

Comparing and Contrasting

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

comparing: identifying how two or more subjects, ideas, characters, or objects are alike

contrasting: identifying how two or more subjects, ideas, characters, or objects differ

points of comparison: common characteristics or aspects of subjects, ideas, characters, or objects that can be compared or contrasted

HERE'S HOW

Step 1: Select the subjects to be compared or contrasted. The subjects should at least have some points in common—some shared traits.

Step 2: Select the points of comparison on which you want to focus. Common points of comparison for items include shape, size, and color. For literary characters or real people, points may include gender, age, appearance, personality, actions, and motivation. To compare events, you might look at date, duration, location, and causes and effects of the event. Ask yourself:

- What categories are common to both subjects?
- What basis of comparison can I find?

Step 3: Compare and/or contrast the subjects. Use a graphic organizer like the one shown below.

- Select the points of comparison at the left.
- Fill in each space in the chart under the middle columns.
- Then compare and contrast in the right.
- If you are comparing and contrasting more than two items or characters, you can add more columns to the chart.

Points of Comparison	Subject 1	Subject 2	Alike/Different
1.			
2.			
3.			

Step 4: State the similarities and differences. Make your comparison by pairing up qualities and describing the likeness and difference for each. Use complete sentences whether writing or speaking.