It’s time to help students work with the THINKING SKILLS of comparing and contrasting – and then putting those skills into a written format.

There are many resources online, so don’t be shy about using them all. But we’ve got some ideas too – and want to make them available to you.

This idea is just the framework that you can so easily turn into several compare-and-contrast lessons.
The read-write-think website has information about writing different types of compare and contrast paragraphs. I used the Similarities-to-Differences Outline for the example.

Check out this site for yourself – you’ll get lots of good ideas. http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/compcontrast/
I started out by creating a Venn diagram, which is a very common graphic organizer for compare and contrast. But when it was time to write about what is on the Venn, I felt it would be too difficult for younger students to recognize the general attributes that are embedded including: shape, color, skin type, growing conditions, etc.

I don’t think a Venn diagram is the best choice here. We need a more powerful organizer for this compare and contrast.

So on the next slide I designed a comparison matrix and filled it in to see how it would work.
I certainly don’t want to just give the students the matrix – having it already filled in, because I’d be missing the opportunity to teach them how to create one. So now I’ve got several options.

1. I could build a chart with them from scratch.
2. I could give students a blank chart template and then we fill in the parts together.
3. I could give students labels (and pictures of the apples) to paste on the chart.
4. I could set my students in small groups and give each an apple and an orange. I could then give them label cards on which they write the attributes as we go over them. I could design larger label cards in another color to list the overall attributes – since young students might not do that on their own. AFTER students do this, I could ask analysis questions in a Partner Chat format – the same questions that I’ll use on the next slide with a completed chart.

I’ve just decided that I really like option 4 – so I’ll introduce the compare/contrast in that way. But then I think I’ll show students how to make a chart after they’ve made their observations of an apple and orange. I’ll model this using the materials from one of the groups’, doing a “presentation.” Then I’ll have the group I modeled with show me how to do it. Then it’s off to everyone else to do their charts. (I think we’ll make these on large easel-sized paper to make it especially fun for students.) Again – after students do the charts, it’s time to ask analysis questions.

NEXT, we’ll do a chart that students fill in – but all of the charts will look the same. The chart above is the one we’ll use, but it will be BLANK. I want students to specifically how the data from the chart comes from their observations of the apples and oranges. Depending on the time of the year, we may need to do this together.
Remember the success sequence – DRAW, TALK, WRITE. After you create the comparison matrix (chart) with students, make sure you have them talk about the chart. This is a good time to have students talk by having them answer analysis questions with one another. Do this in a structured way. Pair students with another. With each pair of students have a partner A and a partner B. Then call out questions with A answering the first (while partner B listens) and then B answering the second (while partner A listens) and so on.

I’ve got a starter list of analysis questions here, but don’t be shy about adding your own.

Now it’s on to the writing piece.
After students have had plenty of opportunity to talk about the chart, the next step is to have them write about it. It is a good idea to model this often with students. When writing about information, remember that you’re working with facts.

Notice in the first paragraph that the attributes are capitalized. You’ll want to remind students that when they refer to something in a chart or graph, they should write the labels as they are presented on the chart.

I’ve broken this piece of writing into four short paragraphs.

First paragraph: Tell what the chart shows.
Second paragraph: Compare apples and oranges.
Third paragraph: Contrast apples and oranges.
Fourth paragraph: Summarize the compare and contrast of apples and oranges by general attributes.

Are there other ways to have students do this? You betcha! This is just one way – one that works for me.
This is a **content card** for comparing and contrasting. My content cards are those I design that have the key “stuff” we may want to teach students while we’re working on the learning targets. This content card for compare and contrast can be used for all content areas – and can be adapted for all grade levels. Refer to it often while teaching compare and contrast – and as always, don’t forget to add your own good ideas.

I’ve used two sources here for the list of words: Marzano’s cluster words and words from Read, Write, Think.

Hmmm, I had an interesting scenario while thinking through this organizer. The word **NEITHER** is on Marzano’s list under ____ but neither is likely a comparing word. If neither person likes something – both don’t like it.
The idea here is to take the information from the MDE, released in spring 2009 – and begin to work on a brief analytic rubric for classroom use. This is a quick checklist you can use when you have students write a **comparison paragraph**. This is a DRAFT and definitely needs tweaking.
Use this checklist when students are working on just contrast paragraphs. This is a DRAFT.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Look For</th>
<th>Checklist for a Contrast Paragraph</th>
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| Introduction      | - I wrote a beginning sentence that tells what I contrasted.  
|                   | - I wrote about the purpose for making a comparison.          |
| Contrasted Two    | - I wrote about two things to be contrasted.                   |
| Things            |                                                    |
| Contrast          | - I wrote ways that the things are different.                  |
|                   | - I wrote details and examples for each thing I contrasted.    |
| Language          | - I wrote sentences to explain the ways that the things were the different. |
| Logical Order     | - I used a logical order to move from one idea to the next.    |
| Transitions       | - I used contrast words in my paper.                           |
| Conclusion        | - I wrote a conclusion that helps the reader understand the contrast. |
| Grammar           | - I used correct spelling, punctuation, and capitalization throughout my paragraph. |
The idea here is to take the information from the MDE, released in spring 2009 – and begin to work on a brief analytic rubric for classroom use. This is a quick checklist you can use when you have students write a compare-and-contrast paragraph. THIS IS A DRAFT.