

Grade 5 Playlist: Comparing and Contrasting Characters, Settings, and Events

Aligns with *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.3*:

- Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact).

Welcome

Most stories have at least two characters, settings, and events. This is often part of what makes a story interesting. When two characters who are different meet, it can lead to exciting events. When a character visits two settings that are similar, the reader may learn something about the character. Being able to compare and contrast characters, settings, and events in a story is an important skill for a reader to have. It can lead to a much better understanding of the story.

Objectives

In this playlist, students will learn and practice how to:

- compare and contrast two or more characters in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text.
- compare and contrast two or more settings in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text.

Review

Key Terms

- To **compare** is to look at the ways that two things are the same.
- To **contrast** is to look at the ways that two things are different.
- A **character** is a person in a story.
- A **setting** is a place in a story.
- An **event** is something that happens in a story.

Exploring the Standard

Comparing and contrasting characters, settings, and events in a story can help readers understand the story better.

For example, look at this paragraph from chapter 38 of *Black Beauty* by Anna Sewell:



¹The winter came in early, with a great deal of cold and wet. There was snow, or sleet, or rain, almost every day for weeks, changing only for keen driving winds or sharp frosts. The horses all felt it very much. When it is a dry cold, a couple of good thick rugs will keep the warmth in us; but when it is soaking rain, they soon get wet through and are no good. Some of the drivers had a waterproof cover to throw over, which was a fine thing; but some of the men were so poor that they could not protect either themselves or their horses, and many of them suffered very much that winter. When we horses had worked half the day we went to our dry stables, and could rest, while they had to sit on their boxes, sometimes staying out as late as one or two o'clock in the morning, if they had a party to wait for.

A reader can use this excerpt to answer questions such as: How does the difference in setting between the dry cold weather and the rainy weather affect the horses? How does the difference between the drivers who can afford waterproof covers and those who are too poor to afford the covers affect the events that happen to those characters and their horses?

These questions show how understanding the relationship between two characters, two settings, or two events can help a reader better understand *Black Beauty*. For example, the answer to the second question will show readers what the social climate of the story is. This, in turn, will help to explain to readers the relationship between the main character, a horse, and other, human characters, for example.

Listen!

Listen to this excerpt from the story (0.00-1.17):

- http://ia802305.us.archive.org/26/items/blackbeauty_librivox/blackbeauty_38_sewell.mp3

A Closer Look: Comparing and Contrasting Characters

Looking at the ways the characters in a story are similar or different can give a reader a better understanding of the story.

Example

Look at this paragraph from chapter 1 of *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens:

¹The door of Scrooge's counting-house was open, that he might keep his eye upon his clerk, who in a dismal little cell beyond, a sort of tank, was copying letters. Scrooge had a very small fire, but the clerk's fire was so very much smaller that it looked like one coal. But he couldn't replenish it, for Scrooge kept the coal-box in his own room; and so surely as the clerk came in with the shovel, the master predicted that it would be necessary for them to part. Wherefore the clerk put on his white comforter, and tried to warm himself at the candle; in which effort, not being a man of strong imagination, he failed.

Notice the details about Scrooge and the details about the clerk. What does the fact that Scrooge wants to "keep his eye upon his clerk" say about him? Contrast this with the clerk, who is working in "a dismal little cell." Compare the fires the two characters have. Both fires are described as small. Now contrast them. Scrooge's fire is "very small," but the clerk's fire is "so very much smaller that it looked like one coal." Based on these details, the reader can see that Scrooge is a



Teaching Notes: Comparing and Contrasting Characters, Settings, and Events

The goal of RL.5.3 is for students to be able to **compare and contrast characters, settings, and events** and to understand how these similarities and differences contribute to the reader's understanding of the story. The following information contains ideas that teachers can incorporate into their classroom as well as additional resources to peruse and integrate into instruction as appropriate.

Activities

1. Select an excerpt from *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett, and have students complete a Venn diagram comparing and contrasting two of the characters in the story. Have students work with a partner to create a short presentation comparing and contrasting the two characters. Invite students to share their presentations with the class.
2. Direct students to conduct research, finding a story with two different settings. Divide the class into groups of four or five, asking students to discuss how the settings are similar and how they are different. Ask students to discuss how the different settings affect the characters and events of the story.

Writing Prompts

1. Ask students to write their own story using at least two characters, settings, and events. Then ask them to write a short essay explaining the similarities and differences between the characters, stories, and events, and how these similarities and differences contribute to the story.
2. Ask students to think about how similarities and differences between characters, settings, and events can help readers understand a story. Have students write a short essay explaining their thoughts. Instruct students use at least **two** different stories in their explanation.

Additional Resources

Consider these additional resources when teaching RL.5.3:

5th Grade Common Core Reading Literature Activities: List of resources for several Grade 5 RL standards, including 5.3.

- http://myccss.weebly.com/uploads/1/3/5/8/13581150/5th_grade_common_core_reading_literature_activities_.pdf

Common Core Standards- Resource Page: This page provides a breakdown of the RL.5.3 standard and links to teaching tips, such as lessons and videos.

- http://rpd.net/pdfs/NACS_ELA/Fifth%20Grade/Reading%20Literature/RL.5.3.pdf

