

Comparing and Contrasting Texts

Literary Version



What is Comparing/Contrasting?

- Comparing, of course, is identifying the similarities in two or more given contexts. Contrasting, on the other hand, is identifying the differences.
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- E.g. Using the TV show “Family Guy” and “The Simpsons”: Both shows are animated and they both air on Fox. The fathers in both series are fat and stupid while both mothers are the voices of reason. There are differences between the shows. “The Simpsons” characters are all yellow, whereas in “Family Guy,” they are flesh-colored. “Simpsons” characters do not have conversations with animals (unless it is a dream sequence), whereas there is an anthropomorphic dog who lives with the Griffins in “Family Guy.” “Family Guy” uses a lot of shock value and gross-out humor whereas “Simpsons” is tamer and has a more solid storyline to the episodes.

Why Compare and Contrast?

- Comparing and contrasting allows for students to think about what they have read, viewed, etc. It assesses their comprehension of the subject matter and their personal opinions of it.



Comparing and Contrasting Literary Texts

- In the case of literature, a person will find that texts will have similarities and differences. For instance, there may be similar themes in two different texts. Let us take a look at two short stories to follow on the next slide.

- I have linked two fairy tales. After you have read them, make a list of the similarities and the differences in the two stories.

- [Rapunzel](#)

- [The Frog Prince](#)

- Now that you have read both of these stories and taken notes on them, you will notice the similarities and differences in them.
- Both stories contain a romance plot between a woman and a prince. Both stories are set in a far away land. By contrast, Rapunzel was not a princess, but the daughter of a common man. She was the one who was in distress, whereas in “The Frog Prince,” it is the man who needs to be “rescued.”

Comparing and Contrasting Techniques

- While reading each text, take a few notes on some of the key aspects. Then look over the notes on both texts. You can draw a diagram (it does not have to be detailed; can just be a T-square). Write the similarities in one column and the differences in the other. Take a moment to think how the texts can connect to each other.
- Look for a particular theme that is apparent in both texts. (E.g. The unfair treatment of blacks in both *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *To Kill a Mockingbird*)

- It is important to have a good introduction or thesis statement to give the reader an idea of what will be compared/contrasted in the paper.
- Make sure to conclude your paper with the main points of the thesis statement.
- Most importantly, keep your paper organized so that it flows easily and does not confuse the reader.

THE END

