Comparing and Contrasting Texts

Key Terms

- **details**: facts that support the key points of a text
- **compare**: to find what is alike between two or more things
- **contrast**: to find what is different between two or more things

Instruction

Sometimes you may read two passages about the same topic. The passages might be alike and different in several ways. Each passage may have a different main point and different **details** to support it. This depends on what the author of the passage wants to express to the reader.

When you **compare** and **contrast** texts, you figure out how they are alike and different. Let’s compare and contrast two passages about pandas. How are the two passages alike? How are they different?

**Passage #1: What Are Pandas?**

Pandas are beautiful animals. Pandas are mostly white, but they have black fur on their eyes, mouth, legs, and shoulders. These bears live in China. Their fur keeps them warm in the cool forests.

Pandas are about the size of American black bears. Pandas can be four to six feet long. Male pandas are bigger than female pandas. A male panda can weigh up to 250 pounds.

There are fewer than 2,000 pandas remaining in the wild. About 300 more can be found in zoos.
Passage #2: Why Are Pandas Disappearing?

The number of pandas in the world has dropped sharply over the years. This is not because of other wildlife. Pandas have no natural predators. They are peaceful, quiet animals. They eat mostly bamboo plants in the forests of China.

Instead, humans are the reason there are so few pandas. People have destroyed pandas’ forest homes. They have destroyed the bamboo the bears eat. As a result, there are fewer than 2,000 pandas remaining.

The Chinese government is working to help the pandas. It has set up programs to help pandas breed.

Compare and Contrast Practice

This chart shows the topic, main point, and details of each passage. Compare and contrast the details. Circle the similar supporting details (details given in both passages). Underline the details that are different (details given in only one passage). On the lines, write down the details that you circled.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Passage #1</th>
<th>Passage #2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topic:</strong> pandas</td>
<td><strong>Topic:</strong> pandas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main point:</strong> Pandas are interesting animals.</td>
<td><strong>Main point:</strong> People have destroyed pandas’ homes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Details:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Details:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pandas have white and black fur.</td>
<td>- Pandas eat bamboo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pandas live in China.</td>
<td>- People have destroyed bamboo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pandas eat bamboo.</td>
<td>- Pandas live in China.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pandas can weigh up to 250 pounds.</td>
<td>- People have destroyed forests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Male pandas are larger than female pandas.</td>
<td>- There are fewer than 2,000 pandas remaining in the wild.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- There are fewer than 2,000 pandas remaining in the wild.</td>
<td>- The Chinese government is trying to help pandas.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The details the two passages have in common are that pandas live in China, pandas eat bamboo, and there are fewer than 2,000 pandas remaining in the wild.

**What Have We Learned?**

The first passage gives basic information about pandas. The second passage focuses more on how people have destroyed pandas’ homes. Still, there are some similar details in both passages.
Activity #1

Read the two passages. Then fill in the chart.

### Passage #1: Edison’s Failed Inventions

Thomas Edison was known as the “Wizard of Menlo Park.” He was one of the most famous inventors in history. During his career, he received 1,093 patents for inventions. Many of them, such as the light bulb and the phonograph, were great creations. They have a huge influence on our lives today.

However, not everything Edison created was a success. One idea that never took off was Edison's interest in using cement to build things. He formed the Edison Portland Cement Co. in 1899. He made everything from pianos to houses. Unfortunately, at the time, concrete was too expensive. Cement wasn't a total failure, though. His company was hired to build Yankee Stadium in New York.

Edison also tried to combine film and sound to make “talking” motion pictures. Edison created the Kinetophone. It was a peep-hole motion picture viewer with a phonograph. Sound could be heard through two ear tubes while the viewer watched the images. This invention never really became popular, though. By 1915, Edison gave up on the idea of sound motion pictures. Other inventors later perfected using sound with movies.

### Passage #2: A Great Inventor

Thomas A. Edison was born on February 11, 1847, in Milan, Ohio. As a child, he received great support from his mother. She had been a teacher. She wanted her son to love knowledge and be eager to learn.

As a child, Edison had a quick mind. He loved to read. He asked questions about everything. Most of all, he loved to try experiments.

Edison carried that love of knowledge into his career when he grew up. He became a famous inventor. He moved to New York and built a laboratory at Menlo Park. It was here that he created one of his most famous inventions: the
The phonograph was a device that allowed sound to be recorded. By the time Edison died in 1931, he had 1,093 patents for inventions, a world record.

### Passage #1
**Topic:** Thomas Edison  
**Main point:** Edison often had failures and setbacks to his inventions.  
**Details:**

### Passage #2
**Topic:** Thomas Edison  
**Main point:** Edison loved inventing and experimenting throughout his life.  
**Details:**

### Details Found in Both Passages

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Activity #2

The two passages have some different main points and details. How do these help you understand more about Edison? Write a paragraph about it.

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