

Grade 3 Playlist: Same Author, Different Story

Aligns with CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.9:

- Compare and contrast the themes, settings, and plots of stories written by the same author about the same or similar characters (e.g., in books from a series).

Welcome

Many times, authors choose to write their stories in a series. Stories in a series typically share the same characters, but have different plots, themes, and even settings. Some well-known examples of book series are *The Magic Tree House* series by Mary Pope Osborne, *The Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series by Jeff Kinney, *Clifford the Big Red Dog* series by Norman Bridwell, and *The Berenstain Bears* series by Stan and Jan Berenstain.

Objectives

In this playlist, students will learn how to:

- compare and contrast the **themes** of stories written by the same author.
- compare and contrast the **settings** of stories written by the same author.
- compare and contrast the **plots** of stories written by the same author.

Review

Key Terms

- A **theme** is the lesson or main idea of the story.
- The **setting** is where and when a story takes place.
- The **plot** is the storyline, or the sequence of the events within the story.

Exploring the Standard

When comparing or contrasting two stories, it is always important to understand each of the stories separately. The first step is to take the time to really read and understand the first story. Ask good questions while reading, such as: What happened in the story? When and where does the story take place? Who were the characters in the story? What is the author's purpose for writing this story? Do not go on to the second story until the first story is completely understood.

Then, repeat the process for the second story. Do not start comparing the two stories yet! Ask the same questions about the second story. Develop a strong understanding of the plot, setting, characters, and theme of the second story as well.

The final step is to compare and contrast the stories. Think about how they are similar and how they are different. Remember, even though some of the characters might be the same, they are doing different things and feeling different emotions. This is because the theme of each story is unique.



Watch!

In this video, the narrator takes a closer look at two books about the adventures of Curious George. Pay close attention to how the narrator reviews each book by itself before comparing the two books with each other.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NaOzw2WzDDo>

A Closer Look: Comparing Two Beatrix Potter Stories

Two well-known stories by Beatrix Potter also can help readers discover similarities and differences in theme, setting, and plot. The first story is called “The Tale of Peter Rabbit.” While reading this passage, remember to ask important questions: Who are the characters? What are they doing? What is the message the author is trying to tell readers? It might be helpful to write these thoughts and answers down on a piece of paper.

Example 1

Read the first few paragraphs of “The Tale of Peter Rabbit.” What questions can be answered so far?

¹Once upon a time there were four little Rabbits, and their names were—

²Flopsy,

³Mopsy,

⁴Cotton-tail,

⁵and Peter.

⁶They lived with their Mother in a sand-bank, underneath the root of a very big fir-tree.

⁷‘Now my dears,’ said old Mrs. Rabbit one morning, ‘you may go into the fields or down the lane, but don’t go into Mr. McGregor’s garden: your Father had an accident there; he was put in a pie by Mrs. McGregor.’

Read!

Continue reading the first story by visiting this website:

- <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/14838/14838-h/14838-h.htm>

The second passage is also by Beatrix Potter. It is a story called, “The Tale of the Flopsy Bunnies.” Just as before, think about the setting, plot, and characters while reading. Just like earlier, it might be helpful to write these thoughts and answers down on a piece of paper.



Teaching Notes: Same Author, Different Story

The goal of RL.3.9 is for students to compare and contrast how one author uses theme, setting, plot, and character in a series of books or stories. The following information contains ideas that teachers can incorporate into their classrooms as well as additional resources to peruse and integrate into instruction as appropriate.

Activities

1. As a long-term activity, allow students to choose two books in their favorite series and do a comparison themselves. Have students use graphic organizers to keep track of information as they read.
 - For character studies, students can use a graphic map to show how characters grow and change between books:
<http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/graphicmap/>
 - Students can also use Venn diagrams to show similarities and differences between plots, settings, theme or characters:
http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/venn_diagrams/
2. Sometimes students struggle the most with finding a differences in the theme of each story. To practice identifying themes, consider reading some of Aesop's fables with students. Comparing and contrasting Aesop's themes and morals is an excellent way to help students gain confidence in identifying the theme of a story.
3. Use shorter passages to discuss as a class before having students read on their own. Even lower-level picture books written by the same author are a simple way to help students understand the process of comparing and contrasting two stories. Read as a group, and pause to discuss each individual story first before moving on to discuss the similarities and differences as a class. Or, split the class up into thirds after reading both stories. One-third of the class should focus on the similarities/differences in the settings, one-third should focus on the similarities/ differences in the plots, and the final one-third should focus on the similarities/ differences in the themes. Then, have them report to the class as a whole and discuss as a large group.
4. Reading logs help to keep students on track with their reading each day if they are reading chapter books. It also allows them to look back at major plot events and characters without rereading the book. Encourage students to write about the characters, setting, theme, and plot for each 30 minutes of reading, or each completed chapter.
5. Sometimes settings can be hard to describe, but easier to draw. Allow students to illustrate the setting for each story. Then, have them hand both illustrations to a neighbor to "circle the differences."

