6 Compare and contrast stories in the same genre

Language Objectives

- Explain how the author portrays characters through actions and dialogue.
- Discuss setting and plot.
- Use synonyms to understand word meanings.
- Compare and contrast stories in the same genre.

Building Literacy

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

- examining the author's choices related to plot, setting, and character.
- analyzing differences in points of view.
- demonstrating knowledge of the distinguishing characteristics of historical fiction.
- considering alternative versions of the text.

Focus on Language

Display the following vocabulary words that students will encounter in these texts. Have students identify synonyms for each word. (The Spanish cognate is in parentheses.)

- fateful
- pleasant
- idle
- unsteady
- furious (furioso)

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

When speaking or reading aloud to English learners, use gestures and pantomime to demonstrate meaning. Have students perform the same motions as they repeat the words. By connecting vocabulary to movement, English learners are more likely to understand and remember the meanings of English words.

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show me

In this lesson, students will compare and contrast two stories set in the past on the American frontier that involve characters who meet under tense circumstances.

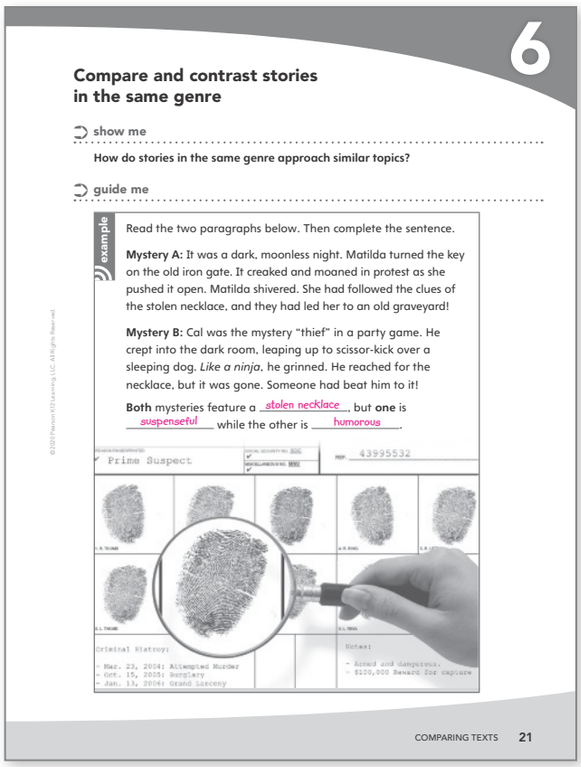
Say: Today, you are going to compare and contrast stories in the same genre. A **genre** is a category of writing that uses certain structures, styles, and subjects. Informational texts and fairy tales are examples of two different genres. The stories you will read today are in the genre of historical fiction.

Have students turn and talk to a partner about different genres. What genres have they read? What genres do they like? What genre is their favorite? What do they think "historical fiction" is about? Ask for volunteers to share their observations with the group.

guide me

Use the example paragraphs in **guide me** to help students practice comparing and contrasting story elements within a genre. Have a student volunteer read aloud the first paragraph and say something about it. It could be a connection to another text, a summary, or a distinguishing feature of the text. Have another volunteer read aloud the second paragraph and repeat the process of saying something.

Then, have student pairs compare and contrast the paragraphs to fill in the sentence frame. Point out that the first part of the sentence asks students to identify how the paragraphs are the same, and the second part asks student to identify how they are different. (Both mysteries feature a stolen necklace, but one is suspenseful while the other is humorous.) Ask students to discuss the traits of a mystery story.


6

Compare and contrast stories in the same genre

show me

How do stories in the same genre approach similar topics?

guide me

example

Read the two paragraphs below. Then complete the sentence.

Mystery A: It was a dark, moonless night. Matilda turned the key on the old iron gate. It creaked and moaned in protest as she pushed it open. Matilda shivered. She had followed the clues of the stolen necklace, and they had led her to an old graveyard!

Mystery B: Cal was the mystery "thief" in a party game. He crept into the dark room, leaping up to scissor-kick over a sleeping dog. *Like a ninja,* he grinned. He reached for the necklace, but it was gone. Someone had beat him to it!

Both mysteries feature a stolen necklace, but **one** is suspenseful while the other is humorous.

Prime Suspect

43995532

Criminal History:
- Mar. 23, 2004: Attempted Murder
- Oct. 15, 2005: Burglary
- Jan. 13, 2006: Grand Larceny

Notes:
- Armed and dangerous.
- $100,000 Reward for capture

COMPARING TEXTS 21

VISUAL LITERACY

Monitor students' understanding after reading by having them draw a scene from the mystery paragraph that they find most interesting. Then, have them share their drawings with their classmates. Drawing activities engage visual learners while providing evidence of reading comprehension.

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work time

Introduce Vocabulary Write the following vocabulary words on the board: **fateful, pleasant, idle**. Then, have students use each word in a sentence to demonstrate their understanding of its meaning.

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

Have partners make predictions about "Grizzled Bill's New Life" based on the title of the text and a quick scan for character and place names. Then have student pairs take turns reading the text aloud.

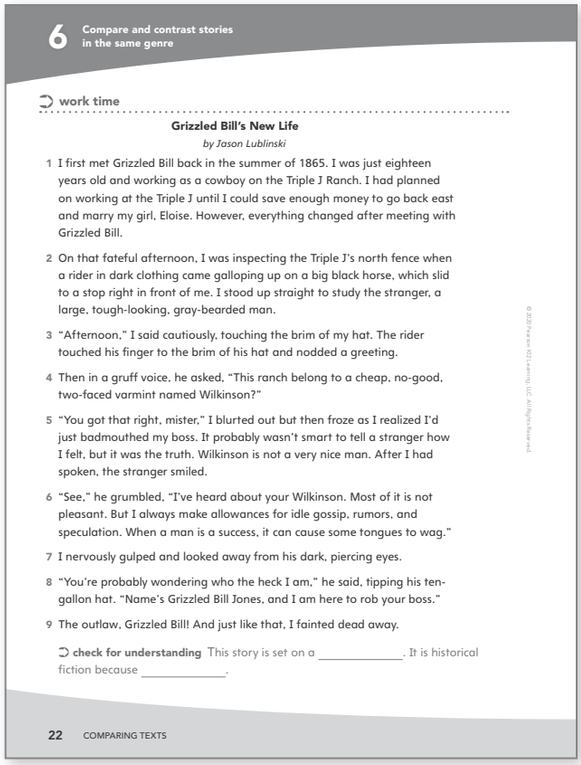
After each student reads two paragraphs, have him or her pause to confirm or revise predictions and then make predictions about the next section. Have partners continue this process until they finish reading.

Analyze Author's Craft and Style: Dialogue Explain that one way authors convey character traits is through **dialogue**, or the words they say.

Point out the dialogue in the fourth paragraph. Have a volunteer explain who says the dialogue (Grizzled Bill), what it tells about the character (he is angry and confrontational), and how it is important to the story (his words cause the narrator to admit that the land belongs to Wilkinson, whom Grizzled Bill plans to rob).

Then, have partners read paragraphs 6 through 8 and discuss what the dialogue reveals about Grizzled Bill and the narrator. (Grizzled Bill is polite but menacing. The narrator is nervous and doesn't feel brave.) Have students explain why the author likely chose to have a character who is a robber speak so formally and politely, and why the author chose to have the narrator say very little.

check for understanding by having students fill in the sentence frames about setting and genre. (This story is set on a ranch. It is historical fiction because it takes place in the past, in 1865.)



6 Compare and contrast stories in the same genre

work time

Grizzled Bill's New Life

by Jason Lublinski

1 I first met Grizzled Bill back in the summer of 1865. I was just eighteen years old and working as a cowboy on the Triple J Ranch. I had planned on working at the Triple J until I could save enough money to go back east and marry my girl, Eloise. However, everything changed after meeting with Grizzled Bill.

2 On that fateful afternoon, I was inspecting the Triple J's north fence when a rider in dark clothing came galloping up on a big black horse, which slid to a stop right in front of me. I stood up straight to study the stranger, a large, tough-looking, gray-bearded man.

3 "Afternoon," I said cautiously, touching the brim of my hat. The rider touched his finger to the brim of his hat and nodded a greeting.

4 Then in a gruff voice, he asked, "This ranch belong to a cheap, no-good, two-faced varmint named Wilkinson?"

5 "You got that right, mister," I blurted out but then froze as I realized I'd just badmouthed my boss. It probably wasn't smart to tell a stranger how I felt, but it was the truth. Wilkinson is not a very nice man. After I had spoken, the stranger smiled.

6 "See," he grumbled, "I've heard about your Wilkinson. Most of it is not pleasant. But I always make allowances for idle gossip, rumors, and speculation. When a man is a success, it can cause some tongues to wag."

7 I nervously gulped and looked away from his dark, piercing eyes.

8 "You're probably wondering who the heck I am," he said, tipping his ten-gallon hat. "Name's Grizzled Bill Jones, and I am here to rob your boss."

9 The outlaw, Grizzled Bill! And just like that, I fainted dead away.

check for understanding This story is set on a _____. It is historical fiction because _____.

22 COMPARING TEXTS

CRITICAL LITERACY

To think critically, students must understand that the author has made specific decisions about characters and their points of view.

Have students analyze the perspectives of the two characters in "Grizzled Bill's New Life" by creating Mind and Alternative Mind portraits. First, have pairs of students sketch the silhouettes of two heads. In the first silhouette, they write or sketch to represent the perspective of one character. Then they do the same for the second character. Have students share their work while discussing the two characters.

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work time

Introduce Vocabulary Write the following vocabulary words on the board: **unsteady, furious**. Then, have students discuss why the author chose to use *unsteady* instead of *clumsy* and *furious* instead of *mad*.

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

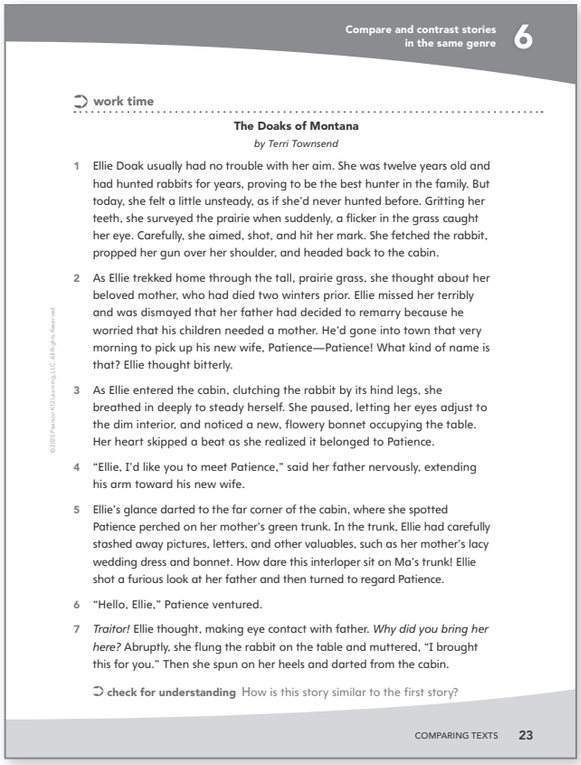
Have student pairs take turns reading "The Doaks of Montana" aloud. After each student reads a paragraph, pause and have the partner retell the character, setting, and plot details they just heard. Continue the process until the end of the text.

Analyze Author's Craft and Style: Character Actions Characters' actions move the plot of a story forward. When characters respond to the events of the story, they cause new events to occur.

Have a volunteer read aloud paragraphs 3 through 5. Point out the sequence of events: Ellie enters the cabin; she notices a bonnet on the table; her father introduces her to Patience; Ellie is angry with her father. Ask a volunteer to explain how one event leads to the next.

Then, have partners identify another series of events in the story and discuss how a character's actions cause an event to take place.

check for understanding by having students answer the question about how this story is similar to "Grizzled Bill's New Life." (Possible response: The stories are similar because they both include characters who dislike someone very much. Grizzled Bill dislikes Wilkinson and plans to rob him. Ellie dislikes Patience even though she just met her.)



Compare and contrast stories in the same genre 6

work time

The Doaks of Montana

by Terri Townsend

1 Ellie Doak usually had no trouble with her aim. She was twelve years old and had hunted rabbits for years, proving to be the best hunter in the family. But today, she felt a little unsteady, as if she'd never hunted before. Gritting her teeth, she surveyed the prairie when suddenly, a flicker in the grass caught her eye. Carefully, she aimed, shot, and hit her mark. She fetched the rabbit, propped her gun over her shoulder, and headed back to the cabin.

2 As Ellie trekked home through the tall, prairie grass, she thought about her beloved mother, who had died two winters prior. Ellie missed her terribly and was dismayed that her father had decided to remarry because he worried that his children needed a mother. He'd gone into town that very morning to pick up his new wife, Patience—Patience! What kind of name is that? Ellie thought bitterly.

3 As Ellie entered the cabin, clutching the rabbit by its hind legs, she breathed in deeply to steady herself. She paused, letting her eyes adjust to the dim interior, and noticed a new, flowery bonnet occupying the table. Her heart skipped a beat as she realized it belonged to Patience.

4 "Ellie, I'd like you to meet Patience," said her father nervously, extending his arm toward his new wife.

5 Ellie's glance darted to the far corner of the cabin, where she spotted Patience perched on her mother's green trunk. In the trunk, Ellie had carefully stashed away pictures, letters, and other valuables, such as her mother's lacy wedding dress and bonnet. How dare this interloper sit on Ma's trunk! Ellie shot a furious look at her father and then turned to regard Patience.

6 "Hello, Ellie," Patience ventured.

7 *Traitor!* Ellie thought, making eye contact with father. *Why did you bring her here?* Abruptly, she flung the rabbit on the table and muttered, "I brought this for you." Then she spun on her heels and darted from the cabin.

check for understanding How is this story similar to the first story?

COMPARING TEXTS 23

VISUAL LITERACY

After students have finished reading, monitor their understanding by having them draw an event from the text. Then, have them work with classmates to put their drawings in plot order. Ask for volunteers to retell the most important events of the story using the drawings as a reference.

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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 how the narrator's viewpoint sets the tone of a passage, use a Think Aloud to model how a critical thinker would approach the text.

Think Aloud The narrator tells the story of "Grizzled Bill's New Life" from a first-person perspective, so the reader knows his thoughts and feelings. The narrator says he speaks cautiously and gulps nervously when he meets the stranger. He also describes the stranger as *tough-looking* and *gruff*. By showing that he is scared and unsure of what the stranger will do next, the narrator creates tension.

Compare and Contrast: Story Elements In order to complete the compare and contrast chart about the two stories, students must first identify the setting, plot, and topic of each one.

Model how to work with a small section of text at a time by directing students' attention to paragraph 1 of "Grizzled Bill's New Life." Draw their attention to the first two lines, which mention the year 1865 and describe how the character is "working as a cowboy on the Triple J ranch." Explain that students should write this information under the story title in the graphic organizer.

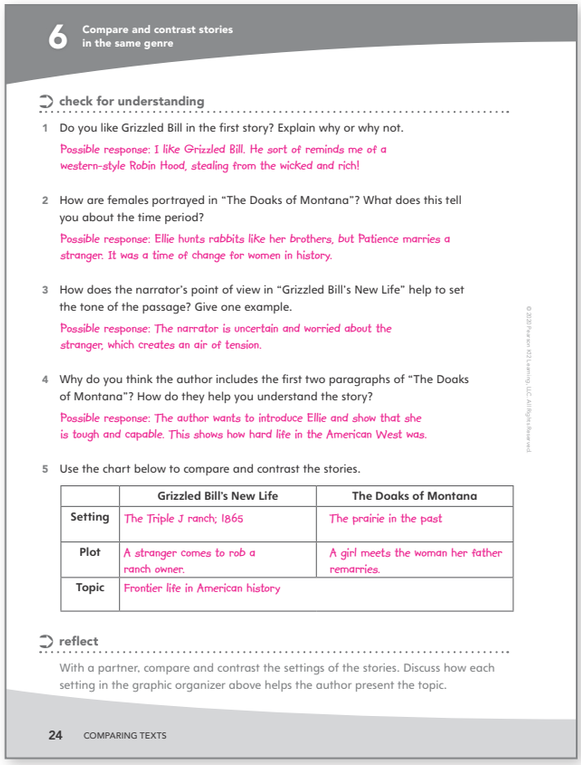
Then, have students work in pairs or small groups to complete the rest of the chart.

reflect

Have students work with a partner to compare and contrast the settings of "Grizzled Bill's New Life" and "The Doaks of Montana." Use the following sentence frames to guide their discussions:

- One way in which the settings are the same is _____.
- One way in which the settings are different is _____.

Remind students to refer to the comparative chart as they discuss the settings of both stories.



6 Compare and contrast stories in the same genre

check for understanding

1 Do you like Grizzled Bill in the first story? Explain why or why not.

Possible response: I like Grizzled Bill. He sort of reminds me of a western-style Robin Hood, stealing from the wicked and rich!

2 How are females portrayed in "The Doaks of Montana"? What does this tell you about the time period?

Possible response: Ellie hunts rabbits like her brothers, but Patience marries a stranger. It was a time of change for women in history.

3 How does the narrator's point of view in "Grizzled Bill's New Life" help to set the tone of the passage? Give one example.

Possible response: The narrator is uncertain and worried about the stranger, which creates an air of tension.

4 Why do you think the author includes the first two paragraphs of "The Doaks of Montana"? How do they help you understand the story?

Possible response: The author wants to introduce Ellie and show that she is tough and capable. This shows how hard life in the American West was.

5 Use the chart below to compare and contrast the stories.

	Grizzled Bill's New Life	The Doaks of Montana
Setting	The Triple J ranch; 1865	The prairie in the past
Plot	A stranger comes to rob a ranch owner.	A girl meets the woman her father remarries.
Topic	Frontier life in American history	

reflect

With a partner, compare and contrast the settings of the stories. Discuss how each setting in the graphic organizer above helps the author present the topic.

24 COMPARING TEXTS

CRITICAL LITERACY

One way to help students think critically is to construct alternatives to the text. For example, have students imagine how the story would be different if it were told from Patience's perspective. Ask them to discuss how Patience likely felt when Ellie glared at her, slammed a rabbit on the table, and ran out the door. This activity will help students understand that not all narrators are reliable and that a single event can be interpreted in several ways.

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show me

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guide me

example

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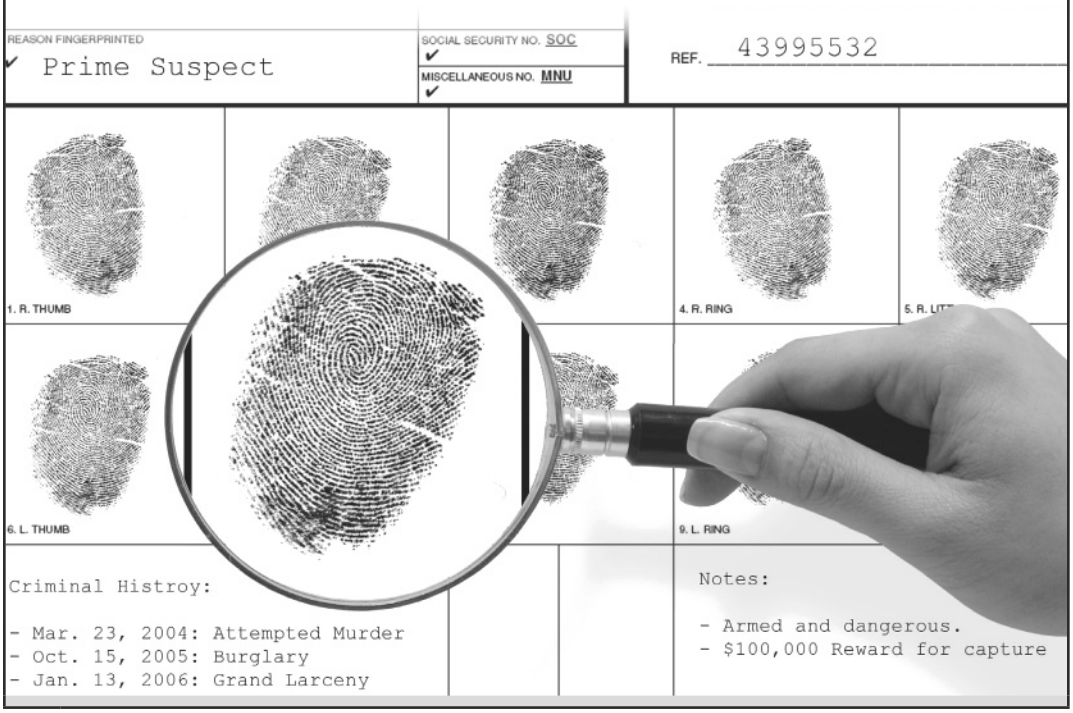
Both mysteries feature a _____, but **one** is _____ while the other is _____.



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work time

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work time

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5 Use the chart below to compare and contrast the stories.

	Grizzled Bill's New Life	The Doaks of Montana
Setting		
Plot		
Topic		

reflect

With a partner, compare and contrast the settings of the stories. Discuss how each setting in the graphic organizer above helps the author present the topic.

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