

Developing Skills for Comparing Points of View

Cluster 2 page 47

How can you develop a strong comparison of points of view?

To strengthen your skill at comparing points of view, use three strategies. You will see them in action one by one on the following screens.

Strategy 1: Compare how authors treat the same or similar topics.

Strategy 2: Identify the details each author includes and emphasizes.

Strategy 3: Compare the points of view of the authors.

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Strategy 1: Compare how authors treat the same or similar topics.

Compare only items with broad similarities.

- Comparing two short stories about African Americans growing up in the United States can be useful because you can highlight the differences in similar items.
- Comparing a serious poem about drug addition with a humorous novel about a man who is mistaken for a famous movie star are so different that the comparison might not be useful.

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Directions: In this group of three points of view, which two could be compared most usefully?

Group A

- The actions performed by Zeus
- The symbolism used in Prometheus
- The various ways to spell Hercules

The actions of Zeus and the symbolism in Prometheus are both about the myths, so they could be compared. The various ways to spell Hercules is more about language than the actual myths.

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Directions: Decide which of the three passages on the following screens share enough similarities that you could compare them usefully.

Arachne was small and pale from much working. Her eyes were light and her hair was a dusty brown, yet she was quick and graceful, and her fingers, roughened as they were, went so fast that it was hard to follow their flickering movements. So soft and even was her thread, so fine her cloth, so gorgeous her embroidery, that soon her products were known all over Greece. No one had ever seen the like of them before.

“Arachne,” p. 49

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Artemis, who had all wild things in her care and was goddess of the chase, liked to spend long days in the open air hunting, or just wandering through the woods at any time of the year, watching the small animals which lived there. She wore, like any huntress, a simple white tunic and carried a javelin and bow and arrows. Her glorious hair was brushed severely back and tied with a single ribbon.

“Artemis, Orion, and the Seven Sisters,” p. 53

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Born in London, England, in 1908, Olivia E. Coolidge studied Latin, Greek, and philosophy at Somerville College of Oxford University. A professional writer for 30 years, Coolidge used her love of ancient culture and language to retell mythological stories in a way that remains true to the past but alive in the present.

Author Biographies, p. 143

Arachne and Artemis could be compared because both are figures from Greek myths. Coolidge was not, although she wrote modern versions of these stories.

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Strategy 2: Identify the details each author includes and emphasizes.

Directions: Read the three passages again and notice the details that are emphasized.

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The details describe Arachne’s appearance and her skill.

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The details describe Artemis’s interests and her appearance.

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Author Biographies, p. 143

The details describe Coolidge's education, skills, and interests.

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Strategy 3: Compare the points of view of the authors.

Directions: Based on the details included in each passage, note what the passages say about Arachne and Artemis that the remaining passage does not say about Coolidge. Explain what this indicates about the point of view of each of the three writers.

- The details describe Arachne's appearance and her skill.
- The details describe Artemis's interests and her appearance.
- The details describe Coolidge's education, interests, and skill.

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The passages about Arachne and Artemis describe how each one looks. Writers of stories commonly take this point of view in order to help readers picture the characters and view them as individuals.

However, the writer of the passage about Coolidge did not describe her appearance. This writer took the point of view that readers needed to know about her as a writer, but that her physical attributes were not significant.