**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.

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.”

**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 •also •comparatively •in the same way •in addition •just as •most important •too

**Contrast Signal Words:** •Although •As opposed to •Compared with •Different from •Either . . . Or •However •Nevertheless •Not only . . . But •Though •Unlike •although •besides •but •compared with •conversely •differ •even though •furthermore •however •in contrast to •instead •less than •more than •nevertheless •notwithstanding •on the other hand •otherwise •rather than •regardless •though •unless •unlike •while •yet

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

Contrast Questions: • What are the differences between \_\_\_ and \_\_\_? • How is a \_\_\_ different from a \_\_\_?

**Purpose:**

The purpose is to illustrate similarities and/or differences between two topics.

**Styles:**

There are two different styles for this type of paper:

1. **Block Arrangement:** Each paragraph discusses one of the two topics to be compared and/or contrasted, stating all of the similarities/differences of that one topic.

**Ex:1**

I. Introduction states the purpose: to discuss the differences between face-to-face and online courses.

II. Body paragraph 1 states the components of face-to-face courses.

A. Teacher-student interaction

B. Student-student interaction

C. Grading process

III. Body paragraph 2 states the components of online courses.

D. Teacher-student interaction

E. Student-student interaction

F. Grading process

IV. Conclusion restates the main points of comparison and/or contrast and offers no further points about the topic. It points out the importance of the compare/contrast shown throughout the essay.

1. **Point-by-Point Arrangement**

I. Introduction states the purpose: to discuss the differences between face-to-face courses and online ones.

II. Body paragraph 1 states the contrast of teacher-student interaction in face-to-face courses and online courses.

III. Body paragraph 2 states the contrast of student-student interaction in face-to-face courses and online courses.

IV. Body paragraph 3 states the contrast of the grading process in face-to-face courses and online courses.

V. Conclusion restates the main points of comparison and/or contrast and offers no further points about the topic. It points out the importance of the compare/contrast shown throughout the essay.