

# Compare and contrast conflicting information from two texts on the same topic

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## Language Objectives

- Identify facts and opinions.
- Explain how authors use details to support claims.
- Understand the meaning of domain-specific vocabulary.
- Compare and contrast two texts on the same topic.

## Building Literacy

Comparing and contrasting texts will help students move beyond what is stated by an author by:

- interpreting what the author wants readers to know.
- generating questions to confirm understanding.
- examining the author's choices about which information and viewpoints to include or exclude.
- determining whether a text is balanced or biased.

## Focus on Language

Display the following domain-specific vocabulary words that students will encounter in these texts. (Spanish cognates are in parentheses.) Then, have students make a prediction about the topics of the articles.

- ecosystems (ecosistemas)
- predators (depredadores)
- habitat (habitat)
- livestock
- extermination (exterminación)



### ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Use an illustrated word wall to help English language learners understand new vocabulary. Having a visual reference can help students access vocabulary as they work on other classroom activities.

➔

show me

In this lesson, students will compare and contrast nonfiction texts about the restoration of wolf populations in the United States.

Say: Today, you are going to compare and contrast conflicting information in two texts on the same topic. To identify **conflicting information**—ideals and details that differ across texts—consider how the authors use facts and opinions. **Facts** are pieces of information that are true and can be verified, or checked, in other sources. Facts are not likely to vary across texts, though authors may interpret the same fact in different ways.

**Opinions** are statements of belief and depend on the author’s unique **position**, or view, on the topic. That means opinions are more likely to vary across texts on the same topic. Good authors support their opinions with facts to make strong arguments and convince readers that their beliefs are valid. However, authors may choose to leave out any facts that do not support their opinions.

Have students turn and talk to a partner about what to do when they are confronted with conflicting information. Encourage students to consider how an author’s purpose for writing and the position he or she supports affects the information that is presented to readers. Invite volunteers to share their thoughts with the group.

➔

guide me

Use the statements in **guide me** to help students practice identifying **facts** and **opinions**. Explain that by examining how authors use different facts and opinions when they write about the same topic, readers can identify **conflicting information** across texts.

Have a student volunteer read aloud Statement 1 and identify whether it is a fact or opinion (fact). Discuss that facts are not likely to vary across texts, though an author may decide to leave out a fact if it does not support his or her position.

Then, have students work in pairs to read the rest of the statements and identify them as facts or opinions. Prompt students to underline the statements that are opinions (Statements 2 and 4).

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Compare and contrast conflicting information from two texts on the same topic

➔ show me

How do we resolve conflicting information?

➔ guide me

example


Read the statements below. Underline the statements that are opinions.

Statement 1: The gray wolf preys on ungulates much larger than itself, such as elk, deer, or moose.

Statement 2: Gray wolves that roam outside of national parks should be killed.

Statement 3: Gray wolves typically hunt within territories.

Statement 4: Gray wolves are magnificent creatures that should be protected at all costs.



COMPARING TEXTS 89

VISUAL LITERACY

Readers can improve comprehension by making connections between words and graphic features. Have students work in small groups to discuss the picture of the wolf on page 89. Then, have them write a caption for the picture, based on the details in the statements. Ask for volunteers to share their captions with the group.



## work time

**Introduce Vocabulary** Write the following vocabulary words on the board and point out their Spanish cognates: **ecosystems, predators, habitat.** Have students use a KWL graphic organizer to rate their understanding of these domain-specific vocabulary words.

**Read—Pause—Discuss** Use the following interactive strategy to promote a strategic reading of the text.

Have student pairs take turns reading “Speaking for the Wolves” aloud. After each student reads two paragraphs, have him or her pause to ask his or her partner questions about what they just read. Have them continue this process until they finish reading.

**Analyze Author’s Craft and Style: Author’s Purpose** In “Speaking for the Wolves,” the author informs readers about the controversy surrounding wolves and their possible removal from the endangered species list. However, authors often have more than one purpose.

Have a volunteer read aloud paragraphs 4 through 6. Then, have students discuss what other purpose the author might have (to persuade readers to take action by writing, petitioning, contacting people in positions in authority, and so on). Ask a volunteer to explain the purpose by citing specific text details.

**check for understanding** by having students identify the author’s position on removing wolves from the endangered species list. (Possible response: The author opposes removing wolves from the list because getting rid of wolves harms entire ecosystems. Also, wolves are already in danger even with protection, so they would be in even more danger if they were not.)

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### work time

#### Speaking for the Wolves

by Della Chesterton

- 1 Will wolves survive in North America? The battle rages over whether the wolf should be taken off the Endangered Species List in certain areas of the country. In areas where protections have been lifted, wolves are targeted for “aggressive management.” Aggressive management means keeping animal numbers down by hunting, poisoning, and trapping. These actions hurt the wolf and endanger entire ecosystems. In response, more people are speaking out for wolves.
- 2 Shaun Ellis, for example, is a wolf expert who has spent many years living among wolves, including a seven-year stay on the Nez Percé reservation near Yellowstone National Park while studying the howls of wolves. National Geographic filmed Ellis as he raised wolf cubs that had been abandoned at birth to create a television series called *Living with Wolfman*.
- 3 Other advocates, such as Tonya Littlewolf, maintain wolf sanctuaries that provide shelter for abandoned and injured wolves. Many of these sanctuaries are nonprofit operations, supported by visitor admission fees or monetary donations from interested citizens. There are also organizations that track wolf populations, work on legislation, and run educational campaigns.
- 4 In 1947, an organization called Defenders of Wildlife was formed to protect native wildlife and habitat. It focuses on the protection of wolves and other endangered predators, such as bears and jaguars, and believes that restoring wolf populations will help conserve both wildlife and habitat.
- 5 In 2008, Defenders of Wildlife helped prevent the Navy from building an airstrip near Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge in North Carolina. This refuge is home to the world’s only wild population of red wolves. If a noisy airstrip were built, the wolves and other animals would most likely be forced out of their habitats. After people petitioned and wrote letters, the proposed airstrip was cancelled, and the animals on the refuge were given a reprieve.
- 6 Even though wolves are making a comeback in many areas, they remain in constant danger. Will you help speak for wolves?

➔ **check for understanding** What is the author’s position on removing wolves from the endangered species list?

90 COMPARING TEXTS

## CRITICAL LITERACY

To encourage further inquiry and social action, have students conduct research about how wolves function in ecosystems and how their reintroduction has restored habitats, such as areas in Yellowstone National Park. Then have groups create informational posters to draw attention to the issue.

➞

work time

**Introduce Vocabulary** Write the following vocabulary words on the board: **livestock**, **extermination**. Point out the Spanish cognate for *extermination*. Have students discuss how the context clues in this text help them better understand the meaning of each word.

**Read—Pause—Summarize** Use the following interactive strategy to promote a strategic reading of the text.

Have student pairs take turns reading “Protecting Our Livestock” aloud. After each student reads a paragraph, pause and have the partner summarize the information they just heard. Continue the process until the end of the text.

**Analyze Author’s Craft and Style: Balance** Explain that in some texts, no matter the author’s purpose, an author may present opinions about the topic. If the author only presents his or her views on the topic, the text is considered **biased**, or one-sided. On the other hand, if the author presents facts from multiple viewpoints without inserting opinions, the text is considered to be **balanced**, or fair.

Ask a volunteer to read aloud paragraph 1 of “Protecting Our Livestock.” Emphasize that the author does not insert his opinions, but presents the views of others. Have students work in partners to discuss how this paragraph is an example of balanced writing, citing specific words and phrases from the text.

**check for understanding** by having students answer the question about the author’s word choice. (Possible response: The author calls bringing wolves back to the western United States “the return of an old problem” because wolves had been exterminated from much of land. Ranchers viewed this as the solution to a problem. The return of wolves means ranchers will face the same problem again.)

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➞ work time

Protecting Our Livestock  
by Chandler Beal

1 While most ranchers in the United States love nature, they fear that bringing wolves back to the western United States poses a serious threat to their sheep, cattle, and other livestock. Even though a 2008 study showed that bears and coyotes killed more sheep than wolves did, the fact remains that 1,300 sheep were killed by wolves that year. Ranchers can't afford to lose livestock due to the return of an old problem.

2 Back in 1906, the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Biological Survey gave permission to clear cattle ranges of gray wolves. To help kill the wolves, the bureau hired professional wolf hunters who used steel traps and poison-laced meat. Fifty years later, the extermination program had wiped out nearly all of the gray wolves in the 48 contiguous states.

3 What many people don't know is that wolves in the West live in national forests and on public lands, which are also used for grazing livestock. With

volves making a comeback, ranchers now have to keep vigilant watch over their sheep and cattle. The financial loss from predators like wolves is a hardship that many ranchers can't afford.

4 Most western states have programs that compensate ranchers for livestock losses. However, this doesn't lessen the burden of moving animals from one area of land to another to avoid wolves. Ranchers are also spending more money on guard dogs and fencing.

5 Killing wolves can mean a fine of thousands of dollars or even jail time. In some states, ranchers can kill wolves only when they threaten their livestock. In 2012 and 2013, it is estimated that hunters killed more than 500 wolves in Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming. The problem is that once the number of wolves gets too low, the wolves receive more protection. Ranchers, however, are running out of ways to protect their livestock.

➞ check for understanding In paragraph 1, what does the author mean by the return of an old problem?

COMPARING TEXTS 91

VISUAL LITERACY

Visual learners may struggle with texts that do not have accompanying graphics or illustrations. To provide focus and engagement, place students in pairs. Have each student draw a detail from the text without talking to their partner. Then, prompt them to switch drawings and identify the text detail their partner has drawn.

## check for understanding

**Analyze Author's Craft and Style** Have students work with a partner to answer the **check for understanding** questions.

If students struggle to identify information that weakens the author's position, use a Think Aloud to model how a critical thinker would approach the text.

**Think Aloud** First, I need to identify the author's position in "Protecting Our Livestock." In paragraph 5, the author says, "Ranchers are running out of ways to protect their livestock." This statement reveals the author's view that wolves are dangerous to livestock and should not be reintroduced. A strong detail would support this position. So, I need to find a detail in the first paragraph that does *not* support this position. The fact that more sheep were killed by bears and coyotes than wolves does not help the author make his point. Instead, it shows that wolves are not as big a threat to livestock as other predators. This detail weakens the author's argument, so I think he should have excluded it.

**Compare and Contrast: Information** To help students complete the T-chart, review the main points the authors make in both texts. For example, the author of "Speaking for the Wolves" gives details to support the idea that wolves need legal protection in order to survive in North America. Point out the author's reference in paragraph 1 to "aggressive management" that involves hunting, poisoning, and trapping and the harm this caused to ecosystems.

Likewise, the author of "Protecting Our Livestock" includes details supporting the idea that culling wolves is necessary. For example, the author states that wolves kill sheep and cattle, causing financial hardship for ranchers.

Discuss how these examples help readers understand both sides of the debate and how each author primarily included details that support his or her point of view.

## reflect

Have students work in small groups to compare and contrast how the authors used the information in the T-chart. Encourage them to discuss whether the authors downplayed or highlighted information to support their position.

Provide the following sentence frames:

- The author of "Speaking for the Wolves" thinks wolves need protection because \_\_\_\_\_.
- The author of "Protecting Our Livestock" thinks that protection for wolves is a problem because \_\_\_\_\_.

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#### check for understanding

- 1 In "Speaking for Wolves," what threat to wolves is missing from the passage? Why do you think this is so?  
*Possible response: The threat from ranchers is missing because mentioning that wolves kill livestock weakens the case for saving them.*
- 2 What fact in paragraph 1 of "Protecting Our Livestock" weakens the author's position against wolves?  
*Possible response: The author cites a study that showed "bears and coyotes killed more sheep than wolves."*
- 3 How does the author's position in "Speaking for Wolves" affect the facts included in the passage?  
*Possible response: The facts focus on those people and groups who "speak out for wolves" not on those who oppose them.*
- 4 In "Protecting Our Livestock," what details does the author provide to support the financial loss the rancher's face?  
*Possible response: The cost of moving livestock to avoid wolves, the cost of fences and guard dogs, and the loss of sales from killed livestock.*
- 5 Complete the T-chart to compare and contrast similar information. *Possible responses:*

Speaking for Wolves	Protecting Our Livestock
The battle rages over whether the wolf should be taken off the Endangered Species List.	The problem is that once the number of wolves gets too low, the wolves receive more protection.
Restoring wolf populations will help conserve both wildlife and habitat.	... ranchers now have to keep vigilant watch over their sheep and cattle.

#### reflect

With a partner, compare and contrast how the information in the T-chart above was used by the author.

92 COMPARING TEXTS

## CRITICAL LITERACY

To think critically, students must understand that the author has made specific decisions about the words and ideas he or she included in the text.

After students have finished reading "Protecting Our Livestock," have them develop a list of questions they would like to ask the author about his background and experience with the topic. For example:

- Where did you find these facts about the impact of wolves on livestock?
- How does the grazing of livestock affect land and ecosystems?
- What evidence supports the claim that "most ranchers in the United States love nature"?



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➤ show me

How do we resolve conflicting information?

➤ guide me

example

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## work time

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by Delia Chesterton

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- 2 Shaun Ellis, for example, is a wolf expert who has spent many years living among wolves, including a seven-year stay on the Nez Percé reservation near Yellowstone National Park while studying the howls of wolves. National Geographic filmed Ellis as he raised wolf cubs that had been abandoned at birth to create a television series called *Living with Wolfman*.
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- 6 Even though wolves are making a comeback in many areas, they remain in constant danger. Will you help speak for wolves?

**check for understanding** What is the author’s position on removing wolves from the endangered species list?

➤ work time

**Protecting Our Livestock**

*by Chandler Beal*

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➤ **check for understanding** In paragraph 1, what does the author mean by the return of an old problem?



### ➤ check for understanding

- 1 In “Speaking for Wolves,” what threat to wolves is missing from the passage?  
Why do you think this is so?
- 2 What fact in paragraph 1 of “Protecting Our Livestock” weakens the author’s position against wolves?
- 3 How does the author’s position in “Speaking for Wolves” affect the facts included in the passage?
- 4 In “Protecting Our Livestock,” what details does the author provide to support the financial loss the rancher’s face?
- 5 Complete the T-chart to compare and contrast similar information.

Speaking for Wolves	Protecting Our Livestock
<p>The battle rages over whether the wolf should be taken off the Endangered Species List.</p> <p>Restoring wolf populations will help conserve both wildlife and habitat.</p>	

### ➤ reflect

With a partner, compare and contrast how the information in the T-chart above was used by the author.