

# Compare and contrast the text structure of two texts

# 9

## Language Objectives

- Identify signal words and phrases.
- Describe text structure.
- Evaluate an author's choices.
- Compare and contrast the structures of two or more texts.

## Building Literacy

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

- making connections across texts.
- analyzing text structures and relationships between ideas.
- identifying visuals that enhance the text.
- focusing on nuances of word choice.

## Focus on Language

Display the following vocabulary words that students will encounter in these texts. Then, have students create a web for each word. In the outer circles, have students write related words that use the same base word. (Spanish cognates are in parentheses.)

- inexperienced (sin experiencia)
- continually (continuamente)
- unfamiliar
- powerful
- unsuspecting
- seriously (seriamente)



### ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Beginning English learners will benefit from having short classroom texts translated into their native languages. Present these texts side-by-side so students can make connections between the two languages.

## ➔ show me

In this lesson, students will read two texts about the ocean and compare and contrast the text structure each author uses to organize information.

Say: Today, you are going to read two texts about the ocean and evaluate the text structures the authors use. Remember, **text structure** is how the author organizes the ideas in a text. To figure out the structure of a text, look for **signal words and phrases** and think about how the ideas are connected. After you identify the structure, or structures, of each text, you can then consider how the structures of the two texts are alike and different.

Have partners turn and talk to share examples of signal words and phrases they might find in different types of text structures. Ask volunteers to share their examples with the class.

## ➔ guide me

Use the sentences in **guide me** to help students use signal words to identify text structure.

Read aloud the first sentence and circle “At first” and *then*. Review how those words indicate that one detail comes before another in a **chronological structure**. Ask a volunteer to identify which feeling comes first (*nervous*) and which feeling comes after (*comfortable*).

Then, have student pairs read and discuss the connecting ideas in the next sentences. Students should circle the signal word and write the text structure it indicates (*but*, *compare and contrast*; *so*, *problem and solution*).

9

### Compare and contrast the text structure of two texts

➔ show me

How does text structure affect how ideas are portrayed?

➔ guide me


**example**

Read the sentences below. Circle the signal words that identify the text structure of each sentence. Then write the text structure on the line.

At first, I was nervous; then I began to feel comfortable.  
Chronological

A swimming pool may be large, but the ocean is enormous.  
Compare and Contrast

Ocean currents can be strong, so it's best to swim close to shore.  
Problem and Solution



COMPARING TEXTS 33

### VISUAL LITERACY

Monitor students' understanding after reading by having partners draw and label the ideas detailed in each sentence. Then, have volunteers share their drawings with the class. Drawing activities engage visual learners while providing evidence of reading comprehension.



## work time

**Introduce Vocabulary** Write the following vocabulary words on the board: **inexperienced, continually, unfamiliar.** Point out the Spanish cognates for *inexperienced* and *continually*. Then, have students underline the prefix or suffix in each word. Help them use the meaning of the base word (*experience, continue, and familiar*) to identify the meaning of each new word.

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

Have student pairs take turns reading “Swimming Safely in the Ocean” aloud. After each student reads two paragraphs, have him or her pause and share a personal or text connection.

On the board, write a few sentence frames to help guide the conversation, such as:

- This reminds me of a time when I \_\_\_\_\_.
- I remember reading about water safety \_\_\_\_\_.
- I know lifeguards are important because \_\_\_\_\_.

**Analyze Author’s Craft and Style: Word Choice** Remind students that authors choose strong words for effect to strengthen their message and appeal to readers’ emotions.

Reread paragraph 1 and point out the words “powerful force” and “extremely dangerous.” Discuss with students why the author uses these strong words to describe the ocean. (He introduces the ocean in this way to establish a sense of fear, so readers will listen to and follow the safety guidelines described.)

Then, have partners scan paragraph 3 and identify strong words the author uses to convince readers that it’s important to have a lifeguard present when they swim. Ask volunteers to share the words they find.

**check for understanding** by having students complete the sentences about the text structure. (The author uses a sequential structure. Words that signal this structure include: *first, next, furthermore, finally.*)

## 9 Compare and contrast the text structure of two texts

### work time

#### Swimming Safely in the Ocean

by Sam Brelsfoard

- Swimming in the ocean is great fun; however, this powerful force of nature can also be extremely dangerous for inexperienced swimmers. How can you ensure your safety when swimming in the ocean?
- First, learn to swim! At the very least, you should be able to tread water so that you can always keep your head above the surface of the water.
- Next, always remember to swim with a lifeguard present. Lifeguards are trained professionals who can see dangers in the water that you aren’t be able to see for yourself. In addition, it is also a good idea to employ the buddy system. A lifeguard has to watch over many people and continually scan the area for danger, so swimming with a friend ensures that someone is watching you.
- Furthermore, do not swim near piers or other large structures in the water as there is always the danger that a wave could push you into them. Likewise, do not swim near diving areas or other places where people might enter the water quickly. In this situation, you risk someone plunging into the water on top of you, injuring you both. Similarly, never dive into unfamiliar waters where unseen rocks or coral may be close to the surface.
- It is also important to be cautious at all times, so never swim if you are tired. Be sure to take frequent breaks and stay hydrated. Keep an eye on the ocean at all times and stay out of the ocean if the waves are particularly strong.
- Finally, beware of ocean currents. Even the most experienced swimmers can get caught in a dangerous rip current. A rip current is a powerful, narrow channel of water that moves quickly from the shore out to sea. If you’re caught in a rip current that is pulling you away from shore, do not try to swim against it because you’ll just get exhausted. Instead, swim parallel to the shore until you get out of the current.

➔ **check for understanding** The author uses a \_\_\_\_\_ structure. Words that signal this structure include: \_\_\_\_\_.

## CRITICAL LITERACY

One way to help students develop a critical response is to have them construct alternatives to the text. For example, have students imagine how the text might be different if a lifeguard wrote it. How would a lifeguard likely feel about his or her job protecting swimmers? What might a lifeguard write about the dangers of the ocean and the unsafe actions he or she sees swimmers take?



## work time

**Introduce Vocabulary** Write the following vocabulary words on the board: **powerful, unsuspecting, seriously.** Point out the Spanish cognate for *seriously*. Then, have students create a T-chart to list each word and one or more antonyms for it.

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

Have student pairs take turns reading “The Ocean’s Currents” aloud. After each student reads two paragraphs, have him or her complete a sticky note about what was just read.

On the board, write a few ideas that students can use for each note:

- an interesting fact
- an unfamiliar or confusing idea
- a domain-specific concept they want to know more about
- signal words and phrases that connect ideas

### Analyze Author’s Craft and Style: Cause and Effect

Review that the author describes different ocean currents, how they are created, and how the water moves as a result of the currents. Explain that the author uses **cause and effect** to connect these ideas.

Ask a volunteer to read aloud paragraph 3. Point out that the author describes lateral currents. A lateral current is created by waves that “break at an angle when they reach the shoreline.” The waves breaking at an angle is the cause, or why a lateral current is created. The lateral current is the effect, or what happens as a result.

Then, have partners review paragraphs 6 and 7 and discuss additional cause-and-effect relationships. (For example, high tides on beaches that rise sharply from the water’s edge can cause backwash. A strong backwash can cause a person to be knocked over.) Ask volunteers to share their answers with the class.

**check for understanding** by having students complete the sentences about the structure of paragraph 5. (Paragraph 5 has a compare-and-contrast structure. The signal words that help show this are *similarly* and *unlike*.)

Compare and contrast the text structure of two texts 9

work time

**The Ocean’s Currents**  
*by Juan J. Ureta*

1 Is there anything more mesmerizing than watching ocean waves crashing on the shore? The ocean is a powerful body of water that requires vigilance and respect.

2 Much of the ocean’s motion takes the form of currents. A current is a section of water that moves continuously in one direction. There are many kinds of currents that occur near the shoreline that swimmers should be aware of for their safety.

3 For example, most waves break at an angle when they reach the shoreline. As they do this, they push water to the side, creating a lateral current, which then moves water parallel to the shoreline. A lateral current is also known as a littoral, side, or longshore current.

4 Lateral currents can move either slowly or quickly. The larger the wave is, the stronger the lateral current will be. If a lateral current combines with other currents, a potentially dangerous situation can arise.

5 Similarly, rip currents occur near the shore. Rip currents are created by the movement of water as it gathers at the shoreline, following the wake of a crashing wave. After a wave breaks, the water rushes back off the shore and into the ocean, forming the current. Unlike lateral currents, which move along the shoreline, rip currents pull water from the shoreline and out to sea rapidly. It is easy for an unsuspecting swimmer to get caught in a rip current.

6 Backwash is similar to a rip current. It is usually caused by high tides on beaches that rise sharply away from the water’s edge. It can knock people right off their feet.

7 Another dangerous movement of water is called shore break. Shore break occurs when a large wave slams powerfully onto shore in a place where there is a sudden change in how deep the water is. Such conditions often occur on steep beaches and rocky shores in very shallow areas. The force of the wave can seriously injure a person.

➞ **check for understanding** Paragraph 5 has a \_\_\_\_\_ structure. The signal words that help show this are \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

COMPARING TEXTS 35

## VISUAL LITERACY

Visual learners will benefit from interacting with graphic features that portray or explain difficult science concepts. Provide small groups with diagrams and videos that show the different types of currents described in the text. Ask them to discuss how the graphic features help them better understand the ideas in the text.

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44

COMPARING TEXTS

## 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 compare-and-contrast text structures, use a Think Aloud to model how a critical thinker would approach the texts.

**Think Aloud** First, I will look back at each text and review how the author connects ideas. The author of "Swimming Safely in the Ocean" mainly uses chronological structure to tell about steps to take in order to swim safely in the ocean. The author also uses a cause-and-effect structure to tell about what happens as a result of certain situations like rip currents.

The structure of "The Ocean's Currents" is different because it does not use a chronology structure. There are no steps or dates. The author uses a cause-and-effect structure to explain how waves work, though.

So, the text structures are alike because they both connect some ideas by cause and effect. But they are different because "Swimming Safely in the Ocean" is mostly told in chronological order.

**Connect Ideas** Have students locate each detail in "Swimming Safely in the Ocean." Then, guide them use text order and any nearby signal words and phrases to correctly number the ideas. Remind students that they should reread the ideas in order from 1–5 to be sure they make sense and reflect the order of the passage.

## reflect

Have partners discuss another way the author of "The Ocean's Currents" could organize the information. Encourage students to consider how graphic features (charts, diagrams, photos, captions) and text features (heads and subheads) could help readers better understand the scientific ideas the author presents.

### 9 Compare and contrast the text structure of two texts

#### check for understanding

- 1 What is one thing you will do differently as a result of reading "Swimming Safely in the Ocean"?  
*Possible response: I will not swim under the pier at my local beach. I never realized that I could get hurt if the current pushes me up against it.*
- 2 If you could ask the author of "The Ocean's Currents" one question, what would it be and why?  
*Possible response: I would ask which type of current is the most dangerous because I would not want to get caught in it!*
- 3 What is the meaning of "tread" in paragraph 2 of "Swimming Safely in the Ocean"? What clues in the text help you to know the word's meaning?  
*Possible response: "Tread" is a way of moving in the water so that your head stays above the surface.*
- 4 Compare and contrast both texts. How are the structures the same? How are they different?  
*Possible response: Both texts use cause and effect to present ideas. However, the overall structure of "Swimming Safely in the Ocean" is sequential.*
- 5 Use the chronological text structure of "Swimming Safely in the Ocean" to help you order the ideas below from 1–5.  
  - 4 Be alert at all times.
  - 3 Do not swim near large structures.
  - 1 Learn to swim.
  - 5 Beware of currents.
  - 2 Swim with a lifeguard present.

#### reflect

With a partner, discuss how the author of "The Ocean's Currents" could organize the text differently to portray the same ideas in a different way.

36 COMPARING TEXTS

## CRITICAL LITERACY

To promote social engagement and action, have students write and illustrate posters to educate beachgoers about the dangers of rip currents, backwash, and shore breaks. Provide students with ideas they may wish to address with their posters. For example:

- how each type of water movement occurs
- why rip currents, backwash, and shore breaks are dangerous for people in the water and on the edge of the beach
- what people should do to stay safe in and near the ocean

## Compare and contrast the text structure of two texts

➞ show me

How does text structure affect how ideas are portrayed?

➞ guide me

example

Read the sentences below. Circle the signal words that identify the text structure of each sentence. Then write the text structure on the line.

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A swimming pool may be large, but the ocean is enormous.

Ocean currents can be strong, so it's best to swim close to shore.





## work time

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**➞ check for understanding**  
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- 2 If you could ask the author of “The Ocean’s Currents” one question, what would it be and why?
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- 4 Compare and contrast both texts. How are the structures the same? How are they different?
- 5 Use the chronological text structure of “Swimming Safely in the Ocean” to help you order the ideas below from 1–5.  
  
\_\_\_\_ Be alert at all times.  
  
\_\_\_\_ Do not swim near large structures.  
  
\_\_\_\_ Learn to swim.  
  
\_\_\_\_ Beware of currents.  
  
\_\_\_\_ Swim with a lifeguard present.

**➞ reflect**  
.....

With a partner, discuss how the author of “The Ocean’s Currents” could organize the text differently to portray the same ideas in a different way.