

Comprehension Instructional Routine: Compare and Contrast Two Characters in One Text

Preparation/Materials: chart with signal words, one large text of “The Cousins” for the teacher, student copies of “The Cousins,” 1 large Venn diagram, student copies of Venn diagram, pencils



- *Italicized type is what the teacher does*
- **Bold type is what the teacher says**
- Regular type is what the student(s) say

- **Bullet (•) and bolded type are what the teacher and student(s) say in unison**
- Teacher or student slides finger under underlined letter(s) or word(s)



NOTE: For students' responses accept the word similar, same or alike when appropriate. This format mainly employs one word or short phrases rather than complete sentences for the responses.

TEACHER EXPLAINS TASK

We are going to compare and contrast two characters in a story. Using compare and contrast is one way that authors organize their stories. It is also one way readers can think about what they are reading. It helps them understand the important ideas and how they are related.

TEACHER MODELS TASK

When we compare, we learn how things are similar or alike. When we contrast, we learn how things are different or not alike. Signal words in the text help us determine what is similar and what is different.

Display and point to the chart of signal words.

A signal word gives us a clue about how the story is organized. Here is a chart of signal words often used to compare and contrast.

The words in this column are used to compare the similarities between characters or things. *Point to compare.*
Read the list of words.

both, also, just like, alike

The words in this column are used to contrast the differences between characters or things. *Point to contrast.*
Read the list of words.

although, but, on the other hand, than, however, in contrast.

Display the teacher's copy of the story. Point to the vocabulary words as you define them.

The title of this story is “The Cousins.” There are several words in this story that we are going to talk about before I read.

cousins: A cousin is a relative.

Maine: Maine is a state in the northeast part of the United States.

coast: The coast is where the land meets the ocean.

Listen as I read the story about “The Cousins.” *Point to the text as you read aloud from the large copy. The numbers in the story are in light gray as an easy reference to the teacher. Do not read the numbers.*

The Cousins

1 Sally and Maria are both cousins. 2 Sally is tall and has brown eyes. 3 Maria also has brown eyes. 4 On the other hand, Maria is short. 5 The girls live in beautiful states. 6 Sally lives in Maine where it is cold. 7 However, Maria lives in Florida where it is hot.

1 It snows a lot in Maine. 2 In contrast, it is usually sunny and warm in Florida. 3 Both girls like to play outside. 4 They like to have a friend with them. 5 Sally plays in the snow. 6 She builds snowmen. 7 However, Maria plays in the sand at the beach. 8 She builds sand castles. 9 Florida and Maine are alike because you can play outside.

1 Sally and Maria are good swimmers. 2 They are both on swim teams. 3 Their pools are different. 4 The pools in Florida are outside. 5 On the other hand, the pools in Maine are inside. 6 So, Sally swims in an indoor pool and Maria swims in an outdoor pool. 7 In the summer, Sally and Maria swim in the ocean. 8 Both states are on the coast.

There are two characters in this story: Sally and Maria. We are going to compare and contrast the two girls using this Venn diagram. It will help us see how they are similar or alike and how they are different or not alike.

EMPOWERING TEACHERS

TEACHER MODELS TASK (continued)

Display Venn diagram and point to the sections as they are mentioned.

A Venn diagram consists of two circles that overlap.

This circle characterizes Sally (*write Sally at the top of one circle*) **and this circle characterizes Maria** (*write Maria at the top of the other circle*). **When I find differences between the two girls, I will write all that is true about Sally in this space** (*point to the empty space below Sally*) **and all that is true about Maria in this space** (*point to the empty space below Maria*).

The place where the circles overlap represents their similarities or how they are alike. So I will write everything that is the same about Sally and Maria in this space.

Listen and follow along as I reread the first paragraph. Pay attention to signal words for clues to comparing and contrasting. *Point to each word as you read aloud from the large copy of the story.*

1 Sally and Maria are both cousins. 2 Sally is tall and has brown eyes. 3 Maria also has brown eyes. 4 On the other hand, Maria is short. 5 The girls live in beautiful states. 6 Sally lives in Maine where it is cold. 7 However, Maria lives in Florida where it is hot.

Now, I will reread each sentence from the story. I will look for signal words to find what is similar and what is different about Sally and Maria.

Reread each sentence and point to the words. Always point to the chart when discussing all signal words.

Read sentence 1 in paragraph 1.

This sentence tells me about Sally and Maria.

Isn't 'both' a signal word? I'm going to look at the chart of signal words. Yes, here is both and it is a compare word. It tells me something is similar. What is similar? They are 'both' cousins. I want to show how Sally and Maria are alike on the Venn diagram. I will write 'cousins' in the overlapping circles on the Venn diagram because this is how they are similar.

Read sentence 2.

This sentence tells me Sally is tall and she has brown eyes. I need to read more to find out if Maria is similar or different.

Read sentences 3 & 4.

These sentences tell me about Maria.

The words 'also' and 'on the other hand' are in these sentences. I think I saw these words on the chart of signal words. Yes, here is also and it is a compare word. It tells me there is something similar about Sally and Maria. Each girl has brown eyes. I will write 'brown eyes' in the overlapping circles.

And here is the phrase on the other hand; it is used for contrasting. It tells me that there is something different about Sally and Maria. Sally is tall and Maria is short. I want to show these differences on the Venn diagram. I will write tall here (*in Sally's circle*) and short there (*in Maria's circle*).

Read sentence 5.

The girls live in beautiful states. This tells me something about the states, but I wonder where they live. I have to read on to find out.

Read sentences 6 & 7.

Now I know that Sally lives in Maine and Maria lives in Florida. I think 'however' is on the chart of signal words. Yes, however is a contrast word. It tells me there is a difference. I will write 'lives in Maine' in Sally's circle and 'lives in Florida' in Maria's circle.

Now I will look at the Venn diagram to compare and contrast Sally and Maria using the information from paragraph 1. *Point to each part of the Venn diagram as you compare and contrast.*

The overlapping circles tell me how Sally and Maria are similar. They are both cousins and have brown eyes. The rest of each circle tells me how Sally and Maria are different. Sally is tall and lives in Maine. However, Maria is short and lives in Florida.

I can summarize what we've learned about the two characters by using signal words and the Venn diagram as a guide.

EMPOWERING TEACHERS

TEACHER MODELS TASK (continued)

To summarize, I would say this:

Sally and Maria are cousins with brown eyes. However, Sally, who lives in Maine, is taller than Maria who lives in Florida.

TEACHER AND STUDENTS PRACTICE TASK TOGETHER

Remember, when we compare, we learn how things are similar or alike. What do we learn when we compare?

- We learn how things are similar or alike.

When we contrast, we learn how things are different or not alike.

What do we learn when we contrast?

- We learn how things are different or not alike.

Signal words can give us clues about similarities and differences.

Display and point to the chart of signal words.

Let's read the signal words used to compare.

- both, also, just like, alike

Let's read the signal words used to contrast.

- although, but, on the other hand, however, than, in contrast

Display the teacher's copy of the story. Point to each word as you read aloud from the large copy of the story.

Listen and follow along as I read aloud the second paragraph of "The Cousins." Then we will use the Venn diagram to compare and contrast Sally and Maria.

1 It snows a lot in Maine. 2 In contrast, it is usually sunny and warm in Florida. 3 Both girls like to play outside. 4 They like to have a friend with them. 5 Sally plays in the snow. 6 She builds snowmen. 7 However, Maria plays in the sand at the beach. 8 She builds sand castles. 9 Florida and Maine are alike because you can play outside.

Give students a copy of the Venn diagram and a pencil. Continue to display the large Venn diagram and point to the sections as they are mentioned.

Remember, the overlapping circles tell us how Sally and Maria are similar.

What do the overlapping circles tell us?

- They tell us how Sally and Maria are similar/same.

The rest of each circle tells us how Sally and Maria are different.

What does the rest of each circle tell us?

- Each circle tells us how Sally and Maria are different.

Now, we will reread each sentence and look for signal words to help us find what is similar and what is different about Sally and Maria.

Read each sentence with students and point to the chart when discussing all signal words. Teacher fills in the large Venn diagram and students fill in their own copies of the Venn diagram.

Let's read sentence 1 in paragraph 2.

Does the sentence tell us about Sally or Maria?

- no

Let's read sentence 2.

Does the sentence tell us about Sally or Maria?

- no

Sometimes we need to read more to find similarities and differences in the characters.

Let's read sentence 3.

Does the sentence tell us about Sally or Maria?

- yes

I see the word 'both' in the sentence. Isn't 'both' a signal word? Look at the chart and find 'both'. Is it a compare word or a contrast word?

- a compare word

Yes, the signal word both tells us there is something similar about Sally and Maria. Sally and Maria like to play outside.

How are they similar?

- They like to play outside.

EMPOWERING TEACHERS

TEACHER AND STUDENTS PRACTICE TASK TOGETHER (continued)

To show what is alike on the Venn diagram, we need to write 'like to play outside' inside the overlapping circles. Where do we write 'like to play outside'?

- inside the overlapping circles

Yes. Let's write 'like to play outside' inside the overlapping circles. Write on your Venn diagram and I will write on the large Venn diagram.

Let's read sentence 4.

Does the sentence tell us about Sally or Maria?

- yes

This sentence does not have a signal word, but the word 'they' refers to both the girls. The word 'they' tells us something about Sally and Maria. It tells us they both like to have a friend with them.

Does this make Sally and Maria similar or different?

- similar

How are they similar?

- They like to have a friend with them.

Yes. Sally and Maria like to have a friend with them. Let's write 'like to have a friend with them' inside the overlapping circles.

Where do we write it?

- We write inside the overlapping circles.

Write on your Venn diagram and I will write on the large Venn diagram.

Let's read sentence 5.

Does the sentence tell us about Sally or Maria?

- Yes, it tells us about Sally.

It tells us Sally plays in snow.

What does it tell us about Sally?

- She plays in snow.

OK, let's read on.

Let's read sentence 6.

Does the sentence tell us about Sally or Maria?

- Yes, it tells us about Sally.

It tells us Sally builds snowmen.

What does it tell us about Sally?

- She builds snowmen.

Yes, so now we know two things about Sally. She plays in the snow and builds snowmen. Let's read on to see if Maria does something similar or different.

Let's read sentences 7 & 8.

Do these sentences tell us about Sally or Maria?

- Yes, they tell us about Maria.

The sentence tells us that Maria plays in the sand at the beach.

Where does Maria play?

- She plays in sand at the beach.

The sentence also tells us that Maria builds sand castles.

What more does it tell us about Maria?

- She builds sand castles.

Yes, so now we know two things about Maria. She plays in the sand at the beach and builds sand castles.

Now, we want to know if Sally and Maria do something similar or different. I saw the word 'however' in the sentence. Isn't 'however' a signal word? Look at the chart and find 'however'. Is it a compare word or a contrast word?

- a contrast word

However tells us there is a difference between Sally and Maria.

What does Sally do?

- She plays in snow and builds snowmen.

What does Maria do?

- She plays in the sand at the beach and builds sand castles.

Yes. It was good to read more sentences because we learned the differences. Sally plays in the snow and builds snowmen; however, Maria plays in the sand at the beach and builds sand castles.

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TEACHER AND STUDENTS PRACTICE TASK TOGETHER (continued)

We need to show these differences on the Venn diagram.

In Sally's circle let's write 'plays in snow and builds snowmen'.

What do we write in Sally's circle?

- plays in snow and builds snowmen

Yes, write 'plays in snow and builds snowmen' in Sally's circle.

Write on your Venn diagram and I will write on the large Venn diagram.

In Maria's circle let's write 'plays in sand at the beach' and 'builds sand castles'.

What do we write in Maria's circle?

- plays in sand and builds sand castles

Yes, write 'plays in sand' and 'builds sand castles' in Maria's circle.

Write on your Venn diagram and I will write on the large Venn diagram.

Let's read sentence 9.

Does the sentence tell us about Sally or Maria?

- no

Now let's look at our Venn diagram to compare and contrast Sally and Maria using the information from paragraph

2. *Point to each part of the Venn diagram as you compare and contrast.*

We just learned that they like to play outside and have a friend with them.

What did we just learn about how Sally and Maria are similar?

- They like to play outside and have a friend with them.

The rest of each circle tells us how Sally and Maria are different.

We just learned that Sally plays in snow and builds snowmen.

What did we just learn about how Sally is different?

- She plays in snow and builds snowmen.

Then we learned that Maria plays in sand and builds sand castles.

What did we just learn about how Maria is different?

- She plays in sand and builds sand castles.

I can summarize what we've learned about the two characters by using signal words and the Venn diagram as a guide.

To summarize, I would say this:

Sally and Maria are cousins with brown eyes who both like to play outside with friends. However, Sally is taller than Maria and Sally lives in Maine where she plays in the snow and builds snowmen. Maria lives in Florida where she plays in the sand and builds sand castles.

STUDENTS PRACTICE TASK

Now you will continue to compare and contrast the two characters in the story, "The Cousins."

What do we learn when we compare?

We learn how two things are similar or alike.

What do we learn when we contrast?

We learn how two things are different or not alike.

Display and point to the chart of signal words as you read them and continue pointing as students read them.

Signal words can give us clues about similarities and differences.

Read the words we use to compare.

both, also, just like, alike

Read the words we use to contrast.

although, but, on the other hand, however, than, in contrast

Display the teacher's copy and give students their copy of the story.

Silently read the third paragraph about "The Cousins."

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STUDENTS PRACTICE TASK (continued)

1 Sally and Maria are good swimmers. 2 They are both on swim teams. 3 Their pools are different. 4 The pools in Florida are outside. 5 On the other hand, the pools in Maine are inside. 6 So, Sally swims in an indoor pool and Maria swims in an outdoor pool. 7 In the summer, Sally and Maria swim in the ocean. 8 Both states are on the coast.

Now let's choral read the third paragraph together.

You will continue to use the Venn diagram to compare and contrast the two characters, Sally and Maria.

Continue to display the large Venn diagram and point to the sections as they are mentioned. Also, point to the signal words on the chart when they are mentioned below.

What do the overlapping circles tell us?

They tell us how Sally and Maria are alike.

What do the overlapping circles tell us?

They tell us how Sally and Maria are alike.

Now, we will reread each sentence aloud. Look for signal words to help you find what is similar and what is different about Sally and Maria.

Read sentence 1 in paragraph 3.

Does this sentence tell us about Sally and Maria?

yes

This sentence does not have a signal word but it gives us information about Sally and Maria.

Does this information tell us how Sally and Maria are similar or different?

similar

What is similar?

Sally and Maria are good swimmers.

Where do we write 'good swimmers' on the Venn diagram?

We write inside the overlapping circles.

Let's write it. Continue to write on the large diagram so you have a final record of all the information on the Venn diagram.

Read sentence 2.

Does this sentence tell us about Sally and Maria?

yes

Is there a signal word in this sentence?

yes

What is the signal word?

both

Find 'both' on the chart. Is it a compare word or a contrast word?

a compare word.

Yes. The compare word 'both' tells us there is something similar about Sally and Maria.

What is similar?

They are both on swim teams.

Yes. Where do we write 'on a swim team' on the Venn diagram?

We write inside the overlapping circles.

Let's write it.

Read sentence 3.

Does this tell us about Sally and Maria?

no

Read sentence 4.

Does this tell us about Sally or Maria?

no

Read sentence 5.

Does this tell us about Sally or Maria?

no

That's right. These sentences do not tell us about Sally and Maria. We need to read more.

Read sentence 6.

Does this tell us about Sally or Maria?

yes

EMPOWERING TEACHERS

STUDENTS PRACTICE TASK (continued)

Read sentence 6.

Does this tell us about Sally or Maria?

yes

Does this information tell us how Sally and Maria are similar or different?

different

How is Sally different?

She swims in an indoor pool.

How is Maria different?

She swims in an outdoor pool.

Remember, to show these differences on a Venn diagram, we write in the rest of each circle.

Write these responses on the large Venn diagram and give students time to write them on their diagram.

So, what are we going to write in Sally's circle?

swims in an indoor pool

Write 'swims in an indoor pool' in Sally's circle.

And, what are we going to write in Maria's circle?

swims in an outdoor pool

Write 'swims in an outdoor pool' in Maria's circle.

Read sentence 7.

Does this tell us about Sally and Maria?

yes

Does this information tell us how Sally and Maria are similar or different?

similar

What is similar?

They swim in the ocean.

Yes, this sentence does not have a signal word but it tells us something similar about Sally and Maria.

Where do we write 'swim in the ocean' on the Venn diagram?

We write inside the overlapping circles.

Write 'swim in the ocean' inside the overlapping circles.

Read sentence 8.

Does this tell us about Sally and Maria?

no

Now let's look at our Venn diagram to compare and contrast Sally and Maria using the information from paragraph 3. Point to each part of the Venn diagram as you compare and contrast.

The overlapping circles tell us how Sally and Maria are similar or alike. What did we just learn about how they are alike?

good swimmers
on a swim team
swim in the ocean

The rest of each circle tells us how Sally and Maria are different.

How is Sally different?

She swims in an indoor pool.

How is Maria different?

She swims in an outdoor pool.

Let's look at the Venn diagram. We will use it to compare and contrast Sally and Maria.

Point to each section of the Venn diagram, beginning at the top, as the students read aloud what is written.

How are Sally and Maria the same? cousins

brown eyes
like to play outside
like to have a friend with them
good swimmers
on a swim team
swim in the ocean

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STUDENTS PRACTICE TASK (continued)

How is Sally different?

tall
lives in Maine
plays in snow
builds snowmen
swims in an indoor pool

How is Maria different?

short
lives in Florida
plays in sand at the beach
builds sand castles
swims in an outdoor pool

I can summarize what we've learned about the two characters by using signal words and the Venn diagram as a guide. To summarize, I would say this:

Sally and Maria are cousins with brown eyes who like to play outside with friends. They are good swimmers on a swim team and both like to swim in the ocean. The two girls are different in these ways. Sally is taller than Maria. Sally lives in Maine where she swims in an indoor pool. She also plays in the snow and builds snowmen. On the other hand, Maria lives in Florida where she swims in an outdoor pool. She plays in the sand and builds sand castles.

This final summary is an example of how a Venn diagram can assist students when retelling or summarizing.

INDEPENDENT PRACTICE

When students consistently compare and contrast the characters in the text, provide individual turns using other explicit passages. Call on students in an unpredictable order, calling more frequently on students who made errors.

SCAFFOLDING SUGGESTION FOR ERRORS

Verify that students are correctly identifying signal words, the parts of the Venn diagram, and how to compare and contrast. Remind students that as they read each sentence, they need to ask themselves if the sentence is about the two characters, Sally and Maria. If students are experiencing difficulty with this concept, use the Venn diagram with something that is familiar to the students (two children in the classroom).

Adaptations using this Instructional Routine:

- If students are not able to read the text on their own during Students Practice Task, the teacher should read the text aloud and students should follow along in the text with their finger.
- Use texts at the appropriate readability for students to practice comparing and contrasting two characters independently while using a Venn diagram to write down similarities and differences. Let students take turns sharing their Venn diagrams with important points to the rest of the class, or with a partner.
- Once students compare/contrast another text, have them practice using their completed Venn diagrams to retell the main points about the characters.

For further independent practice, refer to the following Kindergarten and First Grade FCRR Student Center Activities at http://www.fcrr.org/SCASearch/PDFs/2-3C_002.pdf

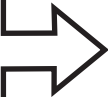
- C.002

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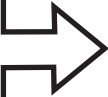
Compare and Contrast

Title: The Cousins

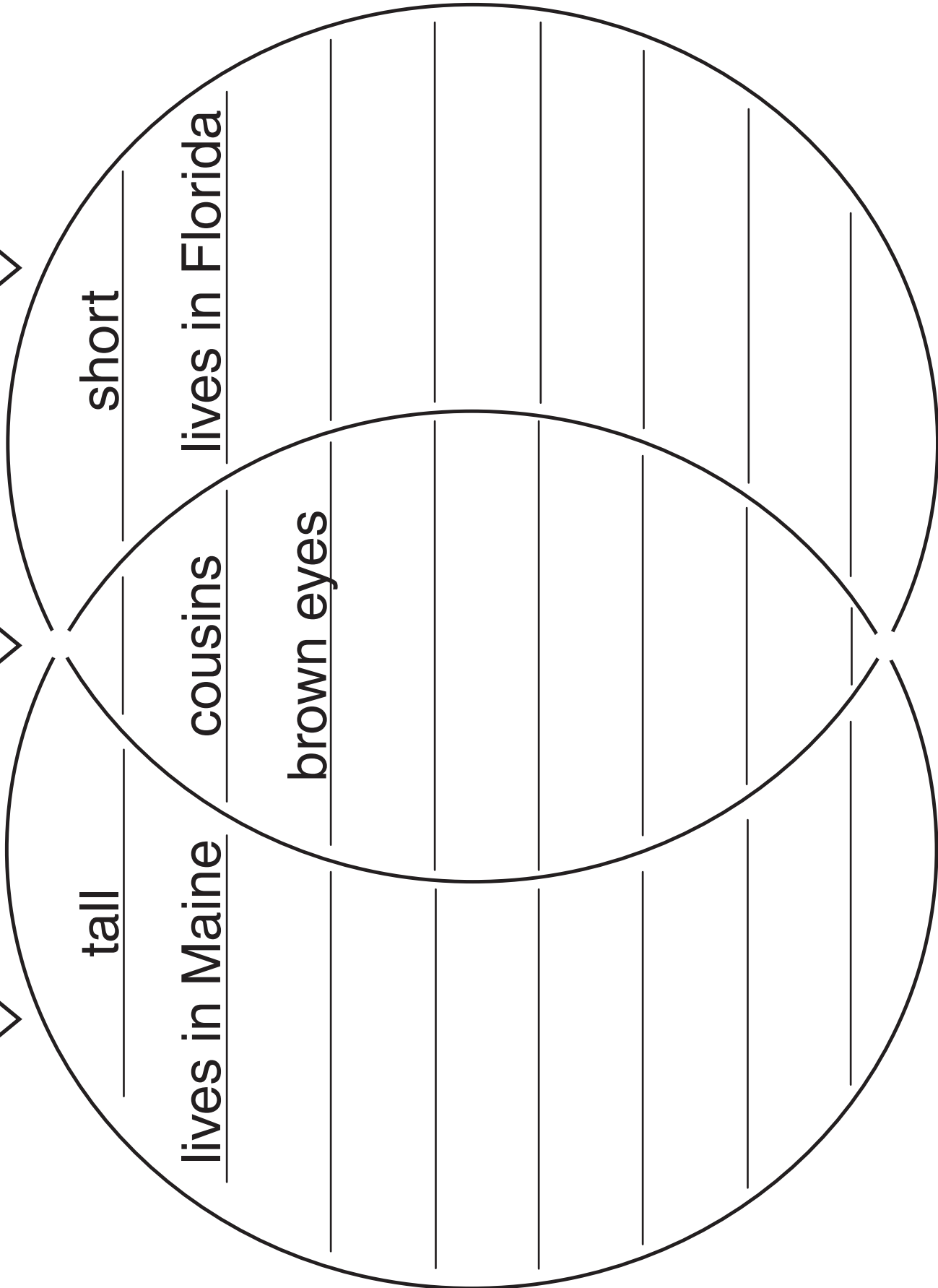
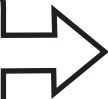
Maria



same



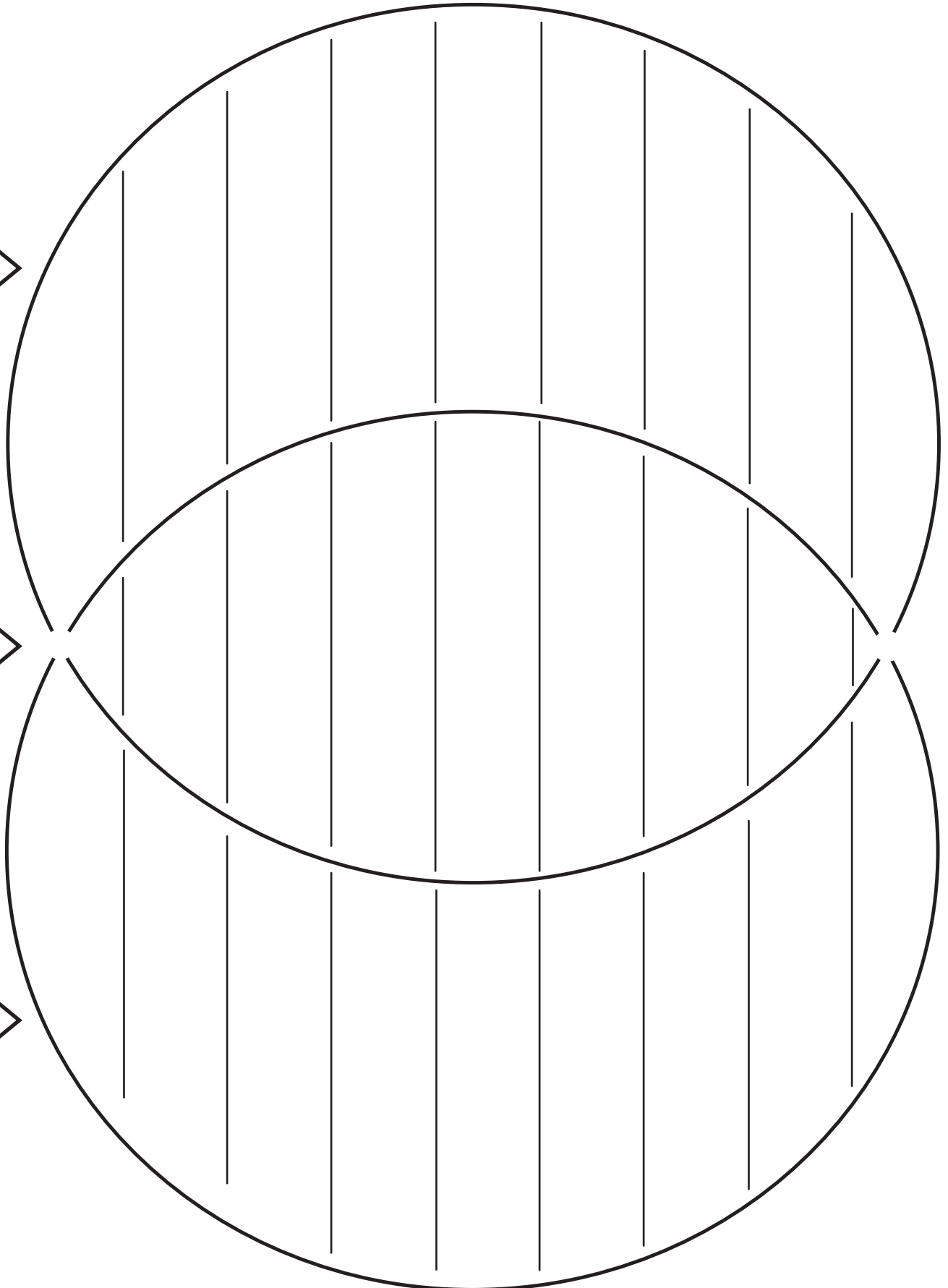
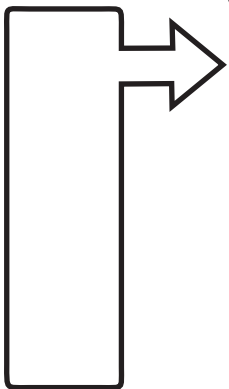
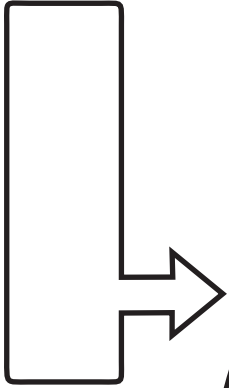
Sally



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Compare and Contrast

Title: _____



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Chart of Signal Words

Words that are used to COMPARE	Words that are used to CONTRAST
both	although
also	but
just like	on the other hand
alike	different
	than
	in comparison
	in contrast

The Cousins

1 Sally and Maria are both cousins. 2 Sally is tall and has brown eyes. 3 Maria also has brown eyes. 4 On the other hand, Maria is short. 5 The girls live in beautiful states. 6 Sally lives in Maine where it is cold. 7 However, Maria lives in Florida where it is hot.

1 It snows a lot in Maine. 2 In contrast, it is usually sunny and warm in Florida. 3 Both girls like to play outside. 4 They like to have a friend with them. 5 Sally plays in the snow. 6 She builds snowmen. 7 However, Maria plays in the sand at the beach. 8 She builds sand castles. 9 Florida and Maine are alike because you can play outside.

1 Sally and Maria are good swimmers. 2 They are both on swim teams. 3 Their pools are different. 4 The pools in Florida are outside. 5 On the other hand, the pools in Maine are inside. 6 So, Sally swims in an indoor pool and Maria swims in an outdoor pool. 7 In the summer, Sally and Maria swim in the ocean. 8 Both states are on the coast.