

Grade 5 Playlist: Compare and Contrast the Structure of Two Informational Texts

Aligns with CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.5:

- Compare and contrast the overall structure (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in two or more texts.

Welcome

Informational texts present information about individuals, events, or ideas. Several authors may write about the same topic, and they will approach the information differently. For this reason, readers can compare and contrast two informational texts written on a similar topic. The texts might include different details, but they also might be organized differently. This playlist focuses on comparing and contrasting the structure of two informational texts on a similar topic.

Objectives

In this playlist, the student will learn and practice how to:

- identify the structure of an informational text, or a part of that text.
- compare and contrast the overall structures of two informational texts.

Review

Key Term

- **Structure** is the way that the author organizes information for a text. There are several common structures for informational texts.

Exploring the Standard

Within informational texts, there are four main types of structures: chronology, comparison, cause/effect, and problem/solution.

A Closer Look: Structures of Informational Texts

When an author uses **chronology**, he or she puts information in the order in which it happened in time. For example, biographies usually are written chronologically. First, the author discusses the individual's early life, and then the author moves on to events that happened as the person aged.

In a **comparison** text, the author will compare and contrast at least two different individuals, events, or ideas. There are different ways of using this structure. For example, the author may mention the topics at the beginning, and then compare and contrast them through the rest of the text. On the other hand, the author may discuss one idea in great detail at the beginning of the text. Then, the author will bring in the second idea and compare/contrast it to the first.



In a **cause-and-effect** piece, the author explores the reasons why something may have happened. The reasons are the causes, and the thing that happened is the effect. A cause-and-effect structure is useful in explaining why something happened. The words *because*, *if*, *then*, *as a result*, and *therefore*, often signal a cause-and-effect relationship.

A **problem-and-solution** structure is used to discuss a problem and present one or more possible solutions to the problem.

Read!

For a description of several text structures for informational texts, see this resource:

- <http://www.ereadingworksheets.com/text-structure/>

A Closer Look: Comparing and Contrasting Structures

Take a look at the following excerpts from two different informational texts.

“How Do Coral Reefs Form?” written by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

¹Coral reefs begin to form when free-swimming coral larvae attach to submerged rocks or other hard surfaces along the edges of islands or continents. As the corals grow and expand, reefs take on one of three major characteristic structures—fringing, barrier, or atoll. Fringing reefs, which are the most common, project seaward directly from the shore, forming borders along the shoreline and surrounding islands.

In order to identify the structure, think about how the author is presenting the information.

1. Are there events that happened in time order? Yes. The text is describing how coral reefs form, starting from the very beginning.
2. Is the author making a comparison between two things? No. There are not any comparisons in the text.
3. Is the author describing a cause and effect of something? No. The text describes the formation of coral reefs, but it does not explain what caused the coral larvae to attach to the rocks.
4. Is there a problem and solution? No. The text does not describe a problem in the formation of coral reefs.

This text has uses a chronology structure. The text describes the steps in the formation of coral reefs.



Teaching Notes: Compare and Contrast the Structure of Two Informational Texts

The goal of RI.5.5 is for students to be able to compare and contrast the structures of two different informational texts effectively. 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. Assign students two grade-appropriate informational texts or excerpts from informational texts. Direct students to look for signal words that can help them determine the structure of each text. Then, have them identify the structure of each text.
2. Break up the class into groups of three to four. Direct students to create a Venn diagram, comparing and contrasting the structures of the two texts.

Writing Prompts

1. Ask students to pick a topic of interest, conduct some research, and then write two paragraphs about the topic using one or two different text structures.
2. Instruct students to switch essays with a student who used a different text structure. The pairs should discuss their structures, and then write a paragraph comparing and contrasting their essays.

Additional Resources

Consider these additional resources when teaching RI.5.5:

“20 Strategies to Teach Text Structure”: This resource provides teachers with 20 different instructional approaches to teaching students about text structure.

- <http://education.illinoisstate.edu/downloads/casei/3-01-04-handout%20TextStructureResources%201.pdf>

“Teaching Comprehension and Text Structure in the Content Areas”: This resource provides teachers with instruction about teaching text structure, according to the Common Core standards.

- <https://keystoliteracy.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Teaching-Comprehension-and-Text-Structure-in-the-Content-Areas.pdf>

“Text Structure”: This resource includes several graphic organizers and other reproducibles that can be used in the classroom.

- http://www.paterson.k12.nj.us/11_departments/language-arts-docs/resources/Reading%20Resources/Text%20Structures/Text%20Structures/Text%20Structures.pdf

