

Table of Contents

Introduction *v*

English

1. Making Connections to Real Life 1
2. Mostly the Same or Mostly Different? 6
3. Sorting Things Out Using Graphic Organisers 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 Maths 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, analyse and compare two or more ideas expressed in various kinds of texts and images. Comparative reading involves applying skills of comparison, contrast, generalisation 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 organised 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, generalisation or analysis. Activities and instruction range from 15 minutes to 60 minutes to complete.

This book can be used to address the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2007, specifically Levels 4 and 5 English, but is useful in any secondary school curriculum concerned with reading comparatively for meaning and understanding. Additionally, lessons in the Social Studies, Mathematics/Science and Career and Life Skills sections touch on elements of these subjects common to all curricula at the adolescent year levels.

Mostly the Same or Mostly Different?

Teaching Tip

This activity can be repeated multiple times and, depending on what you ask students to compare and contrast, can be used to direct students' attention to a specific topic or as a concluding activity to check for understanding. Tracking the pairs who accurately identify the most similarities and differences over time keeps student interest high, as does comparing and contrasting unusual objects or ideas.

Instructional Guide/Procedure

- Distribute the activity sheets.
- Review the directions and give students five minutes to write down similarities and differences.
- Ask students to stop adding to their lists. Give them three minutes to decide if the things they are analysing are mostly the same or mostly different. Tell them to write a brief justification for their answer.
- Lead a short class discussion about the lists and students' answers to the final question.
- Determine which pair accurately identified the most similarities and differences.

Facilitating Learning

As students are completing the activity, remind them to:

- think about ideas beyond obvious responses
- stay focused on the step they are currently working on
- state specific reasons in the justification they write

Supporting All Learners

- Students who are struggling with this activity will benefit from additional practice. Encourage them to improve their skills by keeping their lists and adding additional ideas as a homework assignment.
- Support English language learners by using concrete objects or images initially – things they can hold and examine. It may also be helpful to work with these students in one group and for you to act as the recorder so that vocabulary limitations do not get in the way of their ideas.
- Challenge students who are ready for more by asking them to analyse two abstract ideas or concepts.

Mostly the Same or Mostly Different?

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 students are working.
- Assess the quality and quantity of similarities and differences listed.
- When reviewing students' justifications, look for statements that include specific reasons for the conclusion stated.

Answer Key

Answers will vary, depending upon the things being compared and contrasted. Accept all reasonable responses.

Dear Editor

Supporting All Learners

- Students who are struggling with this activity might benefit from using the full time to complete the graphic organiser and then writing the letter to the editor as homework.
- Support English language learners by allowing them to work in small groups of three or four. Check their graphic organisers to ensure understanding before they begin writing.
- Challenge students who are ready for more by asking them to choose another issue of interest to them, read at least two items related to the issue and write a letter to a real editor at a newspaper that they actually submit for publication.

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 students are working.
- Ask students to underline sentences in their letters that refer back to information listed on the graphic organiser, and check them for accuracy.

Answer Key

Answers will vary depending upon the items read. Accept reasonable responses where statements are supported by information cited on the graphic organiser.