

TEACHER GUIDE **F**

# **F**OCUS on

COMPARING AND  
CONTRASTING

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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 explains how two or more people (appearance, feelings, attitudes, etc.), places, objects or events are alike. A contrast explains how they are different. Clue words often signal comparisons and contrasts. Some comparison clue words are *both, same, like, alike, also* and *similar*. Some contrast clue words are *but, unlike, different, however, whereas, in contrast* and *instead*.

## 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 rolling backpacks and panel-type backpacks, to explain how they are alike. The clue words *in contrast* and *unlike* are used to contrast rolling backpacks and panel-type backpacks, to explain how they are different.

People (appearance, feelings, attitudes, etc.), places, events, situations and objects can be compared and contrasted.

A comparison or contrast may take place in the present in a passage. 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.

*Brad was somewhat depressed at the beginning of the story. How would you describe Brad's feelings by the end of the story?*

*Before she forgot the lyrics, Marlene sang with confidence. How did Marlene sing after she forgot the lyrics?*

*What did the duckling look like before it was rescued? What did it look like after it had been rescued?*

*How were packages delivered 100 years ago? How are they delivered 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, and 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 kinds of backpacks are alike and different.

Rolling backpacks and panel-type backpacks are *both* used by people to carry things. *Both* types of backpack are made from sturdy pack fabric, such as cleanable nylon. *Both* types also have zipped front pockets. Rolling backpacks have small plastic wheels and plastic pull handles. These features help people roll the backpack along the floor without putting too much weight on their back and shoulders. *In contrast*, panel-type backpacks are worn on the back. *Unlike* rolling backpacks, panel-type backpacks have thickly padded back panels, padded shoulder straps and a cushioned waist belt. These help protect the user's back.



	Rolling Backpack	Panel-Type Backpack
<b>Alike</b>	carry things	carry things
<b>Alike</b>	sturdy pack fabric	sturdy pack fabric
<b>Different</b>	small plastic wheels	padded back panel
<b>Different</b>	plastic pull handle	cushioned waist belt

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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 Megan similar to and different from the character Cathy in Wuthering Heights, in terms of appearance, behaviour, attitudes, and so on?*

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

*Do you think that Paul was smart to go into the old 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 similar to what Constable Becker did?*

Compare the two kinds of backpacks in the paragraph. Think about how they are alike. Ask yourself, "How are rolling backpacks and panel-type backpacks alike?"

Both rolling backpacks and panel-type backpacks are backpacks that people use to carry things. Both rolling backpacks and panel-type backpacks are made from sturdy pack fabric, such as cleanable nylon. Both types also have zippered front pockets.

Contrast the two kinds of backpacks in the paragraph. Think about how they are different. Ask yourself, "How are rolling backpacks and panel-type backpacks different?"

Rolling backpacks have small plastic wheels and plastic pull handles. Panel-type backpacks have padded back panels, padded shoulder pads and a cushioned waist belt. Rolling backpacks are pulled, whereas panel-type backpacks are worn on the back.

**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 *both, same, 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, in contrast* and *instead* signal ways in which things are different.

What three clue words are used in the paragraph about rolling and panel-type backpacks? The clue words *both, in contrast* and *unlike* are used.

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

**Remember!**

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

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A comparison or contrast may be stated in a passage.

*The captain was smiling and confident, but the players were sceptical about the win.*

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 information about the characters George and Carmen. But the passage may never say directly whether George is more courageous, more skilful, more considerate, more insightful, more sensitive, more hostile, better educated, taller or shorter or darker or lighter than Carmen. Yet you can use what the characters do, say, think or feel, along with what you already know, to figure out such comparisons and contrasts.

**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.

**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.

In literature, examples of figurative language such as similes and metaphors (which make comparisons) are sometimes used for literary effect.

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

*Monday was sunny and warm, but Tuesday was cloudy and cool.* (clue word *but* signals a contrast)

*Monday was sunny and warm; Tuesday was cloudy and cool.* (no clue word)

A Venn diagram is often used to show how two things are alike and different. The area of intersection shows how the things are alike; the areas outside the intersection show how each thing is unique and differs from the other thing.

