

## Share What You Know

**Dare to Compare**

**The Power of Comparison**

## Learn the Skill

**Points of Comparison**

**How to Compare Texts**

- Step 1: Look for Similarities
- Step 2: Look for Differences
- Step 3: Synthesize Ideas

**Tips for Comparing Texts**



## Practice & Apply

**Compare Themes**

- Note Similarities and Differences
- Record Observations
- Synthesize Ideas

**Compare Genres**

- Note Similarities and Differences
- Record Observations
- Synthesize Ideas

**Review Game**

- Tic-Tac-Toe

## Dare to Compare

What do you notice about the two dogs in this photograph?

In the response area, record the similarities and differences you see.



**Similarities and Differences**

you noted how the dogs are alike and how they are different. You can use a similar process to compare texts.



Making comparisons can help you:

1

expand your knowledge of a topic by reading about it in different texts

2

connect real-life events or settings to the texts that represent them

3

better understand characters and their actions and feelings

4

consider how different writers explore similar experiences and emotions

5

evaluate what you are reading

Learn the Skill ▶ Points of Comparison

## Points of Comparison

Explore the different ways in which you can compare texts.



### Points of Comparison

When reading different texts, you might compare the following:

- genres (forms of writing)
- settings
- characters
- events/outcomes
- themes (messages about life)
- moods
- authors' writing styles

Recognizing how two items or ideas are similar and different can help you better understand and appreciate what you are reading.

## Points of Comparison

Explore the different ways in which you can compare texts.



### Genres

You might consider how two different genres explore the same topic, or compare two texts from the same genre.

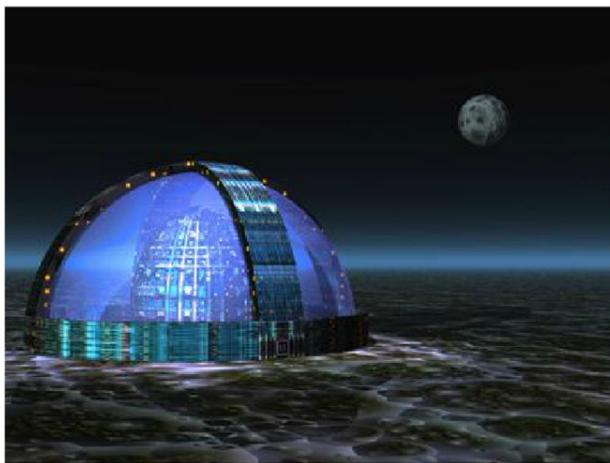
#### Sample Comparisons:

- a coming-of-age story in a historical-fiction novel and a contemporary coming-of-age tale (to help you understand the similarities teen characters share)
- mystery novels (to examine the narrative techniques different writers use)

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### Settings

As you know, **setting** is the time and place of the action in a story. A story's setting often plays an important role; for example, it can affect the characters' attitudes and values or create conflicts.

#### Sample Comparisons:

- the futuristic settings in two different works of science fiction
- a novel set on the *Titanic* in 1912 and a nonfiction description of the ship

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## Points of Comparison

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### Compare Characters

When you compare two characters in the same text, you can better understand their actions and feelings. Comparing characters across texts from different times or cultures can give you insights into those times or cultures.

#### Sample Comparisons:

- two characters in the same novel—one who values wealth and material possessions and one who does not
- two gods or goddesses in myths from different cultures



## Points of Comparison

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### Events/Outcomes

By comparing the portrayal of the same event in two texts, you can increase your understanding of that event. Or, you might compare how characters respond to similar events or conflicts—and note how those conflicts are resolved.

#### Sample Comparisons:

- a novel that portrays a Civil War battle and a nonfiction account of the battle
- two adventure novels in which the characters are stranded on a remote island



## Points of Comparison

Explore the different ways in which you can compare texts.



### Themes

A **theme** is the overall idea or message that a writer wants to communicate. Themes in literature usually focus on emotions and experiences—love, loss, or nature, for example—that affect many people.

#### Sample Comparisons:

- a modern poem and a Native American folk tale about respecting nature
- two short stories about the horrors of war

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## Points of Comparison

Explore the different ways in which you can compare texts.



### Moods

**Mood** is the atmosphere or feeling that a writer creates for readers. A writer's descriptions of the setting, characters, and events can help to create a specific mood.

#### Sample Comparisons:

- two poems about nature—one that has a peaceful mood and one that has a threatening mood
- two biographies about the same person—one that has an admiring tone and one that is more critical

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## Points of Comparison

Explore the different ways in which you can compare texts.



### Authors' Styles

Every writer has his or her own writing style. **Style** is not *what* is written, but *how* it is written. Elements such as word choice, sentence structure, and tone can contribute to an author's style.

### Sample Comparisons:

- Laurie Halse Anderson and Walter Dean Myers
- Mark Twain and Jerry Spinelli

## Look for Similarities

Read each text. In the response area, record any similarities you find.

From Above- Cale Young Rice

What do I care if the trees are bare  
And the hills are dark  
And the skies are gray.

What do I care for chill in the air  
For crows that cark  
At the rough wind's way.

What do I care for the dead leaves there--  
Or the sullen road  
By the sullen wood.

There's heart in my heart  
To bear my load!  
So enough, the day is good!

*From The Witch of Blackbird Pond*

*By Elizabeth George Speare*

*One night she woke from a vivid dream. She and Nat had stood side by side at the bow of the Dolphin, watching that familiar curving prow carving gently through calm turquoise water. They came soundlessly into a palm-studded harbor, fragrant with the scent of blossoms, and happiness was like sunshine, wrapping her round and pouring into her heart till it overflowed.*

*She woke in the freezing darkness. I want to go back, she admitted at last, weeping. I want to go home, where green things are growing, and I will never see snow again as long as I live!*



### **SIMILARITIES:**

## Look for Differences

Next, identify differences between the two texts.

Use this graphic organizer to record differences between the two subjects.



The Character in <i>The Witch of Blackbird Pond</i>	The Speaker of "From Above"

## Synthesize Ideas

Based on the details you recorded, decide which statements are true. Then click to check your answers.



Both the character in *The Witch of Blackbird Pond* and the speaker of "From Above" once lived somewhere better, surrounded by beauty and friends.



Both the character and the speaker live in less-than-ideal conditions, yet the speaker understands that happiness and courage come from within.

Both the character in the novel and the speaker of the poem have similar outlooks on life.

The character in *The Witch of Blackbird Pond* is aware of her depressing surroundings, but the speaker of "From Above" seems blind to his.

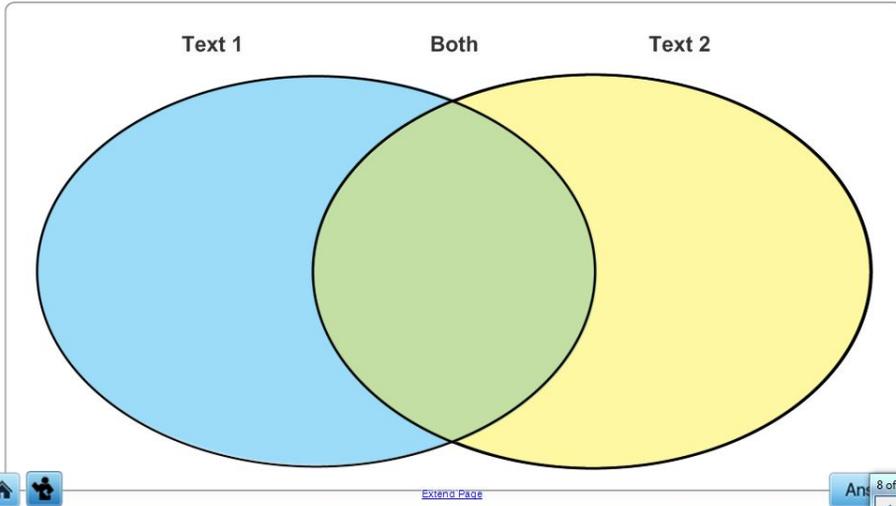
Correct! The lines "There's heart in my heart / To bear my load!" tells readers that this character faces situations with optimism and inner strength.



## Tips for Comparing Texts

You can use a Venn diagram like this one to record observations as you read.

Record your notes in the diagram. Review the sample to see how it's done.



## Tips for Comparing Texts

Use these sentence starters to make a comparison—between characters, ideas, genres, events, or themes—in any two texts.

I noticed that the first text \_\_\_\_\_.

The second text includes details about \_\_\_\_\_.

The two texts are similar in that \_\_\_\_\_.

Some key differences are \_\_\_\_\_.

What I learned from comparing the texts is \_\_\_\_\_.

## Themes: Note Similarities and Differences

Read these texts. What message does each communicate about the wisdom of elders?



The Young to the Old  
Cale Rice Young

You who are old—

And have fought the fight—  
And have won or lost or left the field—  
Weigh us not down  
With fears of the world, as we run!  
With the wisdom that is too right,  
The warning to which we cannot yield,  
The shadow that follows the sun,  
Follows forever!  
And with all that desire must leave  
undone,  
Though as a god it endeavor;  
Weigh, weigh us not down!

But gird our hope to believe—  
That all that is done  
Is done by dream and daring—  
Bid us dream on!  
That Earth was not born  
Or Heaven built of bewareing—  
Yield us the dawn!  
You dreamt your hour—and dared, but we  
Would dream till all you despaired of \_be\_;  
Would dare—till the world,  
Won to a new wayfaring,  
Be thence forever easier upward drawn!

## Themes: Note Similarities and Differences

Read these texts. What message does each communicate about the wisdom of elders?



Without delay, he fell to work on a pair of wings for the boy Icarus, and taught him carefully how to use them, bidding him beware of rash adventures among the stars. "Remember," said the father, "never to fly very low or very high, for the fogs about the earth would weigh you down, but the blaze of the sun will surely melt your feathers apart if you go too near."

For Icarus, these cautions went in at one ear and out by the other. Who could remember to be careful when he was to fly for the first time? Are birds careful? Not they! And not an idea remained in the boy's head but the one joy of escape.

The day came, and the fair wind that was to set them free. The father bird put on his wings, and, while the light urged them to be gone, he waited to see that all was well with Icarus, for the two could not fly hand in hand. Up they rose, the boy after his father. The hateful ground of Crete sank beneath them; and the country folk, who caught a glimpse of them when they were high above the tree-tops, took it for a vision of the gods,—Apollo, perhaps, with Cupid after him.

At first there was a terror in the joy. The wide vacancy of the air dazed them,—a glance downward made their brains reel. But when a great wind filled their wings, and Icarus felt himself sustained, like a halcyon-bird in the hollow of a wave, like a child uplifted by his mother, he forgot everything in the world but joy. He forgot Crete and the other islands that he had passed over: he saw but vaguely that winged thing in the distance before him that was his father Dædalus. He longed for one draught of flight to quench the thirst of his captivity: he stretched out his arms to the sky and made towards the highest heavens.

[23] Alas for him! Warmer and warmer grew the air. Those arms, that had seemed to uphold him, relaxed. His wings wavered, drooped. He fluttered his young hands vainly,—he was falling,—and in that terror he remembered. The heat of the sun had melted the wax from his wings; the feathers were falling, one by one, like snowflakes; and there was none to help.

He fell like a leaf tossed down the wind, down, down, with one cry that overtook Dædalus far away. When he returned, and sought high and low for the poor boy, he saw nothing but the bird-like feathers afloat on the water, and he knew that Icarus was drowned.

## Themes: Note Similarities and Differences

Read these texts. What message does each communicate about the wisdom of elders?

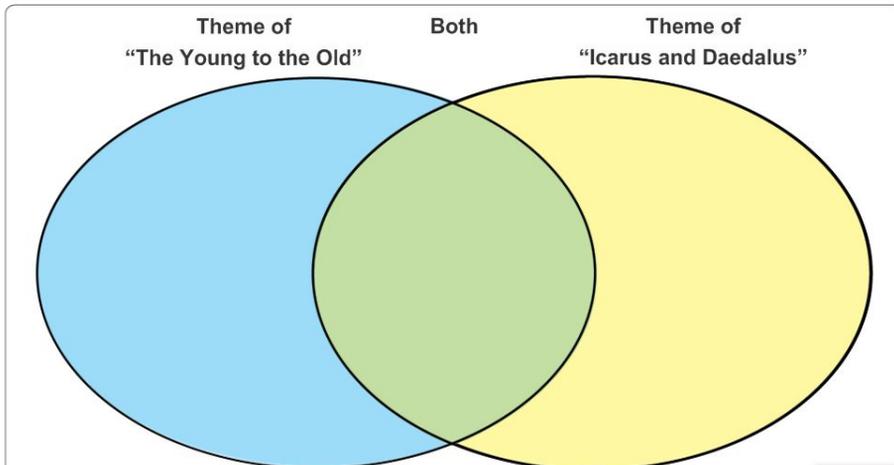


What are the similarities and differences in theme?

## Themes: Record Observations

How are the themes of both texts similar? How are they different?

Complete this Venn diagram to help you compare the themes.



## Themes: Synthesize Ideas

Choose the statements you think are correct. Then click to check your answers.



In one text, being “weighed down” is seen as crippling and undesirable; in the other text, weightlessness leads to failure and death.



Both texts suggest that older, more experienced people are wiser and more cautious than younger people.

The themes of both texts are similar in that they show how younger people tend to understand the risks they face, but plan their actions well.

Both texts express the idea that if you don’t push the limits, there is no room for growth and self-discovery.

Very good! Both passages refer to older, wiser characters that have learned from past mistakes how to be cautious and patient in their actions.



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## Genres: Note Similarities and Differences

Read two texts from different genres. How is the information in each similar or different?



from *Dragon’s Gate*

Novel by Laurence Yep

*Otter has been sent from China to California to work for his famed uncle, helping to build a railroad.*

I started to feel a chill that no fire would ever warm. “I don’t understand. Why wouldn’t the westerners listen to you?”

Uncle Foxfire seemed in genuine distress. “Because I’m not the boss here.”

Puzzled, I refused to believe my own

Record Similarities/Differences in Genre



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## Genres: Note Similarities and Differences

Read two texts from different genres. How is the information in each similar or different?

Puzzled, I refused to believe my own ears. "But you're . . . well . . . you." He was such an important man back home that it was hard to believe he wasn't the same here. "I mean, you're helping them build their railroad."

Uncle Foxfire draped his kerchief around his neck. "In the Middle Kingdom, I'm somebody; but here I'm just one more worker."

"But I thought—"

"—that I was a somebody." He gripped my shoulders. "Get it through your head,



Record Similarities/Differences in Genre



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Uncle Foxfire draped his kerchief around his neck. "In the Middle Kingdom, I'm somebody; but here I'm just one more worker."

"But I thought—"

"—that I was a somebody." He gripped my shoulders. "Get it through your head, boy, or you won't live out a day. In the Middle Kingdom, you and I were on top of the heap, but here we're on the bottom."



Record Similarities/Differences in Genre



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## Genres: Note Similarities and Differences

Read two texts from different genres. How is the information in each similar or different?

### “First Transcontinental Railroad”

*Nonfiction article*

After the madness of the Gold Rush faded in the early 1860s, the United States found itself hungry for more rapid westward expansion. So, the idea to construct the First Transcontinental Railroad was born. Joining the East and West Coasts with a mechanized transportation system would help both the population and economy of the American West grow. However, this size of an endeavor would require a huge labor



Record Similarities/Differences in Genre



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## Genres: Note Similarities and Differences

Read two texts from different genres. How is the information in each similar or different?

an endeavor would require a huge labor force and a large amount of money. With a lack of white European workers available and limited finances, construction companies faced several challenges. To address these problems, Charles Crocker, the manager of the Central Pacific Railroad, suggested recruiting the Chinese workers from the silver mines to work on the railroad.

It took Crocker time to convince others to hire Chinese laborers. Yet his recommendation gained favor once he outlined the cost-saving benefits of his plan.



Record Similarities/Differences in Genre



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## Genres: Note Similarities and Differences

Read two texts from different genres. How is the information in each similar or different?

... recommendation gained favor once he outlined the cost-saving benefits of his plan. Chinese workers were even imported from China to create huge work teams.

Most laborers earned between \$1 and \$3 per day, yet the Chinese were paid much less. The Central Pacific Railroad even refused to compensate the Chinese workers for their food or lodging. Although this sort of inequality is not tolerated today, it was commonplace during the 1860s.

Crocker worked the Chinese laborers to the point of exhaustion. Tunnels were blasted through mountains, bridges were

Record Similarities/Differences in Genre



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## Genres: Note Similarities and Differences

Read two texts from different genres. How is the information in each similar or different?

Crocker worked the Chinese laborers to the point of exhaustion. Tunnels were blasted through mountains, bridges were built across rivers and canyons, and the winters and summers in this part of the United States were brutal. Many Chinese laborers were killed as a result of dynamite blasts, avalanches, extreme heat, and exhaustion. Yet the Chinese work teams showed themselves to be hard-working and efficient. The Central Pacific track, which was constructed mainly by Chinese workers, was completed years ahead of schedule.

Record Similarities/Differences in Genre



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## Genres: Record Observations

Elaborate on the similarities and differences you noted by filling in this chart.

Record observations about the kinds of information each genre provides.



from <i>Dragon's Gate</i>	"First Transcontinental Railroad"



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## Genres: Synthesize Ideas

Think about the similarities and differences you recorded and synthesize your ideas.

Determine whether each statement is true before flipping the card.  
Explain how you make each decision.

A nonfiction text generally includes more factual information than does a work of fiction about the same topic.

Both texts show how poorly the Chinese were treated, but they accomplish this in different ways.

The novel communicates more about how people who experienced the mistreatment might have felt.

The authors of both the novel and the nonfiction article have the same main purpose for writing.



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