

Comprehension Activity

Introduce: Comparison and Contrast

Activity Type: Introduce

Grade: K-3

Group Size: Small Group, Large Group, Whole Class

Length: 15 minutes

Materials: A picture, a fiction or nonfiction book to read out loud, chart paper or board

Goal: Given two elements in a book, students will be able to compare and to contrast them.

Prepare:

Choose a book that appeals to early readers. If you are using a picture or fiction book, choose a book with two main characters. If you are using a nonfiction book, choose one with information on two different topics (two different animals, for example).

Model/Instruct:

1. Show students the book (the front cover, back cover, and some of the pages) and ask them to predict what the book will be about.

Today we are going to read a book entitled _____ . What do you think this book is about?

2. Record the students' comments on the chart paper or board.

3. Explain the meaning of comparing and contrasting.

We are going to compare and contrast two things in this book. To compare means to find the ways the two things are alike. To contrast means to find the ways the two things are different. When we think closely about the way characters or events are alike and different it helps us understand the book better.

4. Use two students to demonstrate comparing and contrasting.

I'm going to call on two volunteers to come to the front of the class.

Call on two volunteers. Make sure they have some similarities and some differences.

Let's take a look at _____ and _____. First, let's compare them. What is similar about them? Think about things like what they are wearing, hair color, eye color, etc.

Call on students to answer and record their comments on the board or chart paper.

Now, we'll contrast them. What is different about them?

Call on students to answer and record their comments on the board or chart paper.

5. Read the first half of the book, pausing at appropriate places to point out details that compare and contrast the two chosen elements.

Practice:

6. Finish reading the book.

Let's talk about the comparisons and contrasts we have made so far. Can anyone tell me anything else that _____ and _____ have in common? In what ways are they different?

7. Record students' remarks on the chart paper or board. It may be helpful to use different colored markers (red for similarities and blue for differences, for example).

8. Confirm similarities and differences using the information from the chart paper or board.

Now let's look back at our comparisons and contrasts. It looks like we were able to gather some good information about how these things are alike and how they are different. When you compare and contrast, you think about the two elements in a deep way. Comparing and contrasting helps us to understand books better.

Adjust:

For advanced students:

Encourage these students to add to the list, if possible. Have them pick out the most important similarity and the most important difference and explain why the difference is significant to a partner.

For struggling students:

Some students may have difficulty identifying similarities and differences at the same time. In this case, it may be helpful to focus on only one at a time. Read the book, focusing on similarities. Then, read it again, focusing on differences. Ask questions like:

How are these things the same?

What do they both have in common?

How are these things different?

What do they do differently?

For ELL students:

Before reading the book, explain the meaning of any key vocabulary or concepts that they need to know. Reinforce that *compare* means that they are to look for things in common and *contrast* means they are to look for things that are different. Use the questions above to guide your discussion.