



# Finding Similarities and Differences

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Language Arts  
Grades 3-5



## Introduction

In this lesson students will find similarities and differences in their everyday lives as well as compare and contrast story elements in fictional texts written by the same author.

## Learning Objectives

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.9](#). Compare and contrast the themes, settings, and plots of stories written by the same author about the same or similar characters.

## Materials Needed

- Venn diagram
- Fiction texts by a single author (e.g. *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series, *Harry Potter* series, *A Series of Unfortunate Events* series, etc.)

## Procedure

Ask students, “What does it mean to compare and contrast two things?” Allow time for students to think about the question and then call on students to share their responses. Next, discuss how when we compare two things, we are finding the similarities and differences between the two.

### Activity 1: Relating to Everyday Lives

1. Explain to students that we compare and contrast different things every day. Then, ask students to give you a few examples of how we do this in our daily lives. To prompt students, tell them to think about the weather, the clothes people are wearing, and the foods that we eat.
2. Inform students that in today’s lesson they will be finding the similarities and differences between two fictional texts.

### Activity 2: Venn Diagram

1. Display a Venn diagram and explain to students that this is the graphic organizer that we use when comparing two different things. Explain that with this type of organizer you do not need to write complete sentences. Then, ask students if they can tell you the difference between comparing and contrasting. Explain that comparing looks at what is similar while contrasting looks at what is different.

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2. Model how to fill out a graphic organizer by choosing a simple topic, like one a student suggested in activity one. Go over key words that we use to compare something (same, alike, different, unlike, etc.).

### Activity 3: Small Group Activity

1. Put students into small groups or pairs and distribute a Venn diagram. Next, give students a few minutes to choose two things to compare and contrast.
2. Once students have finished, have each group share their diagram to ensure everyone understands how to complete a Venn diagram on their own.

### Activity 4: Fictional Texts

1. Choose two fictional texts or excerpts for students to compare and contrast together as a class. Make sure they are short (1-2 paragraphs long).
2. Read aloud each text and together fill out a Venn diagram.
3. Review the story elements as you read, such as the characters, setting, plot, etc.

### Activity 5: Independent practice

1. Choose two different fictional texts or excerpts for students to independently compare and complete a Venn diagram.
2. Make sure students are comparing story elements such as the characters, setting, and events.

## Evaluation

Assess students on small-group activity and independent practice.