



SCHOOL VIOLENCE PREVENTION DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM

STRATEGY: COMPARE AND CONTRAST

Strategy Overview

It's important for students to be able to tell how things are alike and different—the goal of Compare and Contrast. This is often done using a Venn Diagram, but other kinds of organizers are also available.

Example: Strategy Procedures

A portion of the purpose statement for Lesson 4 in the upper elementary *We the People: The Citizen & the Constitution* book says that students “should be able to explain the difference between a constitutional government and a dictatorial government.” This purpose can be well-served using the [Venn Diagram Handout](#), or the [Alternative Compare and Contrast Handout](#). As students read the lesson, they can work individually or in pairs to complete the handout.

1. On a copy of the Venn Diagram handout, ask students to label the topic on the left-hand side “constitutional government,” and the topic on the right-hand side as “dictatorial government.” Then, ask students to list details about these kinds of government in the two circles, with the differences in the outer portions and the similarities in the center where the circles overlap.
2. After students have finished compiling the information using one of the handouts, a whole-class discussion can be used to share results and clarify any misunderstandings. Another follow-up exercise is writing sentences that compare or contrast positions or ideas. Explain to students that writers use certain words that signal similarities (comparisons) and differences (contrasts). The following chart will help anchor this discussion:

Words that Signal Comparison	Words that Signal Contrast
too	but
alike	different
both	yet
the same as	does not appear
resemble	however
as well as	neither
have in common	otherwise
	even though
	in contrast
	instead
	whereas
	on the other hand

3. Ask students to write some comparison and contrast sentences of their own. For this activity, sentence stems can be useful starting points.

- For example, this stem calls for comparison:

_____ **and** _____ **are alike because** _____.

One way to fill in the blanks might look like this:

Constitutional governments **and** dictatorial governments **are alike because** both can have a constitution.

- A similar stem can be used to call for contrast:

_____ **and** _____ **are different because** _____.

Constitutional governments **and** dictatorial governments **are different because** constitutional governments put limits on governments' power while dictatorial governments don't.

More places to use Compare and Contrast

We the People, upper elementary

- Lesson 1: Immigration to the colonies vs. immigration now; life in the colonies vs. life today; slave vs. indentured servant; life on a small northern farm vs. life on a large southern plantation
- Lesson 4: Constitutional government vs. dictatorial government
- Lesson 6 (Activities to do): American Indian tribal constitutions vs. the U.S. Constitution
- Lesson 16: State government vs. federal government

We the People, middle school

- Lesson 1: Immigration to the colonies vs. immigration now; life in the colonies vs. life today; slave vs. indentured servant; life on a small northern farm vs. life on a large southern plantation; people in the colonies vs. people in other places of the world; slaves vs. colonists vs. people in other countries (you'll have to add a circle if using the Venn Diagram handout)
- Lesson 8: Patriots vs. loyalists
- Lesson 10: Massachusetts vs. other states
- Lesson 12: Your students' responses to Ideas For Discussion, "How would you organize a constitutional convention?" vs. what actually happened at the Philadelphia Convention
- Lesson 13: The Virginia Plan vs. The New Jersey Plan
- Lesson 14: The north vs. the south
- Lesson 20: Hamilton vs. Jefferson