

# INTRODUCTION

---

---

## What is the **FOCUS** series?

*FOCUS* is a reading-strategy practice series. Each student book in the series provides brief instruction and concentrated practice for students in one targeted Reading Strategy. *FOCUS* also allows students the opportunity for self-assessment of their performance. It allows teachers the opportunity to identify and assess a student's level of mastery.

### 6 Reading Strategies featured in the *FOCUS* series:

- Understanding Main Idea and Details
- Understanding Sequence
- Recognising Cause and Effect
- Comparing and Contrasting
- Making Predictions
- Drawing Conclusions and Making Inferences

The *FOCUS* series spans 8 reading levels (1.0–8.9). The reading passages in each book are designed so that the book can be used by all students performing at that reading level. The reading passages in each book progress from low to high along that reading level range.

Book	Reading Level
Book A	1.0–1.9
Book B	2.0–2.9
Book C	3.0–3.9
Book D	4.0–4.9
Book E	5.0–5.9
Book F	6.0–6.9
Book G	7.0–7.9
Book H	8.0–8.9

## What is Comparing and Contrasting, the Reading Strategy featured in this *FOCUS* book?

Comparing and contrasting means finding how two or more things are alike and/or different. A comparison tells how two or more people, places, objects, or events are alike. A contrast tells how they are different. Clue words often signal comparisons and contrasts. Some comparison clue words are *same, both, like, alike, also* and *similar*. Some contrast clue words are *but, unlike, different, however* and *whereas*.

## What is in each student book?

There are 48 student books in the *FOCUS* series. There is one student book for each of the 6 Reading Strategies, at each of the 8 reading levels. Each student book contains:

- *To the Student*  
This introduces the program and should be read and discussed with students to make sure they understand what they are to do in the book.
- *Table of Contents*
- *Learn About (Modelled Practice)*  
These two pages provide basic instruction and modelling in the understanding and application of the Reading Strategy. The Learn About should be read and discussed with students to make sure they understand the Reading Strategy. Additional tips for helping students understand and use the Reading Strategy are included in the Reading Strategy Tips for the Teacher on pages 12–13 of this teacher guide.
- *Lesson Preview (Guided Practice)*  
These two pages include a sample reading passage and two selected-response questions with explanations of why each of the eight answer choices is correct or not correct. The Lesson Preview should be read, worked through, and discussed with students to make sure they understand how to answer strategy-based questions.
- *20 Lessons (Independent Practice)*  
Each two-page lesson contains one reading passage, four strategy-based selected-response questions and one strategy-based constructed-response writing question.

**Reading Passages:** The reading passages progress across the reading level. The passage genres include:

—**Fiction:** personal narrative, realistic fiction, historical fiction, fantasy fiction, mystery, folktale, fable, legend

—**Nonfiction:** report, article, interview, letter, postcard, book report, movie review, diary entry, journal entry, biography, textbook lesson, directions, instructions, recipe, invitation, announcement, experiment

**Selected-response questions:** In each lesson, students apply the Reading Strategy to a reading passage and then choose the correct answers for four selected-response (multiple-choice) strategy-based questions. You should model how to answer these kinds of questions using information on the Lesson Preview pages.

**Constructed-response writing questions:** In each lesson, students apply the Reading Strategy to a reading passage and then write a short response to a strategy-based question. You should model how to answer these kinds of questions by using one of the sample answers provided on pages 28–29 of this teacher guide.

- *Tracking Chart*  
Students use this chart for noting their completion of and performance in each lesson.
- *Self-Assessments*  
These five forms allow students the opportunity for self-assessment of their performance.
- *Answer Form*  
Students may use this form to record their answers to the eighty selected-response questions and to indicate that they have answered each of the twenty constructed-response writing questions.

# READING STRATEGY TIPS FOR THE TEACHER

Comparing and contrasting helps you to organise, or group, things that you read about.

The clue word *both* is used to compare rock and rap music. The clue words *whereas* and *unlike* are used to contrast rock and rap.

People, places, events, situations, objects, etc. can be compared and contrasted.

A comparison or contrast can take place in the present. Or it may take place over time, at the beginning and ending of a story, or before and after an event, for example.

*You could probably say that Marty was undecided at the beginning of the story. How would you describe Marty by the end of the story?*

*Before the incident at the old well, Jamie felt confident. How did he feel after the incident?*

*What is life like in Melbourne today? What was it like 150 years ago?*

## Learn About

### Comparing and Contrasting

Comparing and contrasting is finding out how things are *alike* or *different*. Comparing is finding how things are alike. Contrasting is finding how things are different. Two or more people, places, objects and events can be compared and contrasted.

When you read a passage, think about the people, places, objects or events that you read about. Ask yourself, "How are they similar or alike? How are they different?"

Read this paragraph to find out how two styles of music are alike and different.

Rock and rap are *both* styles of music. Rock music was inspired by rhythm and blues and by country music. Most rock songs are short and have simple words that are sung to music with a heavy beat. *Whereas* rock became popular in the 1950s, rap became popular in the 1980s. *Unlike* rock music, rap was inspired by disc jockeys, or DJs, in Jamaica. Rap music has rhyming words that are spoken or chanted to music with a heavy beat.



	Rock Music	Rap Music
<b>Alike</b>	a style of music	a style of music
<b>Alike</b>	has a heavy beat	has a heavy beat
<b>Different</b>	became popular in 1950s	became popular in 1980s
<b>Different</b>	words are sung	words are spoken or chanted

You can compare or contrast within a passage, and you can also compare or contrast information from one passage with information from another passage. For example: *How was Dawn similar to and different from the main character in the story you read last week?*

You can also compare or contrast information in a passage to things in your own life. For example: *Do you think that Dawn was smart to go to the woods alone? Would you have done that? Do you know anyone else who would have done that?*

You can also compare or contrast what you read to things in the world at large. For example: *Was what Dawn did like anything you've seen or read about in the news?*

Compare the two musical styles in the paragraph. Think about how the styles of music are alike. Ask yourself, "How are rock music and rap music alike?"

Both rock and rap are popular styles of music. Both rock and rap have a heavy beat.

Contrast the two kinds of music in the paragraph. Think about how the styles of music are different. Ask yourself, "How are rock and rap music different?"

Rock became popular in the 1950s. Rap became popular in the 1980s. Rock has lyrics that are sung. Rap has words that are spoken or chanted.


**Clue words** can signal comparisons and contrasts in what you read.

For comparisons, look for clue words that signal how things are alike. The words *same, both, like, alike, also* and *similar* signal ways in which things are similar or alike.

For contrasts, look for clue words that signal how things are different. The words *but, unlike, different, however* and *whereas* signal ways in which things are different.

What three clue words are used in the paragraph about rock and rap music? The clue words *both, whereas* and *unlike* are used.

If there are no clue words, think about how things are alike or different.



**Remember:**

Remember that comparing is finding how things are alike. Contrasting is finding how things are different.

© 2007 Hawker Brownlow Education 3 Comparing and Contrasting Book D CA10144

A comparison or contrast may be directly stated in a passage.

*The blueberry is blue, but the grape is purple.*

Sometimes a comparison or contrast is not directly stated in a passage. Then you have to infer it, or figure it out.

For example, a passage may give a lot of information about the characters Eric and Lisa, but it may never say, for example, that Eric is more courageous, more skillful, more considerate, more insightful, more sensitive, better educated or shorter than Lisa. You can figure these things out, however, by using the author's descriptions of what the characters do, say, think or feel, along with what you already know from your own experience. You might determine, for example, that Eric is more insightful than Lisa.

**Definitions:** "The explicitness with which teachers teach comprehension strategies makes a difference in learner outcomes, especially for low-achieving students (modeling and careful scaffolding is key)." (Abadiano & Turner, 2003, p. 76).

Abadiano, H. R., & Turner, J. (2003). The RAND report: Reading for understanding: Toward an R&D program in reading comprehension. *New England Reading Association Journal*, 39(2), 74–79.

**Clue Words:** "Authors often showcase text patterns by giving readers clues or signals to help them figure out the structure being used. . . . A signal may be a word or a phrase that helps the reader follow the writer's thoughts." (Vacca & Vacca, 2005, p. 398).

Vacca, R. T., & Vacca, J. L. (2005). *Content area reading: Literacy and learning across the curriculum* (8th ed.). Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.

Sometimes a comparison or contrast has clue words, but sometimes it doesn't.

*The ivy was green and glossy, but the flowers were brown and shrivelled.* (clue word *but* signals a contrast)

*The ivy was green and glossy; the flowers were brown and shrivelled.* (no clue word)