Compare and contrast story elements to determine how they contribute to meaning

21

Language Objectives

- Discuss author's purpose.
- Describe text structure.
- Evaluate how authors present information.
- Compare and contrast story elements to determine meaning.

Building Literacy

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

- describing how the author reveals meaning.
- interpreting what the author wants readers to know.
- analyzing text structures and relationships between ideas.
- examining the author's choices about what information to include.

Focus on Language

Display the following vocabulary words that students will encounter in these texts. Have students use a KWL graphic organizer to rate their understanding of these words. (Spanish cognates are in parentheses.)

- specifically (específicamente)
- proceedings
- staggeringly
- enthusiastically (con entusiasmo)
- acceptance (aceptación)
- supporters

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

For English learners who struggle with pronunciation, make echo reading and repetition a regular part of the classroom routine. Increasing students' exposure to spoken vocabulary will reinforce correct pronunciation.

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show me

In this lesson, students will read two fictional texts in different genres to compare and contrast how authors use story elements to reveal meaning.

Say: Today, you will read two fictional texts and think about how each author organizes information. When authors use different text structures to present events and ideas, readers can make different connections between story elements. To **compare and contrast** the text structures, tell how the authors' organization and presentation of story elements is similar and different.

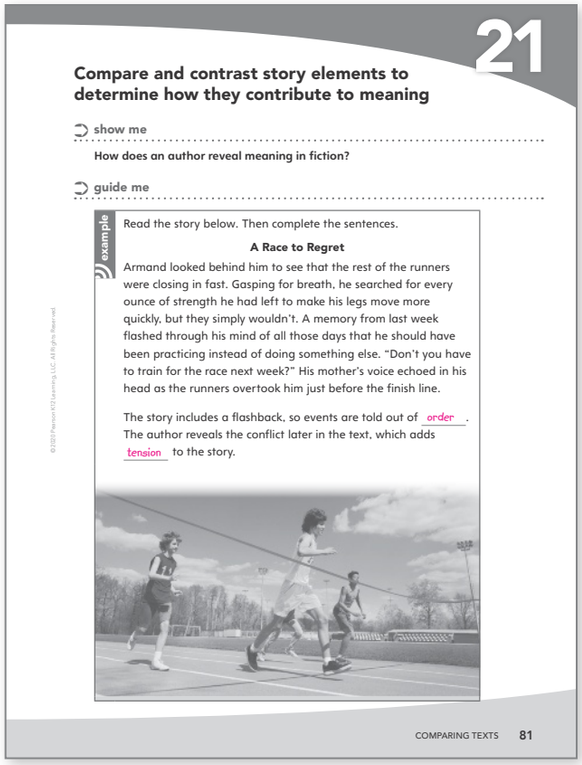
Have partners turn and talk to discuss possible text structures an author might use when telling a fictional story. Encourage them to consider how the different structures might affect how readers understand the relationships between events or among characters. Ask volunteers to share their ideas with the class.

guide me

Use the story in **guide me** to help students understand how an author uses structure to reveal meaning.

Remind students that most story events are told in order. Two other structural techniques authors use are **flashback**, in which the author relates an earlier event, and **foreshadowing**, in which the author alludes to something that might happen in the future.

Read aloud the directions, then have a student volunteer read aloud the story. Point out words and phrases that indicate the order of events, such as, "A memory from last week flashed through his mind." Then, have students work in pairs to complete the sentence frames.



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Compare and contrast story elements to determine how they contribute to meaning

show me

How does an author reveal meaning in fiction?

guide me

example

Read the story below. Then complete the sentences.

A Race to Regret

Armand looked behind him to see that the rest of the runners were closing in fast. Gasping for breath, he searched for every ounce of strength he had left to make his legs move more quickly, but they simply wouldn't. A memory from last week flashed through his mind of all those days that he should have been practicing instead of doing something else. "Don't you have to train for the race next week?" His mother's voice echoed in his head as the runners overtook him just before the finish line.

The story includes a flashback, so events are told out of order. The author reveals the conflict later in the text, which adds tension to the story.

COMPARING TEXTS 81

VISUAL LITERACY

Readers can improve comprehension by making connections between words and graphic features. Have students work in small groups to discuss the picture on page 81. Then, have them write a caption for the picture, combining details from the picture with the information in the text. Ask for volunteers to share their captions with the group.

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work time

Introduce Vocabulary Write the following vocabulary words on the board: **specifically, proceedings, staggeringly**. Point out the Spanish cognate for *specifically*. Have students copy the vocabulary words and list related words for each, such as *specify, specific*, and *specification*. Then have them identify each word's part of speech.

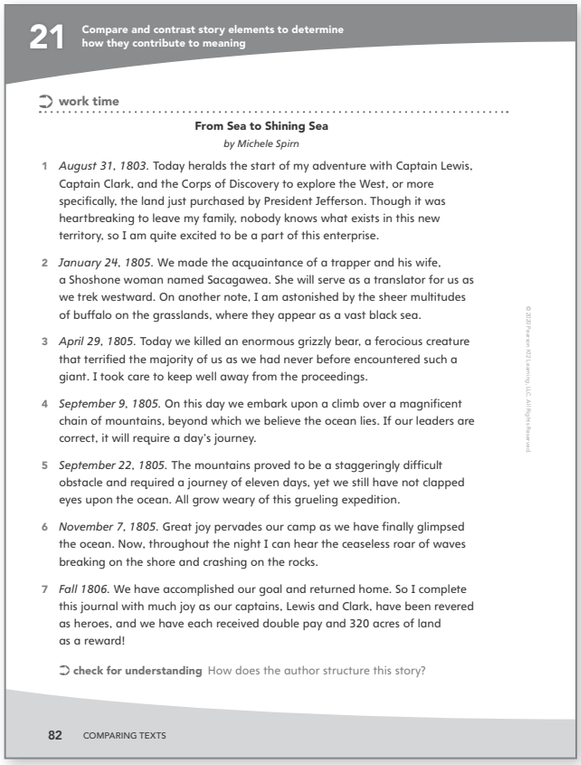
Read—Pause—Predict Use the following interactive strategy to promote a strategic reading of the text.

Have partners make predictions about "From Sea to Shining Sea" based on the title, text features, and a quick scan for key words. 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 make predictions about the next section. Have partners continue this process until they finish reading.

Analyze Author's Craft and Style: Author's Purpose Remind students that authors often have more than one purpose for writing a text. Have volunteers reread paragraphs 1 and 2. Point out the genre, historical fiction, and discuss how the author informs readers about the Corps of Discovery expedition. Then guide students to identify a secondary purpose (to entertain readers with the narrator's thoughts, feelings, and personal observations).

Have partners work to together to sort the historical facts from the personal thoughts and observations. Finally, have partners share how the personal observations add meaning to the text.

check for understanding by having students answer the question about structure. (The author structures the story as a journal with dated entries that show the sequence of events.)



21 Compare and contrast story elements to determine how they contribute to meaning

work time

From Sea to Shining Sea

by Michele Spirn

1 *August 31, 1803.* Today heralds the start of my adventure with Captain Lewis, Captain Clark, and the Corps of Discovery to explore the West, or more specifically, the land just purchased by President Jefferson. Though it was heartbreaking to leave my family, nobody knows what exists in this new territory, so I am quite excited to be a part of this enterprise.

2 *January 24, 1805.* We made the acquaintance of a trapper and his wife, a Shoshone woman named Sacagawea. She will serve as a translator for us as we trek westward. On another note, I am astonished by the sheer multitudes of buffalo on the grasslands, where they appear as a vast black sea.

3 *April 29, 1805.* Today we killed an enormous grizzly bear, a ferocious creature that terrified the majority of us as we had never before encountered such a giant. I took care to keep well away from the proceedings.

4 *September 9, 1805.* On this day we embark upon a climb over a magnificent chain of mountains, beyond which we believe the ocean lies. If our leaders are correct, it will require a day's journey.

5 *September 22, 1805.* The mountains proved to be a staggeringly difficult obstacle and required a journey of eleven days, yet we still have not clapped eyes upon the ocean. All grow weary of this grueling expedition.

6 *November 7, 1805.* Great joy pervades our camp as we have finally glimpsed the ocean. Now, throughout the night I can hear the ceaseless roar of waves breaking on the shore and crashing on the rocks.

7 *Fall 1806.* We have accomplished our goal and returned home. So I complete this journal with much joy as our captains, Lewis and Clark, have been revered as heroes, and we have each received double pay and 320 acres of land as a reward!

check for understanding How does the author structure this story?

82 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, have them develop a list of questions they would like to ask the author about his background and experience with the topic. For example:

- What research did you do to find out about the Corps of Discovery and the expedition?
- Do the narrator's responses to the events reflect how you would respond? Or, were they based on actual reactions from Corps members?
- Why did you choose to have such large time gaps between some entries?

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work time

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

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

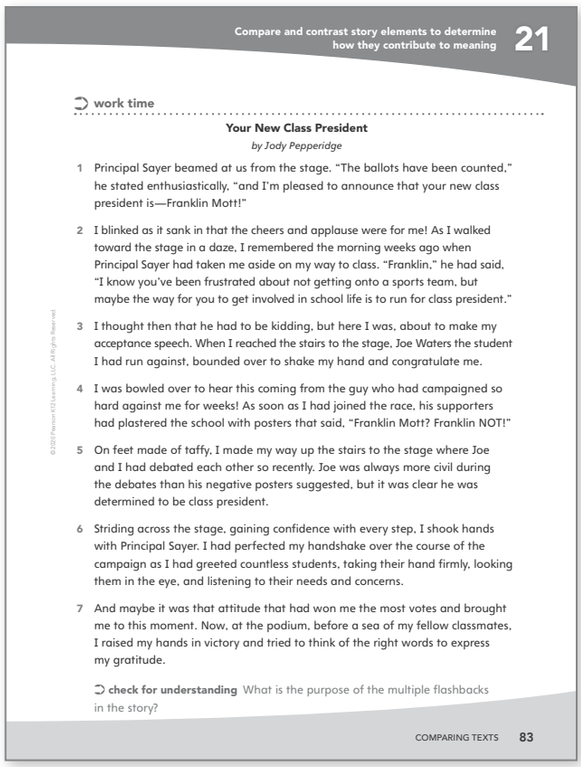
Have student pairs take turns reading "Your New Class President" aloud. After each student reads two paragraphs, partners will pause and draw a sketch about an idea in that section. Prompt partners to share and discuss their sketches when they are finished reading the text.

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 1 and 2. Point out the sequence of events: Principal Sayer announces the new class president; Franklin walks toward the stage; he has a flashback to the event that brought him to his point. Ask a volunteer to explain how one event leads to the next. Discuss how the flashback adds meaning to the events.

Then, ask partners to identify other events in the text and the flashbacks associated with them. Call on pairs to share how the flashback adds meaning to the text.

check for understanding by having students identify the purpose of multiple flashbacks. (The multiple flashbacks reveal meaning about: how Franklin came to run for class president; how heated the campaign was; how civil the debates were; how Franklin perfected his handshake.)



Compare and contrast story elements to determine how they contribute to meaning 21

work time

Your New Class President

by Jody Pepperidge

1 Principal Sayer beamed at us from the stage. "The ballots have been counted," he stated enthusiastically, "and I'm pleased to announce that your new class president is—Franklin Mott!"

2 I blinked as it sank in that the cheers and applause were for me! As I walked toward the stage in a daze, I remembered the morning weeks ago when Principal Sayer had taken me aside on my way to class. "Franklin," he had said, "I know you've been frustrated about not getting onto a sports team, but maybe the way for you to get involved in school life is to run for class president."

3 I thought then that he had to be kidding, but here I was, about to make my acceptance speech. When I reached the stairs to the stage, Joe Waters the student I had run against, bounded over to shake my hand and congratulate me.

4 I was bowled over to hear this coming from the guy who had campaigned so hard against me for weeks! As soon as I had joined the race, his supporters had plastered the school with posters that said, "Franklin Mott? Franklin NOT!"

5 On feet made of taffy, I made my way up the stairs to the stage where Joe and I had debated each other so recently. Joe was always more civil during the debates than his negative posters suggested, but it was clear he was determined to be class president.

6 Striding across the stage, gaining confidence with every step, I shook hands with Principal Sayer. I had perfected my handshake over the course of the campaign as I had greeted countless students, taking their hand firmly, looking them in the eye, and listening to their needs and concerns.

7 And maybe it was that attitude that had won me the most votes and brought me to this moment. Now, at the podium, before a sea of my fellow classmates, I raised my hands in victory and tried to think of the right words to express my gratitude.

check for understanding What is the purpose of the multiple flashbacks in the story?

COMPARING TEXTS 83

VISUAL LITERACY

Graphic organizers can help visual learners make sense of events in stories with flashbacks and foreshadowing. Have students complete a sequence chart to show the chronological order of events in "Your New Class President." Then ask volunteers to discuss why the author has chosen not to present the events in this exact order.

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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 contrast the presentation of ideas in the two texts, use a Think Aloud to model how a critical thinker would approach the texts.

Think Aloud To answer this question, I first need to think about the structure of each text. In "From Sea to Shining Sea," the author uses dated entries to tell the events in order. In "Your New Class President," the author uses flashbacks to reveal more details about the characters and how Franklin became class president. I preferred reading the second text because the flashbacks added interest to the story.

Compare and Contrast: Story Structure In order to complete the Venn diagram, suggest that student pairs ask themselves questions about the structure of each text. For example:

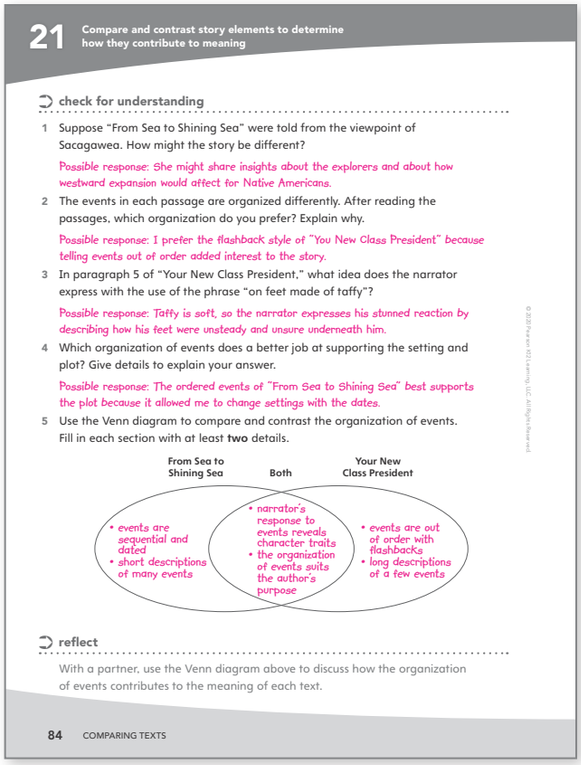
- What is the overall structure of the text?
- How does the structure help readers understand the story?
- What does the narration style reveal about the main character?
- Does the structure support the author's purpose?

reflect

Have students work with a partner and use the Venn diagram to discuss how the organization of events contributes to the meaning of each text.

Use the following sentence frames to guide their discussions:

- The sequential order of the events contributes to the text's meaning by _____.
- The flashbacks contribute to the text's meaning by _____.


21 Compare and contrast story elements to determine how they contribute to meaning

check for understanding

1 Suppose "From Sea to Shining Sea" were told from the viewpoint of Sacagawea. How might the story be different?

Possible response: She might share insights about the explorers and about how westward expansion would affect for Native Americans.

2 The events in each passage are organized differently. After reading the passages, which organization do you prefer? Explain why.

Possible response: I prefer the flashback style of "You New Class President" because telling events out of order added interest to the story.

3 In paragraph 5 of "Your New Class President," what idea does the narrator express with the use of the phrase "on feet made of taffy"?

Possible response: Taffy is soft, so the narrator expresses his stunned reaction by describing how his feet were unsteady and unsure underneath him.

4 Which organization of events does a better job at supporting the setting and plot? Give details to explain your answer.

Possible response: The ordered events of "From Sea to Shining Sea" best supports the plot because it allowed me to change settings with the dates.

5 Use the Venn diagram to compare and contrast the organization of events. Fill in each section with at least **two** details.

From Sea to Shining Sea: • events are sequential and dated • short descriptions of many events

Both: • narrator's response to events reveals character traits • the organization of events suits the author's purpose

Your New Class President: • events are out of order with flashbacks • long descriptions of a few events

reflect

With a partner, use the Venn diagram above to discuss how the organization of events contributes to the meaning of each text.

84 COMPARING TEXTS

CRITICAL LITERACY

To promote social action and engagement, have students conduct a mock election to select a class president. The class can choose three to four students to run for the office and then form campaign teams around those individuals. Teams can work together to design posters, plan responses to debate questions, and write speeches.

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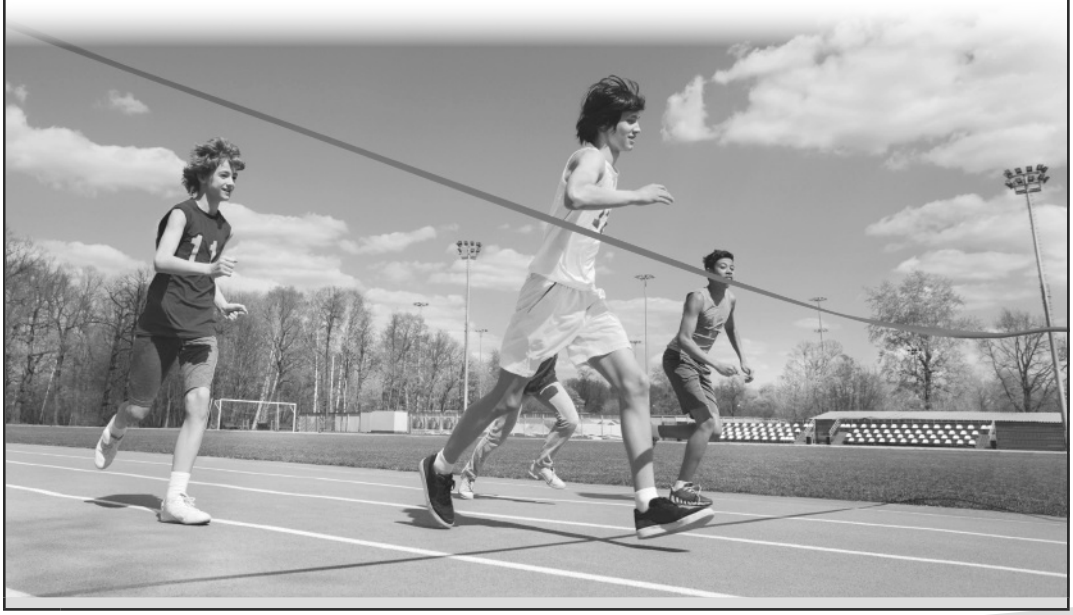

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work time

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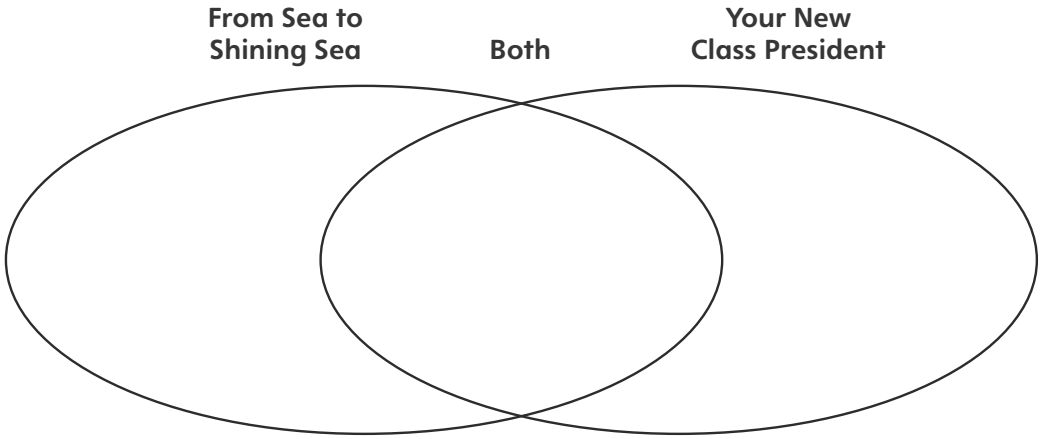

reflect

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