

Comparative Reading

Comparing, Contrasting, and Integrating

NAME: _____

CLASS: _____

What is comparative reading? It is the process of reading two written pieces and figuring out how they work together. When you compare pieces of writing, you see how they are the same. When you contrast pieces of writing, you see how they are different. In narrative texts, authors often have things that compare and contrast. Characters might be the same or different. Ideas, events, or actions might be, too. Seeing how these things work together can help you better understand the text as a whole.

- **Read these two paragraphs. They are from a story about a starship crew. The crew returned to Earth after many years in space.**



It was a city all right, but it was different from any we had seen before. It was covered with a huge glass bubble. Through the bubble, we could see streets and buildings. The people stared up at us as we got nearer. Outside the bubble, there was nothing except heavy, greasy smoke.

Suddenly, the bubble opened to let us in. Just as suddenly, it closed behind us once we were inside. On the ground, people looked normal but somehow different, maybe... frightened. Once outside the ship, I took a deep breath. The air smelled all right but, like the people, it was different. It did not smell like the fresh air I remembered.

How are things the same as they were before the starship left? How are they different?

SAME	DIFFERENT
The city had streets, buildings, and people.	The city was covered with a glass bubble.
The people looked normal.	The people looked frightened.
The air outside the ship smelled all right.	The air outside the bubble was filled with heavy, greasy smoke.
	Inside, the air did not smell like the air they remembered.

If you think about the way things were when the starship crew left, and what things were like when they returned, you can see that something happened to change these things.

- **Now read these two paragraphs. They are from a story about a man who went for a walk in the woods in winter.**



All was still. The cold seemed to have frozen the trees, the air, and every living thing. Even the ringing of my skates on the ice echoed back from the hill with a surprising clearness.

Then, out of the depths of the woods, a sound arose. It seemed to come from under the ice. It was low at first, but it ended in one long, wild howl. I was struck with fear and horror. Never before had I heard such a sound.

How are these paragraphs the same? Both describe things the narrator saw, felt, and heard during his walk. How are they different? The mood in the first one is clear and calm, while the mood in the second one is scared and fearful.

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► Read these paragraphs and answer the questions that follow.



Paragraph 1: *Trevor worked at Mr. Ladd's hardware store. Mr. Ladd was a fair and honest man. He respected others and treated his people well. Trevor liked working for him.*

Paragraph 2: *"I forgot about the concert, and I forgot to ask Mr. Ladd for the day off," Trevor said. "So I told him that I wasn't feeling well. He told me to go home and to feel better soon." Trevor's smile got bigger. "I bet I'll feel much better when we get to the show!"*

1. Read the two paragraphs above. How do Mr. Ladd and Trevor differ?



- A. Mr. Ladd was honest with others but Trevor was not.
- B. Mr. Ladd yelled at others but Trevor did not.
- C. Mr. Ladd made mistakes often but Trevor did not.
- D. Mr. Ladd was hard to talk to but Trevor was not.



Paragraph 1: *When I heard about the Red Room, I had to go. A room that made people go mad! A room with ghosts in every corner! I've been to many "haunted" inns. I've never seen a ghost. There was no ghost in the Red Room, I was sure.*

Paragraph 2: *In my hurry to relight the candles in the Red Room, I tripped and fell. The box of matches broke open. Matches fell all over the floor. Just then, the candles went out. The room was nearly all dark. I felt around the floor for the matches. It did no good. They were gone, as if swallowed.*

2. Read these two paragraphs. How do they compare or contrast with each other?



- A. Both give the idea that most people who stayed in the room had a very pleasant visit.
- B. Both explain the history of the room and when people started to believe it was haunted.
- C. In the first paragraph, the narrator seems calm and confident. In the second one, the narrator seems frightened and unsure.
- D. In the first paragraph, the mood can best be described as sad. In the second one, it can best be described as happy.

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Paragraph 1: *“Really? A barn? We are going to sleep here?” Hailey asked. “It doesn’t even have a TV. How boring!” She threw her bag on a bunk. “We are in the middle of nowhere.”*

Paragraph 2: *“I’ve always liked living in the country,” Justin said. “I like the fresh air and wide open spaces. I like taking care of the animals. My mom always said there’s nothing like life on a farm.”*

3. Read the two paragraphs above. How do they compare with each other?



- A. Both have characters whose families work on farms.
- B. Both use dialogue to give information about the characters.
- C. Both use the image of a barn as a symbol for happiness.
- D. Both have events that happen on certain holidays.