

Getting the Idea

Key Words

compare and contrast
comparison
problem and solution

Comparison

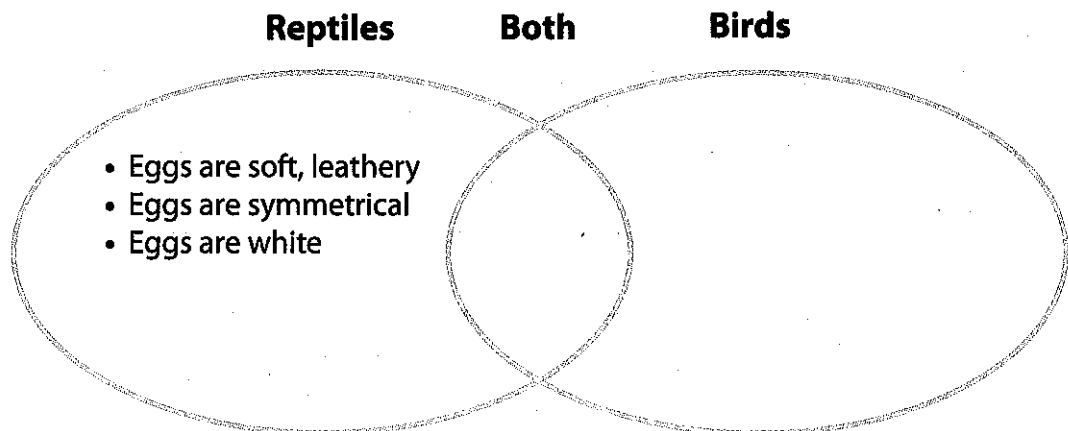
Text structure refers to how a text is organized. An author of an informational text uses **compare-and-contrast** text structure to show how ideas are alike and different. To understand the text structure, look for relationships between ideas. **Comparison** signal words and phrases include *similar, same, like, both, also, and too*. Contrast signal words and phrases include *unlike, however, on the other hand, but, instead, whereas, and although*.

Read the paragraph below. Then follow the steps to analyze its structure.

Most reptiles lay eggs, as do all birds. The shell of a common type of reptile egg is not hard like the shell of a bird's egg. Instead, the reptile's egg is soft and leathery. Further, reptile eggs are symmetrical, whereas some bird eggs are asymmetrical and tapered at one end. Lastly, most reptile eggs are white in color, but bird eggs vary in color.

Step 1 Reread the paragraph. To determine whether it uses a compare-and-contrast text structure, ask yourself, "How are the ideas organized?" Underline any comparison or contrast signal words. Then circle each idea being compared, and draw a box around each idea being contrasted.

Step 2 Complete the Venn diagram below.



Problem and Solution

Another type of text structure is **problem and solution**. An author might present a problem or challenge and then provide one or more possible solutions. You can tell whether a text has a problem-and-solution structure by looking for signal words and phrases that state a problem, challenge, or issue, such as *the problem is*, *the question is*, *a solution is*, *one answer is*, *concern*, *challenge*, *solve*, and *figure out*.

When comparing two or more texts, good readers look at the texts' structures to determine how ideas, events, concepts, or facts are related.

Read the paragraph below. Then follow the steps to analyze its structure.

One problem our school faces is that we need new science lab equipment, but there is no money in the budget to buy it. One solution for getting the equipment students need is to start a fund-raiser. We could have a weekly bake sale, a car wash, or a raffle night. We could also host a relay race, with people pledging a certain amount of money. Or we could start collecting aluminum cans from all students and teachers to return for money. If we do just one of these things, we'll be that much closer to buying the lab equipment.

Step 1 Reread the paragraph. To identify whether the text structure is problem and solution, ask yourself, "How are the ideas organized?" Underline any signal words or phrases that indicate a problem or solution. Circle the problem and then underline any solution or solutions.

Step 2 Complete the problem-and-solution chart below.

Problem The school needs new science lab equipment.	Solution(s)
--	--------------------

Read the article. Underline signal words that indicate a problem-and-solution text structure. Circle the main problem. Draw a box around the solution or solutions.

Dr. Charles Drew: Father of the Modern Blood Bank

1 Charles Drew was an African American surgeon, researcher, and educator. His life and work show that if you work hard, you can bring about remarkable change in the world.

2 In the 1930s, Drew, already a doctor, was working on a degree in medical science at Columbia University. He discovered a method of storing blood plasma, the watery part of blood, so it keeps for a long time. While red blood cells and blood plasma are both essential to life, blood plasma itself can save the lives of people who have lost a lot of blood. Plasma's long storage life makes it easier to transport. In emergencies, it can be given to people with any blood type. Drew's discovery led to the development of blood banks. Blood banks store large amounts of plasma for future use, so doctors always have a supply when patients need it.

3 A few years later, the U.S. government called on Drew to address a far greater challenge. He was asked to help save the lives of soldiers and civilians under attack in Britain during World War II. Thousands of soldiers were becoming badly wounded in battle. They lost a tremendous amount of blood. Because doctors and nurses could only do so much to stop the bleeding, the soldiers often bled to death. As a solution, Drew began work on a project called Blood for Britain that greatly improved the wounded's chances for survival. Drew came up with a safe way to collect blood plasma from patients and donors at many hospitals in New York City. From there, the plasma was sent to Great Britain, where wounded people needed blood.

4 Some estimate that Drew oversaw the collection of roughly 14,500 pints of blood over the course of the project. Drew's work on Blood for Britain was so successful that he later developed a similar blood-bank project for the American Red Cross to use with the U.S. military. Drew's hard work and focus saved countless lives. In 1944, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People awarded Drew a medal for "the highest and noblest achievement" for his blood-plasma work.

Answer the following questions.

- 1** Which word or phrase from the text is the **best** clue to its problem-and-solution structure?
- A. finally
 - B. due to
 - C. challenge
 - D. on the other hand

Hint Which signal words state a problem or issue?

- 2** This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

Part A

Which of the following is the **main** problem in the article?

- A. Many of those who were injured in World War II died.
- B. Medicine was difficult to study in the early twentieth century.
- C. The U.S. government told Drew about a major challenge it faced.
- D. Drew's work with Blood for Britain was a success.

Part B

Which detail from the article **best** supports the answer in Part A?

- A. "If you work hard, you can bring about . . . change."
- B. "The U.S. government called on Drew to address a . . . challenge."
- C. "The soldiers often bled to death."
- D. "Drew oversaw the collection of . . . 14,500 pints of blood."

Hint What is the greatest challenge or difficulty Drew faced, as described in this article?

- 3** Read the excerpt from paragraph 3. Underline problem-and-solution signal words.

Because doctors and nurses could only do so much to stop the bleeding, the soldiers often bled to death. As a solution, Drew began work on a project called Blood for Britain that greatly improved the wounded's chances for survival.

Hint Look back at the text you marked in the article. What was the main problem you underlined? Often a solution is stated near the problem.



Which sentence **best** describes a solution in this article?

- A. Drew decided to study medicine at Columbia University.
- B. Red blood cells and plasma are both essential to life.
- C. Drew was asked to help save lives during World War II.
- D. Plasma was sent to help the wounded.

Hint A solution is a way of solving a problem. Read each answer option, and think about whether it directly solves a problem in the article.



Read the excerpt from paragraph 3.

A few years later, the U.S. government called on Drew to address a far greater challenge. He was asked to help save the lives of soldiers and civilians under attack in Britain during World War II. Thousands of soldiers were becoming badly wounded in battle. They lost a tremendous amount of blood. Because doctors and nurses could only do so much to stop the bleeding, the soldiers often bled to death. As a solution, Drew began work on a project called Blood for Britain that greatly improved the wounded's chances for survival.

Hint Look at the text you marked in this paragraph in the article. Ask yourself, "What problem-and-solution signal words do I need to look for?"

On the lines below, explain how this excerpt is a good example of a problem-and-solution text structure. Support your response with text evidence.



Practice 1

Read the article. Use the Reading Guide to help you identify the text structure.

Reading Guide

As you read the article, underline signal words that indicate a comparison or a contrast. How are the ideas or facts about the states of matter alike or different? Circle the subjects that are compared and contrasted.

Matter Matters

- 1 Rocks, water, a balloon, and even your own body—they're all made up of tiny particles, as is all matter. The particles, or very small pieces, are always moving. How close together those particles are and the speed at which they are moving determine matter's "state." The three common states of matter are solid, liquid, and gas.
- 2 A solid is a substance that has a shape of its own and a volume that does not change. Volume is the amount of space that the substance occupies. The properties of solids result from the arrangement of their particles. The particles are packed closely together and cannot move freely. Instead, they vibrate in place.
- 3 A gas is a substance that has neither a definite shape nor a definite volume. Unlike particles in solids, particles in gases move freely in all directions. Free movement of particles is the reason the volume of a gas is not definite. In a closed container, such as a balloon, particles of a gas spread out and completely fill the container, taking on its shape and volume.
- 4 A liquid is a substance that has a definite volume but no definite shape. Instead, a liquid takes the shape of its container. When water is poured from a bucket into a bottle, the water becomes bottle-shaped. The volume of water is the same, but the shape is different. These liquid properties, like those of solids, result from the arrangement of particles. Particles in liquids are packed closely together, but they are free to move around. The particles can slip and slide around and over each other, allowing the liquid to flow.

Answer the following questions.

- 1 Read paragraph 1. Underline the sentence that gives readers the **best** clue that this article has a compare-and-contrast structure.

Rocks, water, a balloon, and even your own body—they're all made up of tiny particles, as is all matter. The particles, or very small pieces, are always moving. How close together those particles are and the speed at which they are moving determine matter's "state." The three common states of matter are solid, liquid, and gas.

- 2 Read the excerpt from paragraph 3.

A gas is a substance that has neither a definite shape nor a definite volume. Unlike particles in solids, particles in gases move freely in all directions.

Which word **best** signals a compare-and-contrast structure in the paragraph?

- A. neither
- B. definite
- C. nor
- D. unlike

- 3 This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then, answer Part B.

Part A

Which **best** describes how solids and liquids are alike?

- A. They both have a definite shape.
- B. They both have particles that vibrate.
- C. They both have particles that move freely.
- D. They both are made up of particles.

Part B

Which sentence from the article **best** supports the answer in Part A?

- A. "Rocks, water, a balloon, and even your own body—they're all made up of tiny particles, as is all matter."
- B. "A solid is a substance that has a shape of its own and a volume that does not change."
- C. "A liquid is a substance that has a definite volume but no definite shape."
- D. "These liquid properties, like those of solids, result from the arrangement of particles."



How are solids different from both gases and liquids? Select **two** that apply.

- A. Particles in solids are packed closely.
- B. Particles in solids cannot move around freely.
- C. Solids have no definite shape.
- D. Solids have no definite volume.
- E. Solids have a definite shape and volume.



On the lines below, explain how the author's choice of a compare-and-contrast text structure helps readers understand the relationships between the states of matter. Support your response with examples from the text.
