



**5th Grade**

# **Compare/Contrast**

- Make critical comparisons across texts
- Compare important details about a topic, using different sources of information, including books, magazines, newspapers and online resources

## What Students Need to Know:

- comparisons
- important details
- topic
- sources of information
  - books
  - magazines
  - newspapers
  - online resources

## What Students Need to be Able to Do:

- make (critical comparisons)
- compare (details about topic)
- use (different sources of information)

## Important Vocabulary

**Comparison and contrast**—An organization structure of text in which a description of similarities and differences among two or more things occurs.

# COMPARING AND CONTRASTING

When students compare and contrast, they are finding similarities and differences in what they are reading. Help students understand the concept of comparing and contrasting by making analogies to synonyms and antonyms, how things are alike and how they are different and identifying similarities and differences.

Some nonfiction text is organized used a compare/contrast framework. In this type of writing, a writer compares two ideas, events, or phenomena, showing how they are similar and different. The writer states the issues or concepts being compared and explains them in enough detail to help the reader understand why the comparison is significant. Within the text the writers use description as well as comparison/contrast to make points. There are some words that often signal such a text:

- while
- yet
- but
- rather
- either
- like and unlike
- some
- as opposed to
- as well as
- on the other hand
- although
- the same
- similarly

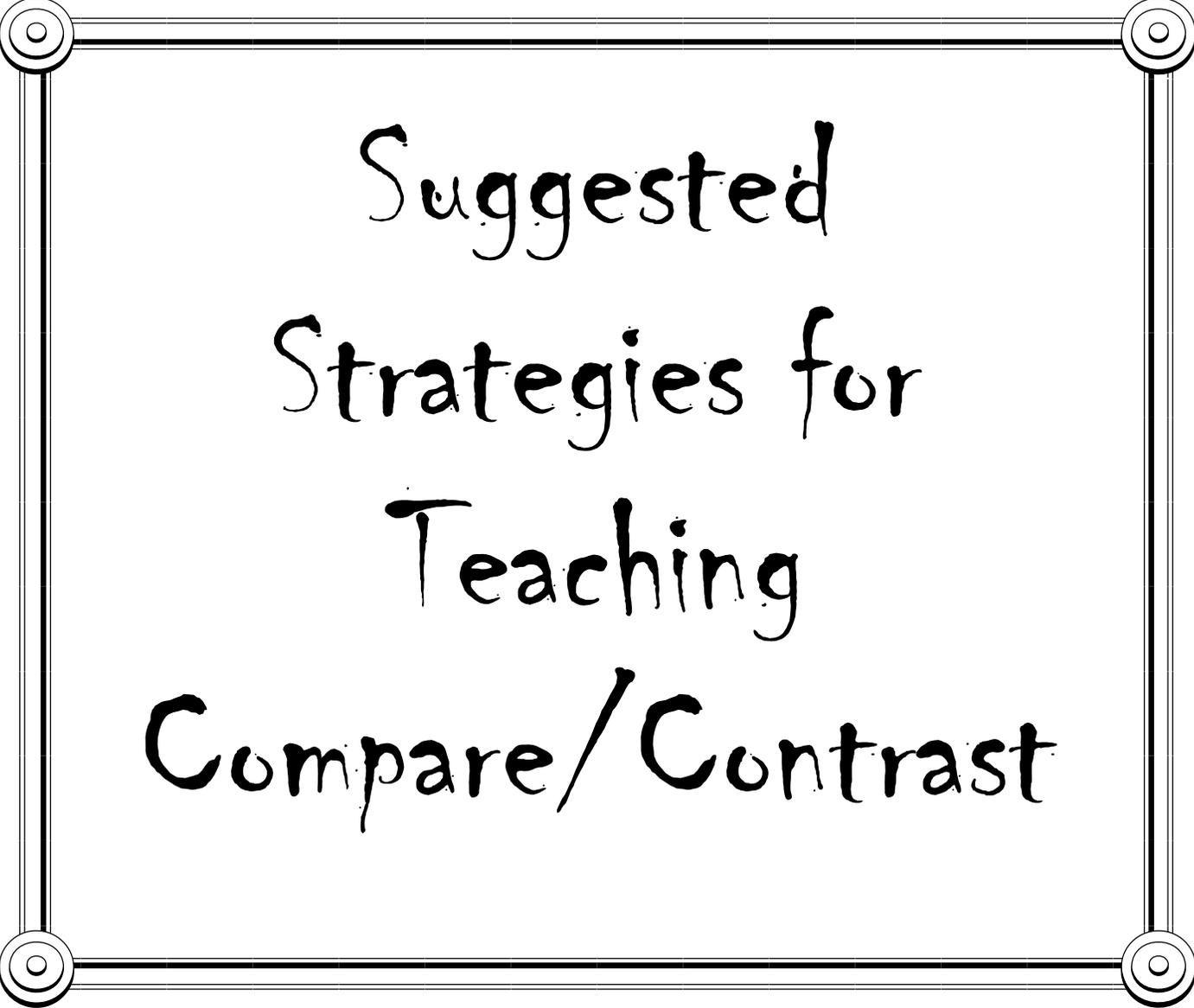
In *Effective Reading Strategies* Rasinski and Padak state “One important aspect of comprehension is the ability to make thoughtful comparisons across texts, between events within stories, and across other aspects of stories that students read. For many students making comparisons can be a daunting task, and neither textbooks nor teachers always explain the process sufficiently.” If this is true, then we must work even harder at providing those sufficient explanations.

Fountas and Pinnell say, “Help students compare texts. Students are often expected to respond to a series of questions that require reading several different texts, sometimes of different genres. Because your students are reading many different texts in guided reading, literature study and independent reading, you can easily guide them to compare and contrast those texts. They can compare characters’ appearance, actions, motives, points of view, and so forth; plots or events; and settings. They can compare fiction, nonfiction and poetic texts on the same topic or with the same setting (geographical or historical). Comparing texts helps them delve into the deeper meaning of complex concepts such as “heroism” or “voyages.”

## QUESTIONS FROM PREVIOUS TESTS

Explain why some scientists today believe that there is water on Mars and some scientists do not. (2 points)

How do Julia's feelings about the ring change from the beginning of the selection to the end? Explain your answer. (2 points)

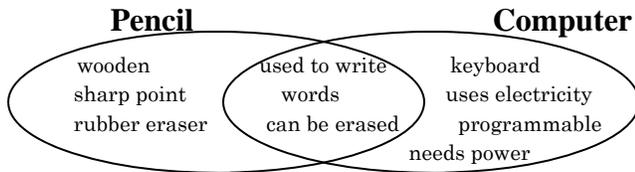


Suggested  
Strategies for  
Teaching  
Compare/Contrast

# Compare and Contrast Game

Write the names of a variety of objects on small cards. Pairs of students should pick two cards, then fill in a Venn diagram identifying ways in which the objects are alike and different. When they have finished, they should share the likenesses and differences with other members of the class without identifying the objects. Students should infer from the clues to determine what two objects are being compared.

Example: pencil, computer



## Sample Objects to Compare:

Horse, bus, umbrella, banana, purse, potato chip bag, cloud, eagle, pencil, computer, paper, cow, desk, mug, clock, tape, calculator, phone, bookshelf, bobsled, ocean, diamond, spaghetti, photograph, violin, rope, plate, laundry, litter, window, lion, moon, magazine

# Compare and Contrast Signal Words

Teach students that there are certain words that usually indicate a need to compare or contrast information. When they see these words, they should know what they are expected to do. In addition, the wording in questions addressing these skills does not vary a great deal.

## Compare Signal Words:

- All
- As well as
- At the same time
- Both
- Like
- Same as
- Similarly, similar to

## Compare Questions:

- How are \_\_\_ and \_\_\_ alike?
- What is the same about \_\_\_ and \_\_\_?
- Compare \_\_\_ and \_\_\_.
- How was \_\_\_ like \_\_\_?

## Contrast Signal Words:

- Although
- As opposed to
- Compared with
- Different from
- Either . . . Or
- However
- Nevertheless
- Not only . . . But
- Though
- Unlike

## Contrast Questions:

- What are the differences between \_\_\_ and \_\_\_?
- How is a \_\_\_ different from a \_\_\_?

Compare/Contrast text structure requires the reader to be a shopper — looking for what's the same and what's different, then making decisions based on those observations.

# Venn Diagrams

Venn diagrams are perhaps one of the best graphic organizers to use in helping students learn to compare and contrast information. When beginning to use Venn diagrams, determine first of all what two things you want to compare. It might be two versions of a story, two characters found in the same story, or changes in a character from the beginning to the end of a story.

Model for the students how to complete a Venn diagram to compare and contrast, explicitly talking about the types of information that go in the circles and the intersection of the circles. Then guide students through the process by having them tell you information to put on the Venn diagram. Eventually, your goal is that students can complete a Venn diagram on their own, placing information in the correct places. This final step is one that is often omitted. Teachers commonly use Venn diagrams to compare and contrast, but students many times have no experience creating one by themselves.

## Use Venn Diagrams to Compare:

- ♦ *A character before and after an event in his/her life*
- ♦ *Two different novels with the same theme*
- ♦ *A short story and a novel*
- ♦ *Student's life to that of a character in a book*
- ♦ *Time period of a novel to present-day times*

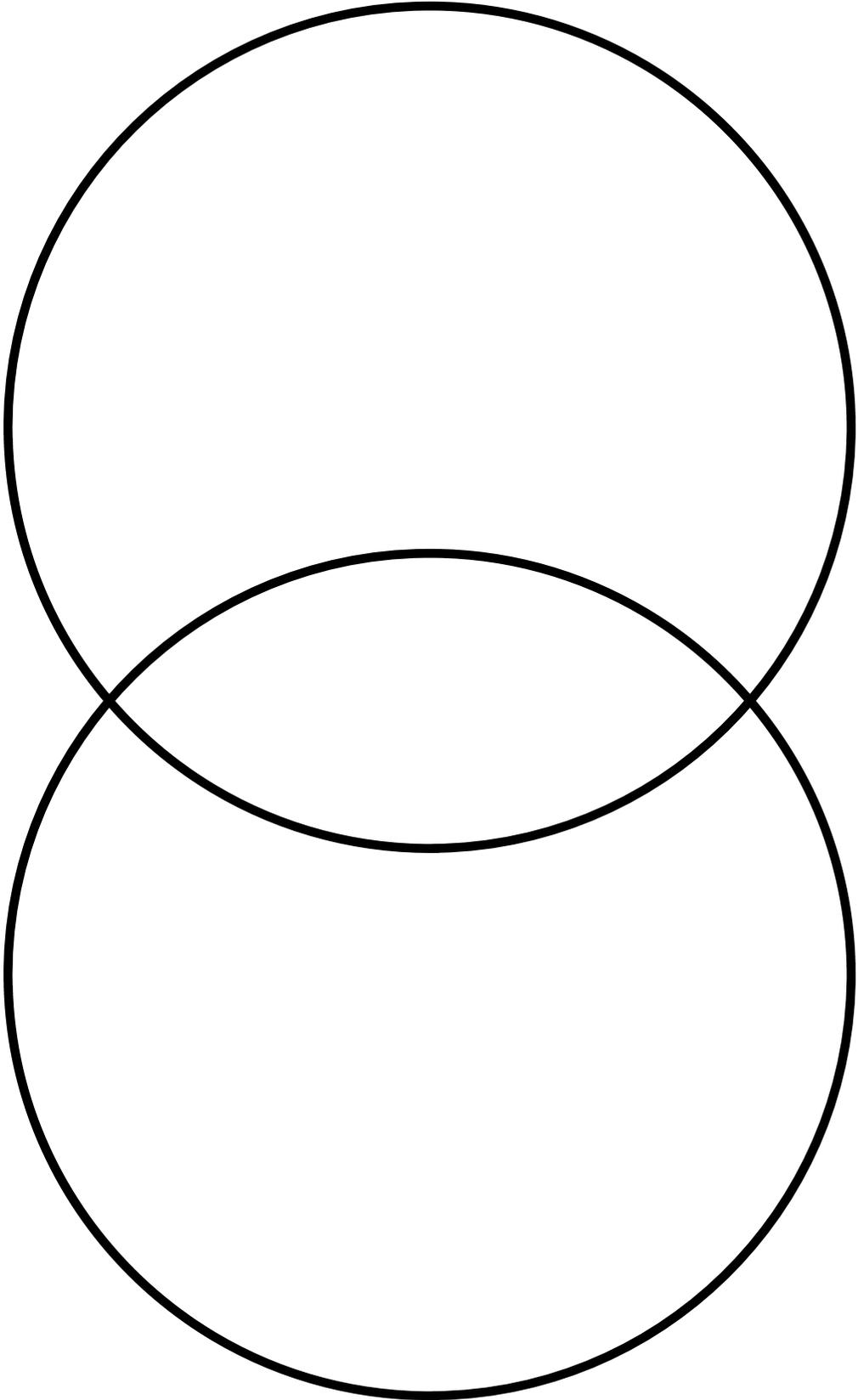
# T-Charts and Double Entry Journals

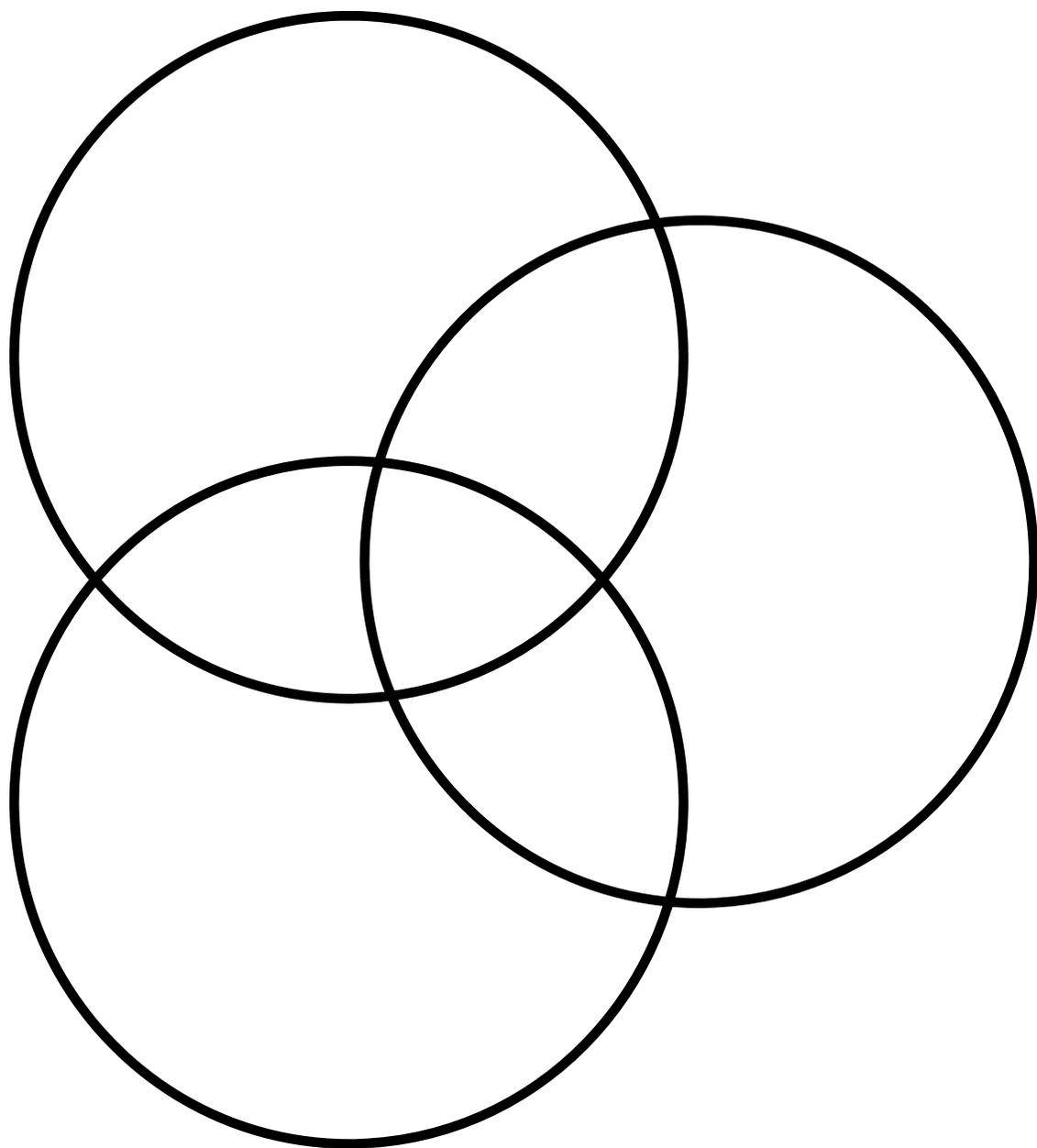
T-charts are another common graphic organizer used to help students learn to compare and contrast elements of fiction. T-charts have been found more than once on proficiency tests. These charts have compare/contrast questions at the top of each column, and the students are asked to supply answers to the questions in each column. Typical questions might be “How are Mary and John alike?” and “How are Mary and John different?”

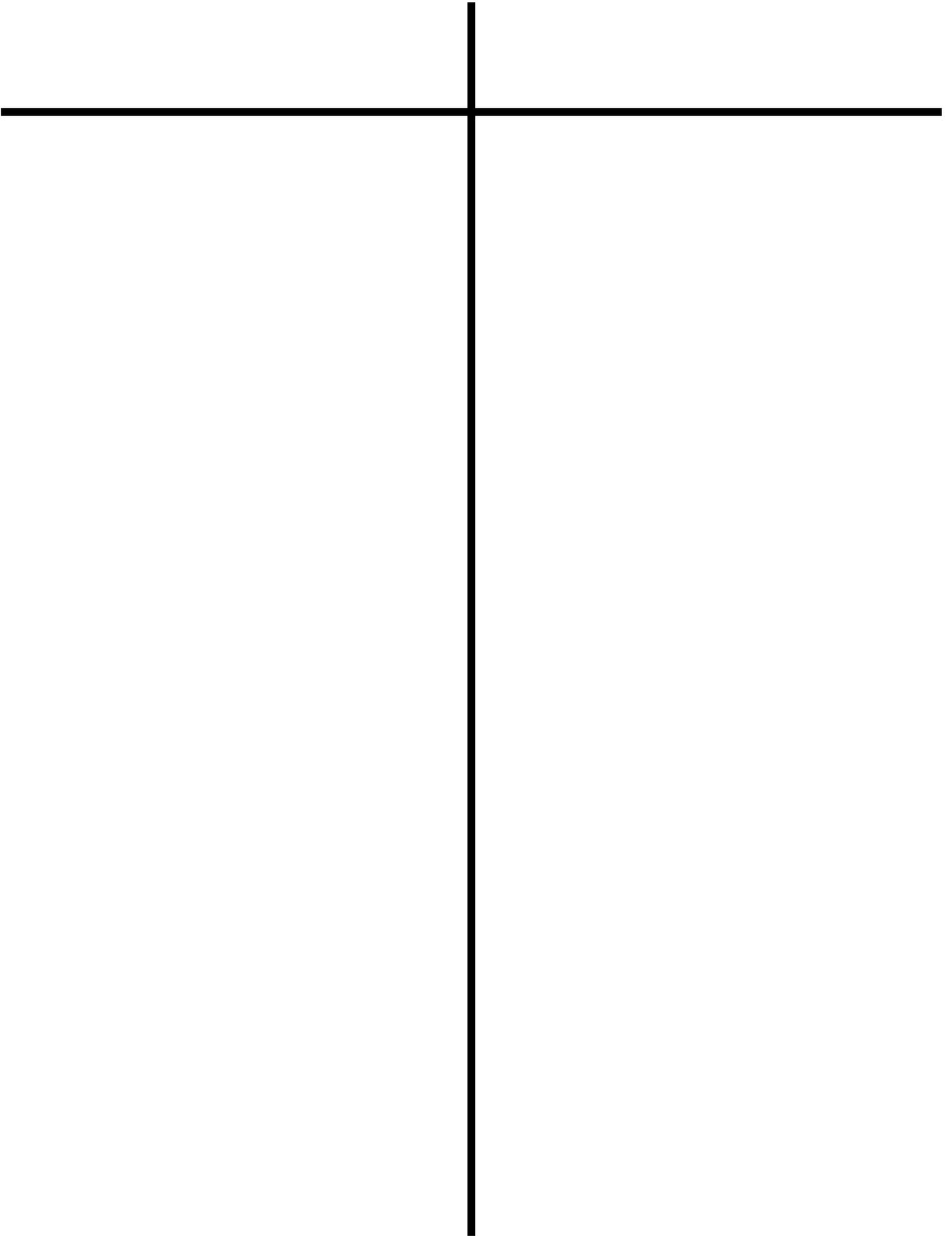
Other types of T-charts might simply be labeled with characters' names, names of places, or titles of stories. Students are then asked to make notes about the selection under the correct headings.

# Just Like

Readers select a character from a book and list traits of that character in the first column. For each trait, readers need to read across the columns to decide if they also have that trait (column 2), if someone they know has that trait (column 3), or if another character has that trait. A Just Like form is included in this handbook.







# Just Like

Book \_\_\_\_\_

The Character \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Character traits</b>	<b>Like myself?</b>	<b>Like a friend?</b>	<b>Like another character?</b>

# Feature Matrix

A feature matrix is a table that allows students to compare the characteristics of several different things. Since it contains information that has been organized into categories, it is a quick way to interpret a large quantity of data and see patterns of similarity and difference.

1. Label the matrix at the top of the page
2. Identify the things or objects to be compared and write them in the column down the left side of the template.
3. Note the characteristics to be compared and write each in one of the rows across the top of the template.
4. Determine whether each object listed in the column has any of the characteristics listed in the rows, and if there is a match, place an X in the box.
5. Continue to evaluate and mark each object in the column.
6. Look for similarities by noting patterns of X's and look for differences by noting blank boxes.

Encourage students to discuss similarities and differences and draw conclusions.

	c a t	d o g	c o w	s n a i l	l a m b	f i s h	h o r s e	a p e
legs	x	x	x		x		x	x
fur	x	x	x		x		x	x
shell				x				
fins						x		
pet	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
live in water				x		x		
walk	x	x	x		x		x	x

# Same or Different Book

Select a familiar story for which there are several versions. Fairy tales work well for this activity. Students create a book that illustrates how the versions are either alike or different.

Follow these steps to make the book:

- Divide the paper into halves, labeling each half with one of the book titles
- If students are making a “different” book, they draw a picture of something that is different in each of the stories
- If they are making a “same” book, they draw a picture of something that was the same in each of the stories
- Students may include as many pages as they like, or you may suggest topics for the pages such as characters, setting, problem, etc.



# Character Charts

When analyzing characters, students are often taught to look at their physical appearance, their actions, their feelings, and the reactions of other characters to them. By closely examining these , aspects of characters, students can make inferences about them. If you want students to compare characters to each other, create a chart that leads students to examine multiple aspects of each of the characters. This chart might look like the one pictured below:

Character	Physical Appearance	Actions	Feelings	Reaction of Others
Sarah				
John				
Carrie				

After students complete the chart, have them write comparisons of the characters using information from the chart.

## *Other Headings for Comparison Charts*

- Characters
- Setting
- Illustrations
- Language
- Problem
- Resolution

# Write about Comparisons/Contrasts

Many students learn through writing. Following are some possible writing topics to help students learn to compare and contrast:

- Rewrite a story, changing the setting. Students must think about whether the original setting worked for the plot and theme. In making the change, they will have to consider how the new setting affects these and other aspects of the story and will have to accommodate accordingly.
- Strengthen students' understanding of how point of view shapes a story by asking them to tell the story from a viewpoint of a different character.
- Changing the beginning or ending of a story or adding another episode to the story will give students an opportunity to grapple first hand with aspects of plot.
- If a story goes back and forth in time, have students tell the story sequentially. This will help them see that flashbacks are an effective literary mechanism.
- Rewrite a story as a folktale or fairy tale, change poetry to prose, or make a short story into a play. These activities will give students insights into different genres.
- Change adjectives and/or the formality of the language to help students see how these changes can alter the mood of a story.
- Students can learn about author's style by modeling the writing of a story after a particular book. Pattern books work well for this activity.
- Encourage students to practice using similes, metaphors, personification, irony, hyperbole and understatements so they will have a better understanding of these literary devices when they are reading.



# Story Map Showing Character Change

The graphic organizer shown below can be used to help students understand the change in a character from the beginning to the end of a story.

## Turning Point

Character at Beginning of Story	Events that Caused Change	Character at End of Story

# More Ways to Examine Characters

Try one or more of the following to help students compare/contrast characters they encounter while reading:

- Make a progressive list of words/phrases to describe a character while reading a story. Examine the list to determine how the character has changed throughout the story.
- Write a description of a character, a feeling about a character or an opinion of a character at the beginning of reading a book. Then write the same when the book is finished. Compare the two and tell how the character has changed and how your feelings about the character have changed.
- Make a timeline of a character's life or development as a story progresses.

# Comparing Setting

Following are some activities to use when working on comparing and contrasting settings:

- Present the setting visually as a map showing a journey, a grid map or pictures built up progressively as the story is read, a travel brochure or poster, or a class mural, collage or montage.
- Describe a setting from different viewpoints.
- Discuss descriptive passages to see how a writer has made them vivid, then encourage students to use the same devices in their writing.
- Make progressive charts of descriptive words to use later as the basis for writing.

# Changes in Characters

Character at Beginning of  
Story

Events That Caused Change

Character at End of Story

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# Story Comparisons

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Title:</b>
<b>Setting</b>	<b>Setting</b>
<b>Time Period</b>	<b>Time Period</b>
<b>Conflicts</b>	<b>Conflicts</b>
<b>Resolution</b>	<b>Resolution</b>
<b>Development of Main Character</b>	<b>Development of Main Character</b>
<b>Challenges</b>	<b>Challenges</b>

# Theme Study

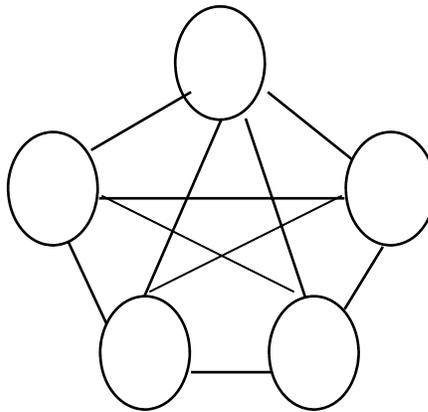
Have students read a variety of books centered on the same theme. Create a class chart that summarizes the main points of each story. Lists of words used to describe similar characters might also be listed on the chart. These can help in defining relationships among characters in the books.

Summarize the theme study by asking questions similar to the following:

- What is the author's intention?
- What have we learned about . . . that we didn't know before?
- Which books remind us most of ourselves? How?
- How do different people cope with . . . ?
- How can our "stereotypes" . . . be misleading?

# Character Sociogram

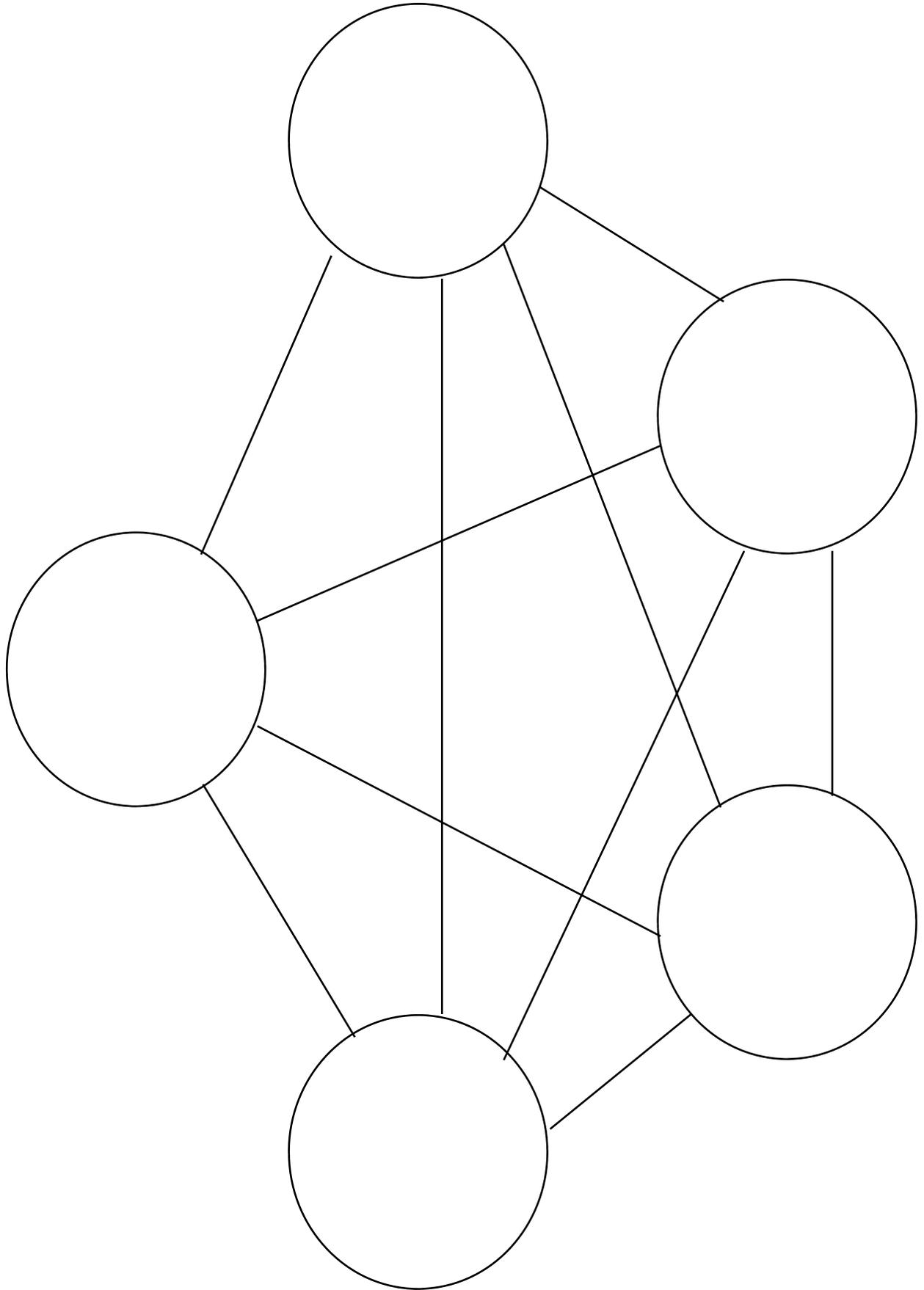
Sociograms show the relationships of people to each other. Identify the major characters from a story that has been read and place their names in the circles on a sociogram similar to that pictured below. On the lines that connect the character names, write a brief statement that addresses the relationship of the two characters.



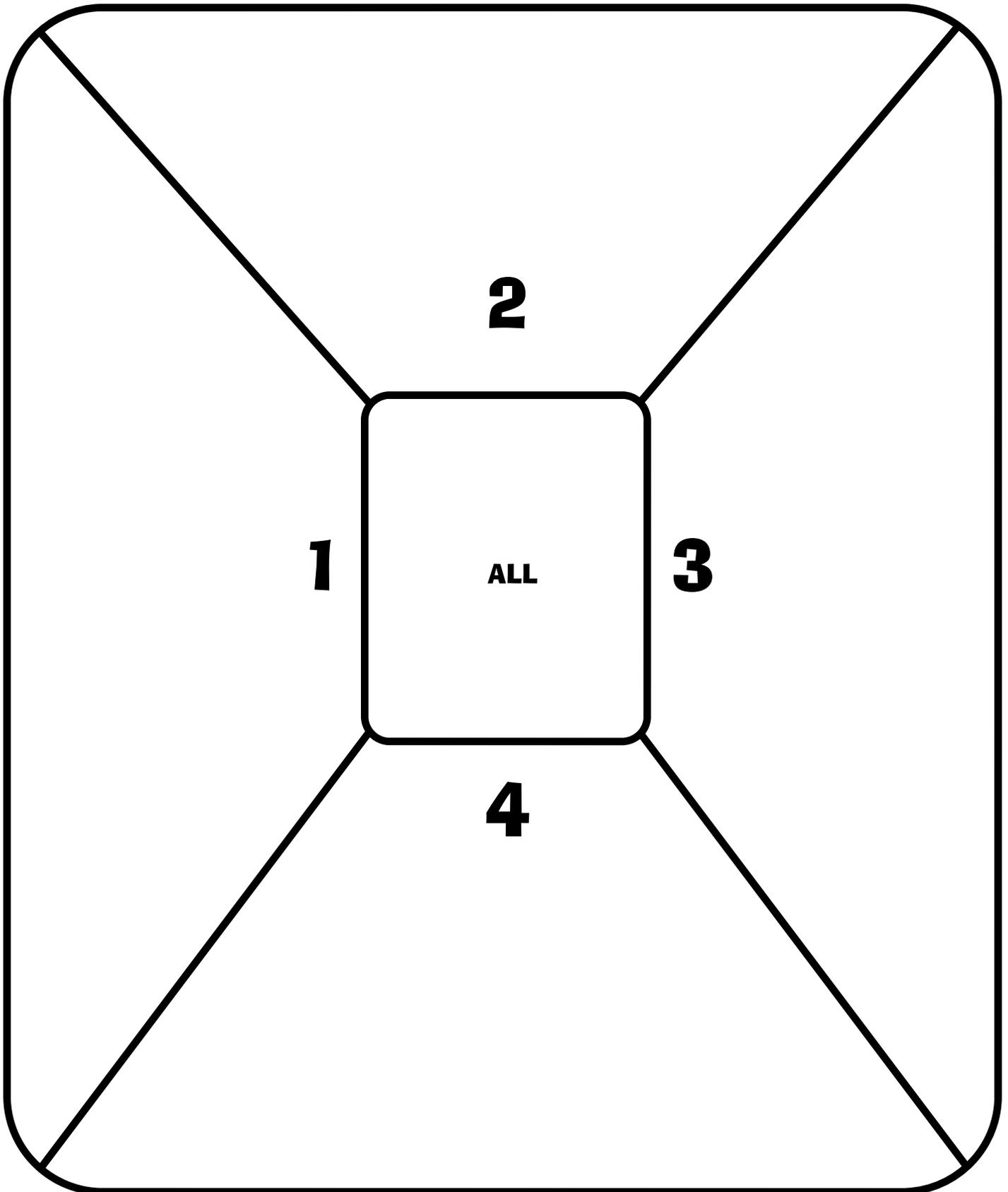
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**Graphic Organizers to Help with Comparing and Contrasting (copies are included)**

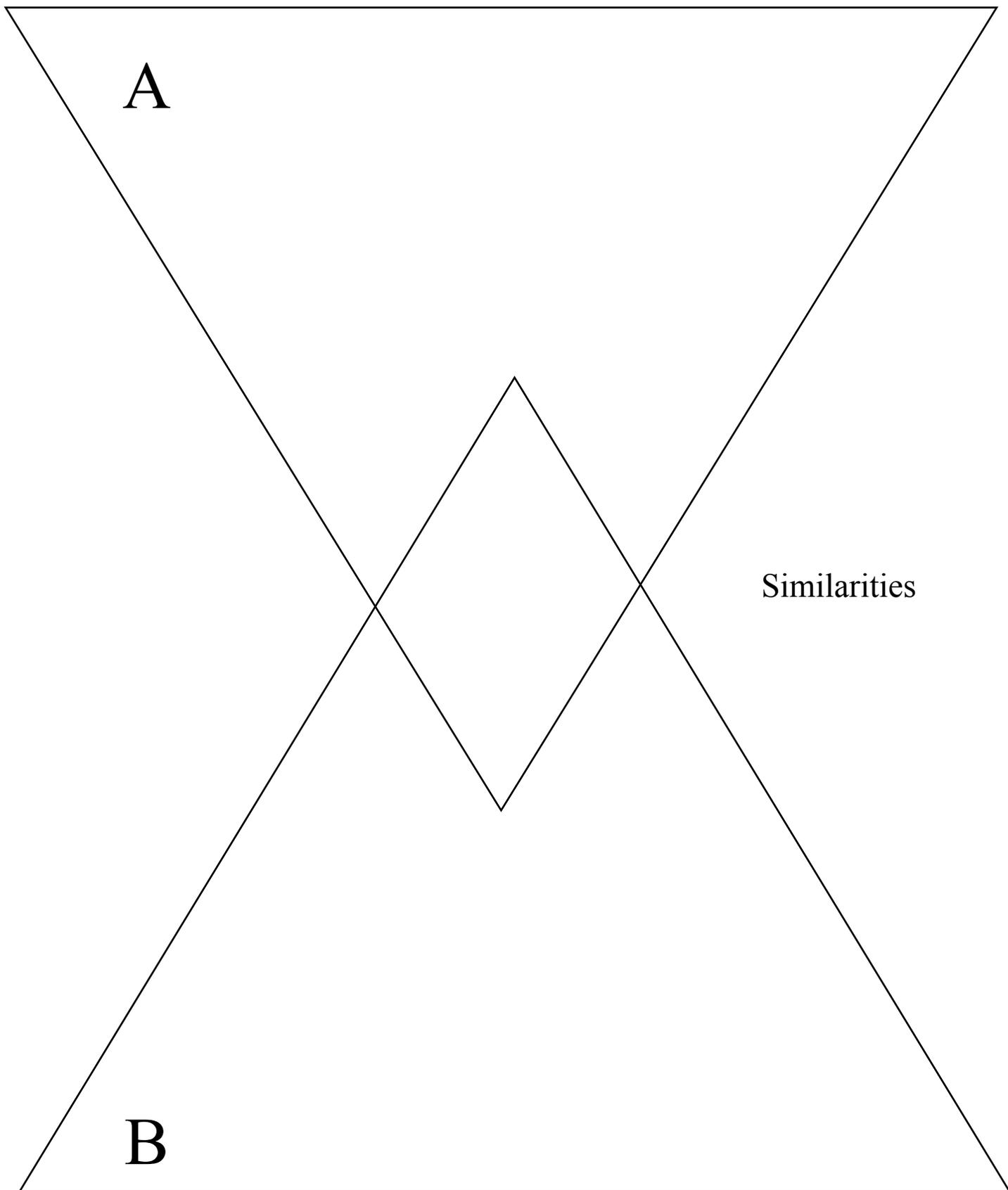
- Story Comparison
- One and All — to compare four items
- Triangle-gram



# One and All Organizer



# Triangle-gram





# Position Paper

Provide students with several articles on a specific topic that present two sides of an issue. Students should read the articles and take notes on points made by both sides. With a partner, they should then pick a side and write a position paper defending their position with factual evidence. Students can also participate in trials or debates on controversial issues. For a more advanced version of this activity, have students pretend they are senators and cast ballots either for or against a particular position.