

ADOLESCENT LITERACY SERIES

Comparative Reading



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Table of Contents

Introduction *v*

English/Language Arts

1. Making Connections to Real Life 1

2. Mostly the Same or Mostly Different? 6

3. Sorting Things Out Using Graphic Organizers 11

4. Comparing and Contrasting: The Vocabulary. 19

5. Writing Essays to Compare and Contrast: Model 1 23

6. Writing Essays to Compare and Contrast: Model 2 29

7. Same Story, Different Version 35

8. How Is One Poem Like Another? 40

9. Same Author, Different Story 44

10. I Can Relate! 49

11. What’s Missing or Different? 54

Social Studies

12. Dear Editor. 59

13. Who’s the Hero? 64

14. Same Place, Different Map 70

15. Who’s Who? 74

Mathematics/Science

16. Comparing and Contrasting in Math and Science. 79

17. Temperatures Rising 83

Career and Life Skills

18. What to Buy? 87

19. You Are What You Eat. 92

20. I Know What I Like!. 97

Introduction

Effective instruction in adolescent literacy does not rely on one strategy alone. Reading, writing, listening, and speaking all contribute to vocabulary acquisition. The subtleties of vocabulary development do, however, lend themselves to both direct and indirect instruction. Most struggling readers can, and do, read printed words. Their difficulty is not articulating, or even spelling, the printed text. The challenge to this learner is an inability to understand, process, and communicate the ideas expressed by the words.

The nature of this problem in adolescent literacy reaches deeper than a student's comprehension. The inability to comprehend text impacts a learner's ability to actively learn new words. The result is that a student will struggle to understand, learn, and communicate concepts in all subject areas. This is our call to action. This is the rationale for providing teachers like you with the resources you need not only to provide students with direct, explicit vocabulary instruction, but also to provide you with the materials for students to transfer strategies to the content areas.

This title focuses on helping students to develop their ability to understand, analyze, and compare two or more ideas expressed in various kinds of texts and images. Comparative reading involves applying skills of comparison, contrast, generalization, and synthesis to the texts, images, and ideas. Comparative reading requires students to think about texts beyond isolated comprehension. Instead, this skill requires an additional effort from the student to comprehend multiple ideas and to provide analysis, synthesis, and evaluative insight into the texts considered.

The twenty lessons set forth in this book will provide students with models for instruction and application of comparative reading in a variety of contexts organized around core content areas as well as real-life situations. Used to extend and enhance your existing curriculum, each lesson is intended to target instruction of a specific type of comparison, contrast, generalization, or analysis. Activities and instruction range from 15 minutes to 60 minutes to complete.

Writing Essays to Compare and Contrast: Model 2

Class Configuration

Time required:

50 minutes (one class period)

Structure:

individuals (activity sheet), group (class discussion)

Materials:

- activity sheet (one copy per student)
- two items to compare and contrast (Teacher's choice—select things that will engage students, but not detract from the focus on how to write the draft of the essay. The items may be text selections, objects, or ideas.)

Learning objectives:

- Students will write a draft of a point-by-point essay that compares and contrasts two things.

Standards

IRA/NCTE

4. Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.

McREL

Language Arts: Standard 2. Uses the stylistic and rhetorical aspects of writing

Laying the Groundwork

Assessing students' prior knowledge will help them to develop new skills. Before starting this lesson, make sure your students understand the following:

- The ability to compare and contrast things is both a life skill and an academic skill.
- The skills presented in the previous four activities in this book are applied in this activity.

Vocabulary that students should be familiar with includes:

- **attribute:** a quality or characteristic of a person, place, or thing
- **compare:** to explain how two or more things are alike
- **contrast:** to explain how two or more things are different

Writing Essays to Compare and Contrast: Model 2

Teaching Tip

This activity includes both individual and class work. Determine the amount of time students spend on each part of this activity based upon your observations of students as they work. It is possible that students will not complete their drafts in one period. If this is the case with your class, students can finish their drafts as a homework assignment.

Instructional Guide/Procedure

- Distribute a copy of the activity sheet to each student.
- Review the directions at the top of the activity sheet. Spend a few minutes introducing the items you have chosen for students to compare and contrast.
- Lead a class discussion to identify the three attributes students will use to compare and contrast the two things.
- Have students work individually to complete the graphic organizer.
- Lead a class discussion about the similarities and differences students identified on their graphic organizers.
- Have students work individually to write an introductory paragraph and a second paragraph discussing the first attribute and the similarities and differences between the two items.
- Lead a class discussion about the draft of the first two paragraphs. Encourage volunteers to read what they've written aloud.
- Have students work individually to write a draft of the remaining paragraphs. (This may need to be done as a homework assignment.)

Facilitating Learning

As students are completing the activity, remind them to:

- confine their observations about the similarities and differences between the items to the three attributes identified on the graphic organizer
- follow the prescribed format for the essay as described on the activity sheet
- use terms that signal comparisons and contrasts while writing the second through fourth paragraphs

Writing Essays to Compare and Contrast: Model 2

Supporting All Learners

- Students who are struggling with this activity will benefit from working with a partner when writing the draft of the first two paragraphs. If they continue to have difficulty, allow them to work with their partner to complete the rest of the draft.
- Support English language learners by allowing them to work through this activity in a group. While other students are working individually, guide these students through each step to insure they are not confused.
- Challenge students who are ready for more by asking them to exchange papers, proofread one another's work, and write final drafts of their essays to be kept as samples for future reference.

Assessment

There are various ways to assess students' understanding beyond their completion of the activity sheet. Choose one or more of the following methods to evaluate their learning.

- Assess based on your observations while the students are working.
- Ask students to write a short reflection describing their thought process as they completed this activity.

Answer Key

Answers will vary. Accept drafts that meet the criteria set forth in the lesson directions.

Name _____

Date _____

Writing Essays to Compare and Contrast: Model 2

Activity Sheet

There are two primary models to choose from when writing a compare-and-contrast essay. One model is sometimes called a “point-by-point” essay (sometimes it is a four-paragraph or five-paragraph essay). This activity walks you through how to write a draft for a point-by-point essay to compare and contrast two things.

A **point-by-point** essay consists of several paragraphs. Essays can be four, five, or more paragraphs long.

The **first paragraph** is used to engage the reader’s interest. This paragraph *introduces the two things being compared and contrasted*.

The **second paragraph** begins with a transition sentence to redirect the reader’s attention. The remaining sentences discuss the first attribute (see graphic organizer), *describing the similarities and differences between the two things*.

The **third and subsequent paragraphs** each begin with a transition sentence to redirect the reader’s attention to the *next* attribute being discussed. The remaining sentences follow the pattern established in the second paragraph: *describing the similarities and differences between the two things*.

The **final paragraph** provides a conclusion. It is used to *summarize the most important similarities and differences*. This paragraph ends with a concluding statement.

Directions

Your teacher will provide two items (two text passages, objects, or ideas).

1. Before writing a point-by-point essay, carefully analyze the two things being compared and contrasted.
2. Use the graphic organizer provided on the following page to make notes. The attributes will be identified during a class discussion. List them (one per row) in the first column. Your task is to note the similarities and differences for each item as they relate to each specific attribute.

(continued)

Name _____

Date _____

Writing Essays to Compare and Contrast: Model 2

	Item 1	Item 2
Attribute 1:		
Attribute 2:		
Attribute 3:		

(continued)

Name _____

Date _____

Writing Essays to Compare and Contrast: Model 2

3. On another sheet of paper, write an **introductory paragraph**. Grab the reader's interest. Introduce the two things being compared and contrasted.

4. Next, write a **second paragraph**. Begin with a transition sentence to redirect the reader's attention. Write the remaining sentences. Discuss the first attribute. Describe the similarities and differences between the two things according to *only* the *first* attribute.

5. Next, write a **third paragraph**. Start with a transition sentence to redirect the reader's attention. The remaining sentences in this paragraph discuss the **second attribute**. Describe the similarities and differences between the two things according to *only* the *second* attribute.

6. Next, write a **fourth paragraph**. Start with a transition sentence to redirect the reader's attention. The remaining sentences in this paragraph discuss the **third attribute**. Describe the similarities and differences between the two things according to *only* the *third* attribute.

7. Write a **concluding paragraph**. Summarize the most important similarities and differences between the two things. End with a concluding statement.