

Figure RL 9.6

INTENSIFYING THE INSTRUCTION

Connections Between Texts

Making Connections Between Texts is a comprehension strategy that is ideal for supporting student development in relation to Reading Anchor 9. Connections may be made between characters, settings, themes, topics, genres, or two books by the same author. Allow two days for this lesson.

1. Select two familiar texts that are related in some way. See Figure RL 9.2 for a starter set of ideas. You may read the texts aloud or students may read them silently or with a partner.
2. If you are working with a small group, give the students a large piece of chart paper; if working with the whole class, arrange students in groups, each with a large piece of chart paper in the middle.
3. Give students a set of two or three guiding questions and ask them to use a bulleted list to jot down their ideas about ways in which the texts connect. Following are some key questions to guide the process.
 - What is similar about the topics?
 - What is similar about the characters?
 - What is similar about the settings?
 - What is similar about the themes?
 - What is similar about the problem-resolution sequences?
 - What similarities do you notice in the way the books are organized?
 - These texts are written by the same author. What similarities do you notice?

For English Learners

If possible, place English learners with native English speakers for this activity.

4. Ask groups or partners to work together to make a statement about what they have learned by comparing and contrasting two texts.

Collaborative Engagement

1. **Choose the literature and the reading context.** Gather a set of texts that you want your students to compare. Look for texts that will lead to interesting comparisons of characters, events, topics, or themes. See the list of recommended books in Figure RL 9.2.
2. **Arrange for students to read or listen to the text.** You may use texts that have been read aloud to the whole class (ideally providing at least one copy of each per group) or students may be arranged in groups to read different texts. Because of the complexity of comparing two books, it is recommended that you read the books aloud to K–2 students and talk them through the comparison before setting them off on their own. For older students, be sure that the texts are accessible to all, providing support for those who cannot read the material independently with success.
3. **Hold the meetings.** Arrange for students to come together after the reading to compare the two texts in ways you have modeled. Giving students key prompts before reading (as in Figure RL 9.7) can help them focus on key ideas to consider in preparation for their discussions.
4. **Arrange a follow-up discussion.** When all groups are working on the same text, organize for a whole-class discussion as a follow-up to the group activity.

Figure RL 9.7

READING ANCHOR 9:
Prompts to Support Student-Led Group Discussion of Text

Kindergarten

- Set up a center containing puppets or props from two stories (such as *Goldilocks* and *Little Red Riding Hood*). Allow students to merge the materials and dramatize as they wish.
- After students listen to two or three stories (or more), guide each student to choose a character from one book and draw that character engaged in an experience/adventure from the book. Students should write the character's name at the top of the page. As students work, encourage talk that compares and contrasts the character's experiences and adventures. Staple all the adventures together to create a class book.

First Grade

- Students work together to record one key experience that was similar for the two main characters in two different books. You may ask that they use drawing and/or writing. Figure RL 9.3 provides a template that may be reproduced on large chart paper or given to each student for documentation.

Second Grade

- Students work together to compare and contrast two versions of the same story on one key element (topic, characters, setting, problem/goal). Students should write enough detail to show both similarities and differences. Figures RL 9.3 and RL 9.4 provide templates that may be reproduced on large chart paper or given to each student for documentation.

Third Grade

- Students work with their group to compare and contrast the settings, themes, or plots of two stories written by the same author. Figures RL 9.4 and RL 9.5 provide templates that may be reproduced on large chart paper or given to each student for documentation.

Fourth and Fifth Grades

- Students work with their group to compare and contrast the ways in which two authors portray similar themes or topics in two different stories. Figures RL 9.4 and RL 9.5 provide templates that may be reproduced on large chart paper or given to each student for documentation.