

## Focused Compare and Contrast

This strategy requires students to focus on teacher-selected factors when considering similarities and differences and then to:

- Categorize each factor as a similarity or a difference
- Explain the similarity or difference
- Assess the significance of each
- Interpret, evaluate, and draw conclusions

The main difference between this strategy and Open Compare and Contrast is that in this one the factors to be considered are selected by the teacher, thus ensuring that those most significant to the purpose of the lesson are included.

The completed graphic organizer can be used as a planner for writing.

### Teacher Preparation:

1. Fill in the following boxes at the top of the graphic organizer (6-2-3):
  - a. Items to be compared/contrasted
  - b. Purpose
  - c. Factors to considerMake a copy for each student.
2. Prepare an overhead, poster, or other display of the Focused Compare and Contrast questions (6-2-2) OR make a copy for each student.

### Special Note: Modeling the Skill

Before introducing the lesson in which students will use this strategy, prepare a sample lesson and model the use of the graphic organizer all the way through.

### Lesson Plan:

1. Discuss the material from which students will draw their information.
2. Review the factors to be considered.
3. Review the Focused Compare and Contrast questions.
4. Review the graphic organizer, showing how each item listed in the “Factors to Consider” box needs to be entered in the “Factors Considered” column, either in the “How Alike” section or the “How Different” section and the box to the right of each factor filled in.
5. Emphasize the importance of the conclusion.
6. Students work their way through the graphic organizer either individually, in small groups, or as a large group.

Instructions to students:

  - Take each factor, consider it, and decide whether it goes in the top section or the bottom
  - Fill in the box to the right of each factor
  - Reach a conclusion
7. In a class-wide discussion, students share the similarities and differences and the conclusions.

## **Focused Compare and Contrast**

1. What kinds of similarities and differences are significant to the purpose of the comparison and contrast?
2. What similarities fall into these categories?
3. What differences fall into these categories?
4. What pattern(s) of similarities and differences are revealed?
5. What conclusion or interpretation is suggested by the comparison and contrast that is significant to its purpose?

Swartz, Robert. *Infusing the Teaching of Critical and Creative Thinking into Content Instruction*, 1995.

