

Nonfiction Comprehension: Compare and Contrast



Third Grade

Reading

Teach your students to compare and contrast to boost their comprehension! Use this lesson to teach your students to compare and contrast information from two nonfiction texts on the same topic.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to compare and contrast information from two nonfiction texts on the same topic.

Materials and preparation

- Class set of the [Graphic Organizer Template: Venn Diagram](#) worksheet
- Class set of the [Compare and Contrast Whales](#) worksheet
- Two nonfiction picture books on the same topic, such as [Hark! A Shark! All About Sharks](#) by Bonnie Worth and [Sharks: Fun Facts Photo Book](#) by Susie Alex
- Two nonfiction texts or picture books on the same topic (one set per group)
- Class set of index cards
- Pen and pencil

Key terms

- compare
- contrast

Attachments

- [Graphic Organizer Template: Venn Diagram \(PDF\)](#)
- [Compare and Contrast Whales \(PDF\)](#)

Introduction (3 minutes)

- Hold up a pencil and a pen. Ask students to think about what is the same and what is different about each of the items.
- Instruct students to turn and talk to a partner about what is the same about the two items. Then, share out as a class.
- Have them turn and talk to a different partner about what is different about the two items. Share out as a class.
- Tell students that they just used an important reading skill, comparing and contrasting, to look at two different things. Explain that this is a powerful strategy for readers because it helps our brains make connections between ideas and information.
- Read aloud the learning objective and have students repeat it.

EL

Beginning:

- Have students hold and manipulate the pen and pencil to explore before noting similarities and differences.
- Pair students with a supportive peer or one that speaks the same home language (L1).

Get more lesson plans at <https://www.education.com/lesson-plans/>

Find worksheets, games, lessons & more at [education.com/resources](https://www.education.com/resources)

Intermediate:

- Provide students with sentence stems, such as "They are different/the same because ____."

Explicit Instruction/Teacher modeling (15 minutes)

- Display a copy of the Graphic Organizer Template: Venn Diagram worksheet and explain the purpose of it. Share that the center circle is for when we **compare**, which is when we say how something is similar, or the same, as something else. Tell them that the outer circles are for when we **contrast**, which is when we say how something is different from another thing.
- Show the students two nonfiction picture books, such as *Hark! A Shark! All About Sharks* by Bonnie Worth and *Sharks: Fun Facts Photo Book* by Susie Alex. Tell learners that you will read the two books aloud and show how to compare and contrast them.
- Point out that both books are on the same topic, so you know they will cover much of the same information. However, the writing styles may be different and the specific information may be different.
- Read aloud the two texts, and think aloud as you model filling out some of the Graphic Organizer Template: Venn Diagram worksheet.

EL

Beginning:

- Give students a Graphic Organizer Template: Venn Diagram worksheet to complete and follow along during the teacher modeling.

Intermediate:

- Ask a student to summarize the purpose and sections of the Venn diagram for the class.

Guided Practice (20 minutes)

- Divide the class into small groups, and give each student a Graphic Organizer Template: Venn Diagram worksheet.
- Instruct the small groups to add more information to the graphic organizer based on the two texts that were read aloud.
- Give each group a set of nonfiction texts or picture books on the same topic, and tell students that they will read the texts together, looking for similarities and differences. Tell them that they will record the information on a larger Venn diagram.
- Distribute a piece of chart paper with a Venn diagram on it and a marker to each group. Call on a nonvolunteer to explain the purpose of the graphic organizer, and call on another student to explain what type of information goes in each section. Tell groups that they will present their graphic organizers to the rest of the class to teach their peers about their topic.
- Direct students to read their two nonfiction texts on the same topic and fill out the graphic organizer. Circulate while students work to offer support as needed.
- Have students present their graphic organizers to their peers.

EL

Beginning:

- Invite students to work in a small, teacher-led group. Allow them to access the whole group lesson text and prompt them to find only one more similarity and one more difference to add to the chart.
- Give students two simple, accessible texts with a partially completed Venn diagram.

Intermediate:

- Pair students intentionally with supportive peers and more advanced ELs.

Independent working time (15 minutes)

- Call on a nonvolunteer to explain the sections of the Venn diagram to the class. Remind students that each section should have specific information from the text.
- Distribute a copy of the Compare and Contrast Whales worksheet to each student and instruct them to read the two passages, looking for similarities and differences. Then, have them complete the Venn diagram at the end of the worksheet with three pieces of information in each section.

EL

Beginning:

- Have students work in a small, teacher-led group. Read aloud the text to them and give them two different colored highlighters. Have them locate the similarities and differences in the text with the highlighters.
- Allow students to compare and contrast orally.

Intermediate:

- Have students talk to a partner about the sections of the Venn diagram before sharing with the class.
- Allow students access to reference materials in their L1 or English to look up any unfamiliar words.

Related books and/or media

- Find [interactive books](#) for each child's level.

Differentiation

Support:

- Put students with supportive peers as they complete group work.
- Give students two nonfiction texts in an audio format.

Enrichment:

- Challenge advanced students to compare and contrast more complex texts. Have them create a digital presentation of the similarities and differences using a program, such as Keynote or Prezi.

Assessment (5 minutes)

- Give each student an index card for an Exit Ticket and write the following questions on the board:
 - What information from the lesson will be important to know three years from now? Why?
- Instruct students to respond to the questions on their index cards.

EL

Beginning:

- Simplify the question for students. For example, "Why is comparing and contrasting important?"

Intermediate:

- Provide a sentence frame for students to use such as " ____ will be important to know three years from now because ____."

Review and closing (2 minutes)

- Put students into partnerships and have them share their answer on the Exit Ticket.
- Reiterate that comparing and contrasting is a powerful tool for readers because it helps our brain make connections between pieces of information. It helps us understand and remember information better,

Get more lesson plans at <https://www.education.com/lesson-plans/>

Find worksheets, games, lessons & more at [education.com/resources](https://www.education.com/resources)

which makes us better readers.

EL

Beginning:

- Pair students with a supportive peer or one who speaks the same L1.

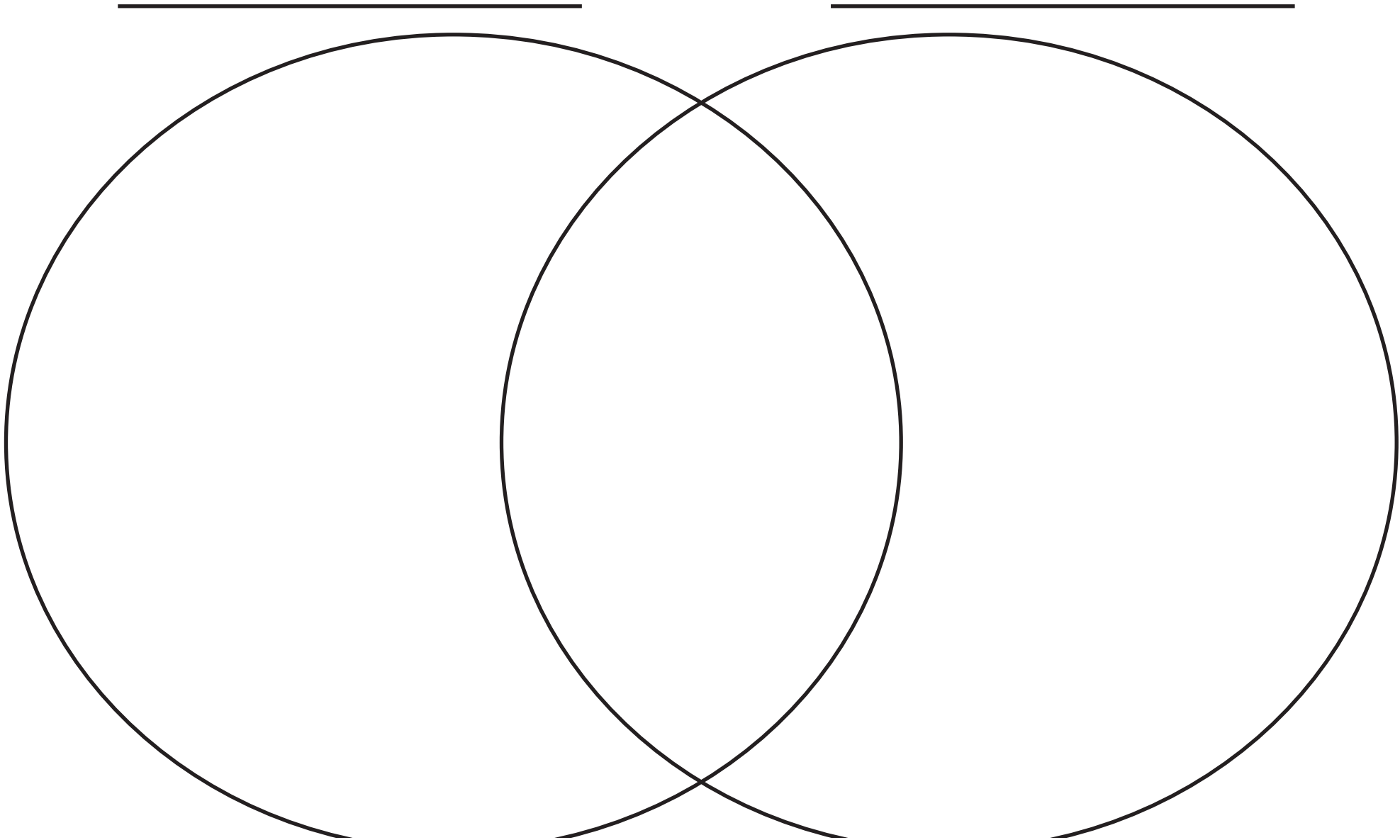
Intermediate:

- Have students share their Exit Ticket answers with the whole class.
- Ask a student to summarize the key points about comparing and contrasting with a partner, and then with the whole class.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Venn Diagram



Get more lesson plans at <https://www.education.com/lesson-plans/>

Find worksheets, games, lessons & more at [education.com/resources](https://www.education.com/resources)

Compare and Contrast Whales

Directions: Read the passages below and then complete the Venn diagram with information from the two texts.

Blue Whales

Blue whales are the largest animals currently on Earth. These whales can grow up to 100 feet long and weigh up to 200 tons.

Just what do these large animals eat? Their diet consists only of tiny shrimp-like animals called krill. After taking a big gulp of seawater, the blue whale's massive tongue forces the water out of its mouth through its baleen*. Only the krill is left behind and swallowed. A blue whale can eat up to four tons of krill in a single day.

Blue whales have been found in every ocean of the world. Since whales live in the ocean, they are marine animals. They swim in small groups but are usually found alone or in pairs. During winter you will find whales moving to a new place. Animals migrate, or move to a different place, for many reasons. Blue whales migrate to eat and have their young in warmer waters.

Blue whales are endangered. This means they are threatened by extinction*. During the early 1900s people would hunt for the blue whale to use its oil for lamps and other things. The blue whale can live up to ninety years.

***baleen:** a hard substance in the mouths of some whales that is attached to their jaw and hangs down and "locks" together.

***extinction:** When an animal goes extinct, that means it is no longer anywhere in the world. They have all died out.

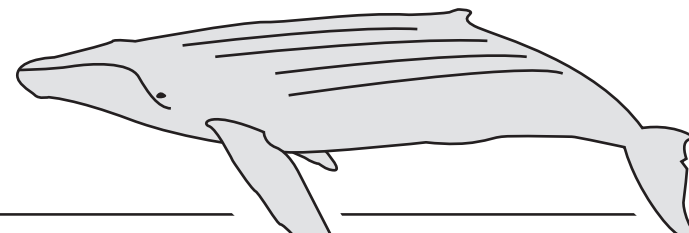
Whales

There are two different kinds of whales. Some whales have teeth, while others filter plankton through a part in their upper jaw called baleen. It is made of keratin, like our fingernails.

The largest whales are blue whales, which grow up to 100 feet in length and 200 tons in weight. They are the largest animal known to have ever existed, even larger than dinosaurs!

Whales are mammals, so they breathe air, are warm-blooded, nurse their young, and have body hair. They have a layer of fat under their skin called blubber that helps keep them warm in the cold ocean water. They breathe through their blowholes by shooting air out of the blowholes and then inhaling into their lungs. Most dives underwater are only five to eight minutes long, but the blue whale can hold its breath for up to 40 minutes, and deep divers like bottlenose dolphins and sperm whales can stay underwater for 90 to 120 minutes.

Whales are estimated to live up to 77 years old, but scientists are not sure if that number is correct. Some people say that whales have been known to live up to 150 years old!



Get more lesson plans at <https://www.education.com/lesson-plans/>

Find worksheets, games, lessons & more at [education.com/resources](https://www.education.com/resources)

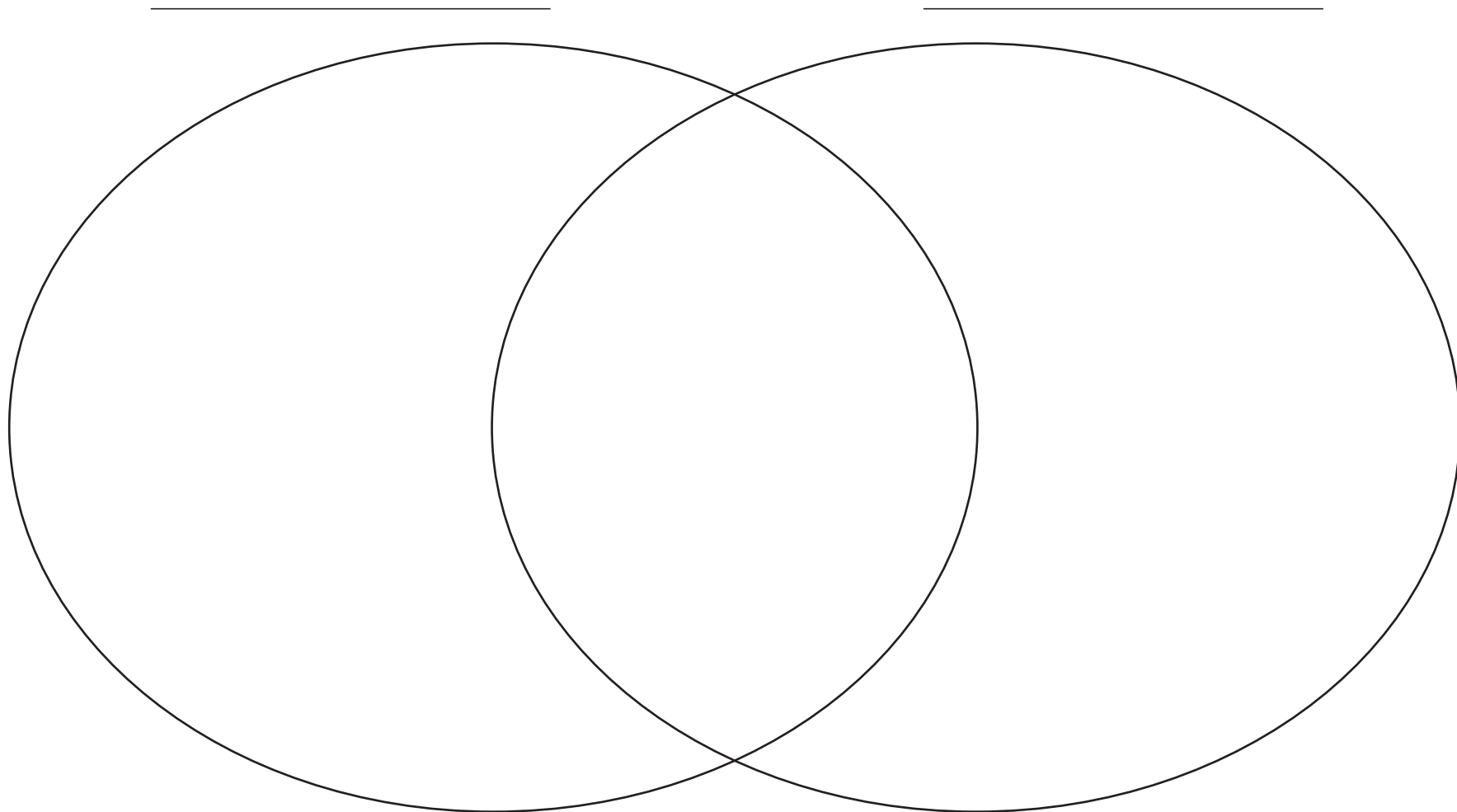
Name _____

Date _____

Compare and Contrast Whales

To **compare** is to say how something is similar to, or the same as, something else. This information goes in the center of the Venn diagram.

To **contrast** is to say how something is different from something else. This information goes in the outer circles of the Venn diagram.



Get more lesson plans at <https://www.education.com/lesson-plans/>

Find worksheets, games, lessons & more at [education.com/resources](https://www.education.com/resources)