

Compare and contrast how different genres approach similar themes

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Language Objectives

- Identify plot structure.
- Discuss the author's purpose.
- Use word relationships to understand meaning.
- Compare and contrast stories with similar themes.

Building Literacy

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

- interpreting the author's message.
- demonstrating knowledge of the distinguishing characteristics of fables and realistic fiction.
- making, confirming, and correcting predictions.
- examining text structures and relationships between ideas.

Focus on Language

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

- murky
- imposing (imponente)
- timidly (tímidamente)
- elegant (elegante)
- ornate (ornamentado)



ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Some English learners will struggle to identify the syllables in multisyllabic words. Speakers of monosyllabic languages such as Cantonese, Hmong, Khmer, Korean, and Vietnamese may pronounce a two-syllable word as two separate words. Review how to pronounce syllables by clapping or tapping one time for each syllable as you slowly pronounce the word. Have students repeat the word and action with you several times. Speed up the pronunciation each time to emphasize that the syllables are part of one word.

➔ show me

In this lesson, students will compare and contrast a fable with realistic fiction on the theme of honesty.

Say: Today, you are going to compare and contrast how similar themes are handled in two different genres. A **genre** is a category of writing that uses certain structures, styles, and subjects. Examples of fiction genres include fables and realistic fiction. A **theme** is the central message, meaning, or “big idea” of a story.

Have students turn and talk to a partner about different fiction genres they have read. Ask students to explain which genre is their favorite and why. Invite volunteers to share their thoughts with the group.

➔ guide me

Use the chart in **guide me** to help students practice identifying typical features of fiction genres. Have a student read aloud the first statement. Discuss whether the trait is true of a fable, realistic fiction, or both genres (both). Ask volunteers to provide evidence that supports their choice.

Then, have students work in pairs to complete the rest of the chart. Encourage students to provide support for their choices using examples from texts they have previously read.

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Compare and contrast how different genres approach similar themes

➔ show me

What role does a genre play in presenting a theme?

➔ guide me

example

Place an X in response to each statement to share what you know about fables and realistic fiction.

| | Fable | Realistic Fiction | Both |
|--|-------|-------------------|------|
| May include a theme | | | X |
| Uses events that could not really happen to teach a lesson | X | | |
| Uses events that could happen to present a message | | X | |

COMPARING TEXTS

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VISUAL LITERACY

Readers can look for details in graphics the same way they look for details in texts. Have students work in small groups to compose brief sentences that describe the picture on page 41. Ask volunteers to share their sentences with the class. Then, discuss which story this photograph would most likely appear alongside: a realistic fiction story or a fable.

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52 COMPARING TEXTS

work time

Introduce Vocabulary Write the following vocabulary words on the board: **murky, imposing**. Point out the Spanish cognate for *imposing*. Have students name real-world examples of things that can be murky or are imposing.

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

Have partners make predictions about “The Honest Woodcutter: An Aesop Fable” based on the title of the story. Then have student pairs take turns reading the story aloud. After each student reads two paragraphs, have him or her pause to confirm or revise predictions and make predictions about the next section. Have partners continue this process until they finish reading.

Analyze Author’s Craft and Style: Characterization

Read aloud paragraph 2, emphasizing the phrases “an imposing man,” “loomed before him,” and “a mighty effort.” Ask a volunteer to explain what each phrase means, and discuss how these descriptions help readers understand what Hermes is like.

Then, have partners read through the rest of the text and note other words or phrases that are particularly descriptive. Invite volunteers to explain how the word choice affects the reader’s understanding of the characters in the story.

check for understanding by having students answer the question about whether the events in the story could or could not really happen. (The events in the story could not really happen because Greek gods are not real people. They are characters in ancient legends. Also, axes do not magically appear in lakes in real life.)

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work time

The Honest Woodcutter: An Aesop Fable
retold by Aisha Jackson

- 1 A poor woodcutter was chopping down a tree when his ax suddenly slipped from his hands and plunged into a deep pond. He cried out, dropped to his knees, and peered into the murky water, but all he saw was his own reflection.
 - 2 Abruptly, an imposing man with wings on his hat and feet loomed before him. “I am Hermes,” the man stated, “Greek god of trade, travelers, sports, and luck, at your service.” Hermes then reached into the pond, and with a mighty effort, retrieved a beautiful golden ax, and held it out.
 - 3 “I’m sorry, but that’s not my ax,” the woodcutter confessed.
 - 4 Hermes rummaged in the depths again and pulled out a glittering silver ax. Shaking his head regretfully, the woodcutter said, “That’s not it either.”
 - 5 Hermes again immersed his arm, extracting a rusty ax with a cracked wooden handle, which he held gingerly between two fingers. “That’s my trusty old ax!” the woodcutter proclaimed gleefully.
 - 6 Beaming, Hermes declared, “I’ll permit you to keep the gold and silver axes as well, considering your honesty.”
 - 7 The woodcutter heaved the axes over his shoulder and strode past the wealthiest man in town, who gaped at him and inquired, “Wherever did you get those axes?” The woodcutter described his encounter with Hermes.
 - 8 Hastily, the wealthy man dashed home, and clutching his shabby old ax, hurried to the pond. Sneakily, he hurled the ax into the water and then wailed that he had dropped his ax in the pond until Hermes appeared. Hermes reached in, retrieved a golden ax, and asked, “Is this it?”
 - 9 “Oh, yes, that’s mine!” yelled the wealthy man, reaching for the ax.
 - 10 Hermes, glowering, bellowed at the man, “Dishonesty yields nothing!” and then vanished, taking the ax with him.
- ➔ **check for understanding** Could the events in this story really happen? Why or why not?

CRITICAL LITERACY

One way to help students think critically is to construct alternatives to the text. For example, have students imagine if the wealthy man told the story. Ask them to discuss how the wealthy man likely felt when Hermes bellowed at him, left the man’s shabby ax in the water, and disappeared with the golden ax. This will help open new ways of engaging with familiar stories.



work time

Introduce Vocabulary Write the following vocabulary words on the board: **timidly, elegant, ornate**. Have students scan the text to see which nouns the adjectives describe and which verb the adverb describes.

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

Have student pairs take turns reading “When It Rains” 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: Character Actions and Sequence of Events Character 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 2 and 3. Point out the sequence of events: Elaina loses her father’s umbrella; she runs back to the station; she talks to a man at the “Lost and Found” window; he fetches an umbrella; Elaina tells him it isn’t hers. 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 caused an event to take place.

check for understanding by having students complete the analogy. (Possible response: Hermes is to the woodsman as the man at the “Lost and Found” window is to Elaina.)

work time

When It Rains

by Flor Gutierrez

- 1 One dismal, gloomy morning, just before Elaina boarded the train to the city, her father loaned her his umbrella. It was ancient—with bent spokes and ragged fabric—but his favorite, so Elaina took it. As the train sped down the tracks, Elaina thought, it's not even raining, but her momentary distraction was replaced by excitement about visiting the art museum.
- 2 Later, as Elaina strolled back to the train station, she reflected on her stellar day. She thought about the glorious paintings she'd seen as she gazed up at the clear blue sky, which made Elaina suddenly panic. “Oh no, Dad's umbrella!”
- 3 Elaina sprinted to the station and immediately rushed to a window marked “Lost and Found.” “Excuse me, sir,” Elaina said timidly to the elderly gentleman at the window, “but I left my umbrella on the train.” He rummaged through an overflowing bin and extracted an elegant green umbrella, showing it to Elaina. “No, I'm sorry, mine is black,” Elaina said.
- 4 “Ah,” the man said, and produced a stylish one with glossy black fabric and an ornate handle. “That's lovely,” Elaina said, “but mine is a little...crooked.”
- 5 “This has to be it,” he said, holding up the threadbare, flimsy umbrella.
- 6 “You found it!” Elaina cried. “You have no idea—anyway, thank you!”
- 7 “Here,” he said, “take the others too; they've just been collecting dust.”
- 8 On the way to her gate, umbrellas under her arm, Elaina ran into her friend Becky and told her all about her day, highlighting the incident with her umbrella. Becky listened intently before excusing herself and dashing to the “Lost and Found,” where the man looked at her quizzically while she recounted a sordid tale about losing her mother's favorite umbrella.
- 9 Becky squealed when the man produced a sleek red one, saying it was hers. “Is it?” said the man, slamming the window. “Somehow I doubt that!”

➔ **check for understanding** Complete the following analogy:
Hermes is to the woodsman as _____ is to Elaina.

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.

➤ 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 tone changes, use a Think Aloud to model how a critical thinker would approach the text.

Think Aloud To understand how the tone changes in "When It Rains," I will look at the words the author uses before and after paragraph 2. The author says that Elaina *strolled* and *reflected*. The tone is peaceful and calm since she is thinking about the good day she had at the museum. But when Elaina realizes she lost the umbrella at the end of paragraph 2, she panics and sprints to find it. The tone can be described as "alarmed," since Elaina is worried.

Compare and Contrast In order to complete the compare-and-contrast graphic organizer about the stories, students must identify features that are similar and different. Explain that students should work with one feature at a time and look for specific details in each text that are related to each feature.

Write the following sentences on the board for students to consider as they complete the graphic organizer:

- Are the characters realistic or unrealistic?
- How do the settings compare?
- What is the object that is lost?
- What big idea does the author want me to know?

➤ reflect

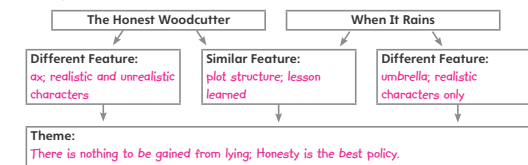
Have students work in pairs to discuss how the stories present the same theme in different ways. Use the following sentence frames to guide their discussions:

- Hermes states the theme when he says _____.
- When Becky lies to the man at the station, he says _____.

11 Compare and contrast how different genres approach similar themes

➤ check for understanding

- 1 Suppose a poor man attempted the same actions as the wealthy man in "The Honest Woodcutter"? How might this change the moral of the story?
Possible response: The lesson might be something more like, "Lying serves no one, including those in need."
- 2 How would your opinion of "When It Rains" change if it were revised to be more humorous? Explain your answer.
Possible response: I would not like the story as much because I wouldn't believe that Elaina was that concerned about losing the umbrella.
- 3 How is paragraph 3 of "The Honest Woodcutter" important to the fable?
Possible response: The woodcutter is honest and admits that the golden ax is not his. This reveals his nature and leads to his reward.
- 4 How does the tone change in paragraph 2 of "When It Rains"? Use text evidence to support your answer.
The tone shifts from peaceful to alarmed. Elaina "strolled" and "reflected" on the day, then panicked when she realized the umbrella was gone.
- 5 Use the graphic organizer below to compare and contrast both stories. Write one phrase in each box. *Possible responses:*



➤ reflect

Discuss with a partner how the stories present the same theme in different ways.

CRITICAL LITERACY

Students become good critical thinkers when they are able to look beyond the words on a page in order to make connections with other texts and examine the author's intent.

Have students practice thinking critically by reflecting on these questions after reading:

- How is "When It Rains" like a fairy tale or fable? How is it different?
- What does the author of "The Honest Woodcutter: An Aesop Fable" want readers to learn?
- Does the man at the window treat Becky fairly in "When It Rains"? Why or why not?

Compare and contrast how different genres approach similar themes

➤ show me

What role does a genre play in presenting a theme?

➤ guide me

example

Place an X in response to each statement to share what you know about fables and realistic fiction.

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work time

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check for understanding Could the events in this story really happen? Why or why not?

➤ **work time**

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➤ **check for understanding** Complete the following analogy:
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- 2 How would your opinion of “When It Rains” change if it were revised to be more humorous? Explain your answer.
- 3 How is paragraph 3 of “The Honest Woodcutter” important to the fable?
- 4 How does the tone change in paragraph 2 of “When It Rains”? Use text evidence to support your answer.
- 5 Use the graphic organizer below to compare and contrast both stories. Write **one** phrase in each box.

| The Honest Woodcutter | When It Rains | |
|-----------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Different Feature: | Similar Feature: | Different Feature: |
| Theme: | | |

➤ reflect

Discuss with a partner how the stories present the same theme in different ways.