.

Teacher creates task

Question/Task: Use a Venn diagram to compare and contrast brothers Pablo and Nico from the story. Then use information from the graphic organizer to explain why it is difficult for the brothers to get along and share.

Venn Diagram

Graphic Organizer

Primary

Name _____ Date _____



Pablo

Nico

Teacher populates characters being compared and contrasted

Messy
Likes to draw
Sleeps in the closet

Brothers
Share a room
Try to find a way to live in the same room
Come up with rules
Agree on how to paint their room

Neat
Likes to organize
Puts tape on the floor

Example using Brother Messy, Brother Neat

Venn diagram comparing and contrasting two characters in the same story to illustrate the relationship between siblings.

Response: Even though Pablo and Nico are brothers and share a room, they are very different. For example, Pablo is messy and Nico is neat. This makes it hard for them to share a room until they come up with rules. The rules help them come to an agreement, so they can comfortably live together in the same space.

Teacher creates task

Question/Task: Explain why it is difficult for the brothers to get along and share. How do they solve their problem?

Extended T-Chart

Graphic Organizer

Primary

Name _____ Date _____



Teacher populates characters being compared and contrasted

<i>Pablo</i>	both/similar	<i>Nico</i>
Messy	Brothers	Neat
Likes to draw	Share a room	Likes to organize
Sleeps in the closet	Try to find a way to live in the same room	Puts tape on the floor
	Come up with rules	
	Agree on how to paint their room	

Example using *Brother Messy, Brother Neat*

Extended T-Chart comparing and contrasting characters in the same story to illustrate the relationship between two siblings.

Response: Even though Pablo and Nico are brothers and share a room, they are very different. For example, Pablo is messy and Nico is neat. This makes it hard for them to share a room until they come up with rules. The rules help them come to an agreement, so they can comfortably live together in the same space.

Matrix 2x4

- Shows more complex relationships and overlap between multiple criteria or two or more versions of the same story.
- Organizes information in rows and columns, making it easier to analyze.
- Populates criteria for bases of comparison.

Teacher creates task

Question/Task: How do these two similar stories tell a different tale?

Matrix 2x4

Primary

Name _____ Date _____

	<i>Jack's Tale</i>	<i>Giant's Tale</i>
<i>Characters</i>	Jack, Jack's mom, Giant, funny little man	Jack, Jack's mom, Giant, funny little man
<i>Setting</i>	Jack's home Giant's home	Jack's home Giant's home
<i>Problem</i>	Jack and his mom need money for food	Giant is sick of eating sheep for supper
<i>Event(s)</i>	Jack traded his cow for magic beans Jack stole because he is hungry Giant fell and broke his leg	Jack traded his beans for a special goose Jack stole because he is a thief Giant fell and broke his leg
<i>Solution</i>	Jack and his mom take care of the Giant until his leg is better	Jack and his mom take care of the Giant until his leg is better

Teacher populates criteria being compared and contrasted

Comparing and contrasting two versions of the same story. Using a matrix lets the teacher scaffold instruction by providing the criteria with which the comparisons are made.

Response: Many of the story elements in these two tales are the same, such as the characters, setting, and even the ending with the Giant being cared for by Jack and his mom. What makes each story unique is in Jack's Tale we learn he steals from the Giant because he is hungry, but in the Giant's tale we learn that the Giant thinks differently about why Jack steals from him.

Example using Jack's Tale and Giant's Tale