

TEACHER GUIDE **E**

# **F**OCUS on



COMPARING AND  
CONTRASTING

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction .....	1
Reading Strategy Tips for the Teacher .....	12
Teacher Assessment 1 .....	14
Teacher Assessment 2 .....	15
Teacher Assessment 3 .....	16
Class or Group Performance Graph .....	17
Research Summary.....	18
Answer Form .....	27
Answer Key.....	28

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**HAWKER BROWNLOW**

**E D U C A T I O N**

P.O. Box 8580, Heatherton

Victoria 3202, Australia

Phone: (03) 8558 2444 Fax: (03) 8558 2400

Toll Free Ph: 1800 33 4603 Fax: 1800 15 0445

Website: <http://www.hbe.com.au>

Email: [orders@hbe.com.au](mailto:orders@hbe.com.au)

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# INTRODUCTION

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## 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 is 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, whereas* and *in contrast*.

## 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.

## What is in each teacher guide?

There are 48 teacher guides in the *FOCUS* series, one for each student book. Each teacher guide contains:

- suggested instructions for using the *FOCUS* series effectively in the classroom
- Reading Strategy Tips for the Teacher, a facsimile of the Learn About on pages 2–3 of the student book, with tips for additional discussion related to understanding and using the Reading Strategy
- four reproducibles: three Teacher Assessments to be used for individual student assessment in the Reading Strategy and one Class or Group Performance Graph to be used for class or group assessment in the Reading Strategy
- summary of research that supports the *FOCUS* series
- a completed Answer Form for the eighty selected-response questions in the student book
- Answers for the eighty selected-response questions, plus sample answers for the twenty constructed-response writing questions in the student book

## How should I use the Reading Strategy Tips for the Teacher?

These pages contain a facsimile of the Learn About on pages 2–3 of the student book, along with extended information about the Reading Strategy, which you can use as a basis for in-depth discussion to make sure students understand the strategy and how to use it for better reading comprehension.

## Where do students record their answers?

Students should fill in their answers to the selected-response questions on the Answer Form on page 53 of the student book. If students use the Answer Form, they may detach it from the book. Alternatively, students may fill in the correct answers directly on the student book page.

Students should write their answers to the constructed-response questions directly on the lines provided in the student book. Students who use the Answer Form for the selected-response questions should fill in the circle on the Answer Form to show that they have answered the constructed-response question, which is the fifth question in each lesson.

# READING STRATEGY TIPS FOR THE TEACHER

Comparing and contrasting helps you to organise or categorise information when you read.

The clue word *both* is used in the Learn About passage to compare high-top sneakers and running sneakers, to tell how they are alike. The clue words *in contrast* and *unlike* are used to contrast high-top sneakers and running sneakers, to tell how they are different.

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

A comparison or contrast may 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 or situation, for example.

*Chris was somewhat fearful at the beginning of the story. How would you describe Chris by the end of the story?*

*Before the bike accident, Bill had felt confident. How did Bill feel after the incident?*

*How did the cub feel before it got lost? How did it feel after?*

*How did people get from town to town 100 years ago? How do people get around today?*

## 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 sneaker styles are alike and different.

*Both* high-top sneakers and running sneakers are casual styles of footwear. Both have laces and rubber soles. High-top sneakers are heavy, stiff and come up high over the ankle. They are designed to protect and support the ankle and to prevent the foot from moving in all directions. High-top sneakers are worn by basketball players. *In contrast*, running sneakers are worn by runners. *Unlike* high-top sneakers, running sneakers are light and flexible. They have low tops and padded heels. Running sneakers are designed to cushion and support the foot and to absorb shock while a runner runs on hard surfaces.



	High-Top Sneakers	Running Sneakers
<b>Alike</b>	casual footwear	casual footwear
<b>Alike</b>	laces and rubber soles	laces and rubber soles
<b>Different</b>	heavy and stiff	light and flexible
<b>Different</b>	worn by basketball players	worn by runners

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You can compare or contrast information within a passage, and you can also compare or contrast information from one passage with information from another passage.

*How is the character Kerry similar to and different from the character Jane Eyre?*

You can also compare or contrast information in a passage with things in your own life.

*Do you think that Sean was smart to go into the house alone? Would you have done that? Do you know anyone else who would have done that?*

And you can compare or contrast information in a passage to things in the world at large.

*Have you seen or read in the news about anyone doing something like what Sean did?*

Compare the two kinds of sneakers in the paragraph. Think about how they are alike. Ask yourself, "How are high-top sneakers and running sneakers alike?"

Both high-top sneakers and running sneakers are styles of casual footwear. Both high-top sneakers and running sneakers have rubber soles and laces.

Contrast the two kinds of sneakers in the paragraph. Think about how they are different. Ask yourself, "How are high-top sneakers and running sneakers different?"

High tops are heavy and stiff. Running sneakers are light and flexible. Basketball players wear high tops. Runners wear running sneakers.


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, whereas* and *in contrast* signal ways in which things are different.

What three clue words are used in the paragraph about high-top and running sneakers on page 2? The clue words *both, in contrast* and *unlike* are used.

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



Comparing is finding how things are alike. Contrasting is finding how things are different.

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**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.

A comparison or contrast may be stated in a passage.

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

Sometimes a comparison or contrasted 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 Michelle and Phil. It may never say that Michelle is more courageous, more skillful, more considerate, more insightful, more sensitive, more hostile, better educated or taller than Phil. But you can use what the characters do, say, think or feel, along with what you already know, to figure out things like this.

**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.

Sometimes a comparison or contrast has clue words; 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)