

# Compare and Contrast in the Garden

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**Summary:** Students use plants in the garden to practice comparing and contrasting, and present their observations to the class, and beyond.

**Objective:** Students will be able to compare and contract features of plants in the school garden.

**Grades:** Prek-2, 3-7 (Focus is on grades 4 and 7; green text signifies adjustments for grades 3-5, PreK-2 procedure at the end)

**Time needed:** 45-60

## Standards met:

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.2:** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.6:** Use technology, including the internet, to produce and publish writing and link to and site sources as well as to interact and collaborate with others, including linkages to and citing sources.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.2:** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.2c:** Link ideas within categories of information using words and phrases (e.g. another, for example, also, because, etc.).

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.2d:** Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.

## Materials Needed:

- Pictures of plants
- Paper
- Pencil
- Clipboard
- Crayons

**Background information:** Rory's Story Cubes are a set of nine dice with a picture/graphic on each face. The concept is simple; roll the dice, tell a story. One set of dice can be purchased on Amazon.com for about \$8 per set, and you will probably need 4-5 sets for an entire class. Be sure to check your local book store or toy store too!

## Procedure:

Indoors

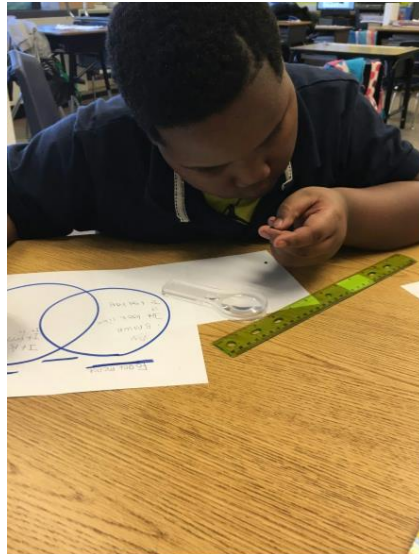
- 1.) Before visiting the garden, students should generate features of plants that can be compared (e.g. stem, leaves, and leaf organization, height, flowers, bark, and structure).
- 2.) Direct students to create a blank T-chart (or Venn Diagram). Images can be shown of plant features to facilitate student understanding, especially for students lacking background knowledge.
- 3.) Teachers can review compare/contract technique and anchor charts as needed. Share the objective of the lesson with students, and discuss norms and procedures for the garden.



- 4.) Model effective observation in small groups. For example, look at pictures of two different plants to compare plant features.
- 5.) Read aloud a book of your choice. Webster teachers recommend [The Tiny Seed](#), by Eric Carle.

#### Outdoors

- 6.) When going outside, each student should take a clipboard, pencil, blank sheet of paper, and a copy of the student page.
- 7.) With partners, (partners should be chosen ahead of time), students should do a walk-through of the school garden (less than 5 minutes) to identify two plants to compare.
- 8.) On their blank sheet of paper, and with partners or independently, students will take time to sketch features or take notes about specific plants. Notes and ideas can be transferred into graphic organizer. Younger students can color their plants. This should take 10-15 minutes.
- 9.) Staying in the garden or returning to the classroom for the writing component, students should write an informative text. This should contain a brief analysis of their two plants, including the details they observed from their walk-through and examination. Students should include inferences/questions about purposes of specific plant features and draw conclusions about the plants they studied. This should take approximately 15-20 minutes. Students should write a paragraph comparing and contrasting the two plants. They should write at least two similarities and two differences.



Students practice comparing and contrasting plants using Venn Diagrams, which are recommended for grades 3-5 in this lesson.

#### Indoors

- 10.) Wrap-up and conclusion: students present their findings (after peer editing and revision) to the class as an oral presentation or cooperative presentation using bulletin board, tri-fold poster board, or online posting (e.g. school website, Openlands website).

#### Assessment:

#### Extension Options:

- 11.) Technology extension: When outside, students may take pictures with phones, tablets, or Ipad, to include as an attachment to their writing product. Back inside, direct students to use online research methods to correctly identify (including scientific name and genus) the plants they used in their compare/contrast informative text.

## Diverse Learner support

- Presentation/Instruction Accommodations: Provide students with pictures of plant features (from plants in the garden) to aid in identifying plants (e.g. find the plant with the yellow flowers, students match picture to the plant with the yellow flowers).
- Response Accommodation: Scribe can be assigned for aid in writing.
- Setting Accommodation: Student can return to classroom for writing task if it aids in reducing distraction.
- Timing Accommodation: provide students with 50% extended time to identify features, and 100% more time to finish writing.
- Response Modification: Students can use/take pictures instead of using the student page. Students can record audio describing the plant instead of writing. Also, students could compare and contrast just one plant feature instead of all that is listed on the student page.

## Lesson Accommodations for PreK-2

- Read students the book Planting a Rainbow, by Lois Ehlert.
- Students can then go for a walk through the school garden.
- Teacher can ask, “What do you see that we read about in the book? What is different? What *don't* you see?”
- Students then can go back to their classrooms or stay outside in the garden to draw a picture of what they saw.