

Lesson 19

Describing Comparisons



Learning Target



Describing the connections between ideas in a text will help you understand what the author is explaining.

- ▶ **Read** Authors work carefully to show **connections** among ideas in their writing. This means that they make sure readers understand *how* sentences and paragraphs are connected and *why* the connections are important.

Sometimes a writer shows connections by making a **comparison** between facts and ideas. Comparing means showing how two or more things are alike and different. Signal words such as *like*, *as*, *also*, and *both* show how things are alike. Signal words such as *however*, *but*, *different*, and *unlike* show how things are different.

Read the following paragraph about toothbrushes. How does the comparison help you understand the subject?

Like people today, ancient peoples wanted to keep their teeth clean. They also used toothbrushes. However, their brushes were very different. Our toothbrushes are plastic with nylon bristles. But the first toothbrushes were made of twigs with crushed ends.



► **Think** Read the paragraph again. Then finish the chart to see how the writer used comparisons to connect ideas.

Sentences	Signal Words	Purpose of Comparison
"Like people today, ancient peoples wanted to keep their teeth clean."	Like	
"They also used toothbrushes. However, their brushes were very different."		
"Our toothbrushes are plastic with nylon bristles. But the first toothbrushes were made of twigs with crushed ends."		

► **Talk** How do the comparisons in the paragraph help you understand more about toothbrushes?



Academic Talk

Use these words to tell about the text.

- **connections**
- **comparison**

Ancient Toothpaste

by Tom Wiggins

- 1 People have always liked to have clean, white teeth. Today, we just squeeze some toothpaste onto a brush and start scrubbing. The toothpaste is made from sodium fluoride, which keeps our teeth strong. It also contains a whitener and flavoring. But toothpaste used to be very different.
- 2 The first tooth cleaner was made in Egypt over 1,600 years ago. Like today's tooth cleaners, it was a paste. Unlike today's toothpaste, it contained mint and dried iris flower. It also contained rock salt and pepper grains. And instead of using toothbrushes, the Egyptians rubbed the paste on their teeth with a finger.
- 3 Egyptian toothpaste also came in only one flavor: mint. Even with the mint, it tasted unpleasant and strong. Today, our toothpaste comes in many tasty flavors. We can choose from mint, cherry, and even bubblegum!
- 4 Like our toothpaste, ancient toothpaste did clean the teeth. However, it was not very pleasant to use. It was painful on the gums. It sometimes made them bleed. Egyptians must have cared a lot about their teeth to keep cleaning them even with all those problems!



Close Reader Habits

Circle words that signal comparisons. How do they help you understand how ideas are alike and different?

Explore

How do comparisons help connect the ideas in “Ancient Toothpaste”?



Time words can make comparisons. Look for words such as *now/then* and *before/after*.

Think

- 1 Finish the chart to see how comparisons help connect ideas in the article. Add your own sentences in the last row.

Sentences	Signal Words	Purpose of Comparison
“Like today’s tooth cleaners, it was a paste. Unlike today’s toothpaste, it contained mint and dried iris flower.”		
“Egyptian toothpaste also came in only one flavor: mint. . . . Today, our toothpaste comes in many tasty flavors.”		

Talk

- 2 What ideas did you add to the last row of the chart? How are those ideas connected to each other and to other ideas in the article?

Write

- 3 **Short Response** How would you feel if you suddenly had to brush your teeth like the Egyptians did? Include comparisons from the article to explain your thinking. Use the space provided on page 316 to write your answer.

HINT Think about how you’ll organize your writing to show comparisons.



THE GREAT INCA ROAD

by Hilary Dumitrescu

- 1 Roads are difficult to build and expensive to take care of. However, a great civilization needs great roads. Roads connect people to the goods they need to live. They allow the government to send help where it is needed. Even the most ancient civilizations understood the need for good roads.
- 2 High in the Andes mountains, the Incan Empire thrived for hundreds of years. When Spanish explorers arrived in the 16th century, they were amazed by the roads they found. Even the longest Roman road, the Via Appia, was not as long as the Incas' Royal Way. The Incan road was 3,500 miles long! Like the Via Appia, the Royal Way connected the capital to other parts of the empire. More roads connected to it. All in all, the Inca roads stretched for 23,000 miles.
- 3 Unlike the Romans, the Incas did not have wheels or carts. Instead, they rode llamas. These sturdy animals carried people and goods all over the empire. Messengers known as *chasquis* ran along the Inca Road. They carried messages from the king to all of his people.
- 4 The Inca Road passed through high mountains. To safely cross the deep mountain ravines, the Incas built amazing hanging bridges. These bridges were not made out of steel like modern bridges. Instead, they were woven out of plant fibers! But the Spanish found that the bridges were strong enough to carry soldiers and horses safely.

Close Reader Habits

How does the author use comparisons to help you understand the topic?

Underline the two civilizations whose roads are compared in paragraph 2.



Another way to spot comparisons is to look for the same details about two different subjects.

Think

- 1** The roads of different groups of people are compared in this passage. Which groups are they?
- A** the Spanish and the Incas
 - B** the Spanish and the Romans
 - C** the Incas and the Romans
 - D** the Incas, the Spanish, and the Romans
- 2** Which **two** sentences from the passage compare and contrast two important roads?
- A** “Even the most ancient civilizations understood the need for good roads.”
 - B** “When Spanish explorers arrived in the 16th century, they were amazed by the roads they found.”
 - C** “Even the longest Roman road, the Via Appia, was not as long as the Incas’ Royal Way.”
 - D** “Like the Via Appia, the Royal Way connected the capital to other parts of the empire.”
 - E** “These bridges were not made out of steel like modern bridges.”
 - F** “Unlike the Romans, the Incas did not have wheels or carts.”
 - G** “But the Spanish found that the bridges were strong enough to carry soldiers and horses safely.”

Talk

- 3** How does the author make a connection between paragraphs 2 and 3? Talk about it with a partner.



Write

- 4 Short Response** Paragraph 4 compares two types of bridge. How does the comparison help you understand why Incan bridges were so amazing? Use the space provided on page 317 to write your answer.

HINT Don't just look at signal words. Look for sentences that show how the bridges are the same or different.