

# Crazy Cow Compares and Contrasts

## Compare and Contrast lesson plan materials required:

- A granola bar and a candy bar; and/or a one dollar bill and a quarter
- A chalkboard or whiteboard
- Crazy Cow Compare & Contrast Lesson Plan Venn Diagrams and Pictures Handout (<http://www.kenbakerbooks.com/lessonplancomparehandouts.pdf>)
- The children's picture book- Cow Can't Sleep by Ken Baker, illustrated by Steve Gray (ISBN-0761461981)
- The children's picture book – Old MacDonald had a Dragon by Ken Baker, illustrated by Christopher Santoro (ISBN-0761461752)

**Compare and Contrast lesson plan activity time:** 30-90 minutes, depending on use of optional reinforcement and advanced exercises. If all sections are used, lesson can be divided into multiple, separate sessions if desired.

**Objective of Compare and Contrast lesson plan:** Help teachers achieve common core standards for comparing and contrasting, by teaching students how to compare and contrast different items, compare and contrast different books, and compare and contrast text within a book.

**Preparation for Compare and Contrast lesson:** Make enough copies of the provided Compare and Contrast lesson plan Venn diagram and picture handouts for each student. On the top of your whiteboard/chalkboard, write "Differences" on the left side, "Alike" in the middle, and "Differences" on the right side.

## Introduction to Comparing and Contrasting

Explain that comparing and contrasting involves looking at things and figuring out how they are similar (alike) and how they are different.

**Comparing:** Tell the students that when comparing two things you think of all the ways they are alike (Note: comparing can also be defined as looking at similarities and differences). For example, when comparing a granola bar and a candy bar, you would ask, "How are *granola bars* and candy bars ALIKE?" Next, hold up both bars (If desired, you can pass out a candy bar and granola bar to each student), and then ask the student to suggest ways that the bars are similar. Write their responses on the middle of the board under the word "Alike". Depending on the types of bars, their responses might include rectangular, edible, sweet, brown, etc. Explain again, that finding similarities between two things, like the granola bar and candy bar, is comparing.

**Contrasting:** Tell the students that when contrasting two things you focus on just the ways the two things are different. For example, when comparing a granola bar and a candy bar, you would ask, "How are *granola bars* and *candy bars* DIFFERENT? Now ask the student to suggest ways that the bars are different. Write their responses on the board, with those for the granola bar under "Differences" on the left side and those for the candy bar under "Differences" on the right side. Explain again, that finding differences between two things, like the granola bar and candy bar, is contrasting.

**Creating a Venn Diagram:** Explain that sometimes it helps to see the similarities and differences between things by creating what is called a Venn diagram. Now draw a Venn diagram on the board by drawing a circle that encloses all words under "Alike" and all the words under the left side "Differences". Draw a second circle that encloses all words

under “Alike” and all the words under the right side “Differences”. Explain that where the circles overlap shows the items’ similarities, and where they don’t overlap shows the differences.

**Note:** As desired, repeat or substitute the above exercise by using a dollar bill and a quarter.

### **Reinforce Students Understanding of Comparing and Contrasting:**

Hand out to each student a set of the Compare and Contrast lesson plan picture handouts. Tell the class that you’re going to read them a story and that as you read the story you want the children to listen and look for times when the cow confuses certain things for something that it isn’t (i.e., sheep for a wool blanket). When that happens they should hold up the picture representing the confused item. They should also think about the similarities and differences between the items. (i.e., Sheep have wool and are soft, wool blankets have wool and are soft, etc.)

After the introduction, read to the class the picture book, *Cow Can’t Sleep*. As you read the story, watch to see if the students display the correct compare and contrast pictures and encourage or congratulate them as they do.

The following represent the most obvious scenes in the story where the cow confuses one thing for something else and which pictures are provided for in the lesson plan handout:

- Ducks for a feather mattress
- Well of water for a glass of water
- Sheep for a wool blanket

After reading the story, review with the students what and how the cow confused some of the different things in the book. Ask the students why the cow might have confused some of those things. As they list the similarities between the items, explain that they’re “comparing” or finding the similarities. Next, ask the students how the cow should have known those items weren’t the same thing. As they list the differences between the items, explain that they’re “contrasting” or finding the ways that the items are different.

### **Assess students understanding of comparing and contrasting:**

Hand out to each student a set of the *Cow Can’t Sleep* Compare and Contrast Venn diagrams. Ask them to use the *Cow Can’t Sleep* Compare and Contrast Venn diagrams to do their own comparing and contrasting by listing on the Venn diagrams the similarities and differences between the items.

Have the students share the differences and similarities that they listed. Discuss and make any needed additional explanations about comparing and contrasting to reinforce students’ understanding.

### **Additional reinforcement and assessment – Comparing and contrasting two stories (Optional)**

(Note: As desired, this exercise can be conducted at the end of the lesson or as a follow-up exercise on another day) To further reinforce and assess the students’ ability to compare and contrast, re-read *Cow Can’t Sleep* to the class. Next, explain that you’re going to read them a story called *Old MacDonald had a Dragon*. Tell them that while you read it that you want them to listen for and think about ways that the story *Old MacDonald had a Dragon* is similar and different to the story *Cow Can’t Sleep*.

When you finish reading, hand out to the students the *Two Farm Stories* Compare and Contrast Venn diagrams. Ask the students to do their own comparing and contrasting by listing on the Venn diagrams the similarities and differences between the two stories. Similarities for both stories might include; on a farm, cow, pig, sheep, farmer, etc. Differences for *Old MacDonald* might include; dragon, dog, guitar, farmer with hair, singing, etc. Differences for *Cow Can’t Sleep* might include; horses, ducks, bald farmer, well, etc.

Have the students share the differences and similarities that they listed. Discuss and make any needed additional

explanations about comparing and contrasting to reinforce students' understanding.

**Advanced reinforcement and assessment – Comparing and contrasting text within a story (Optional)**

Explain to the students that comparing and contrasting can also help them identify things that are *similar, but* have slight differences (Note: “similar” and “but” are helpful words that students can use when comparing and contrasting). Explain to the students that the book *Old MacDonald had a Dragon* has several repeating phrases that are very similar, but with slight differences. Tell them that as you read the book to the students, that they should listen for those repeating phrases. Tell them that whenever you start to say a certain repeating phrase, that you want them to say it aloud with you. But also have them pay attention to the slight differences between each repeating phrase.

As an additional option, if you have enough copies of the book for the students to share, they can read silently along as you read, but when you come to a repeating phrase they can read it aloud. And when they come to the slight differences, you can instruct them to read those words even louder (or silent- your choice) to help them recognize the differences.

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