

▲ COMPARE/CONTRAST QUESTIONS

GOAL: To stimulate high level thinking

KEY: Forced Associations

Compare/contrast questions (how two things are alike and how they are different) are ideal examples of the development of a simple thinking process into a complex one. They move from the **concrete** to the **abstract**. In the following examples we compare/contrast two objects, ideas, or concepts from the same category. We gradually progress to more difficult/complex categories that require **forced associations**.

Example: Ask students to choose partners. Have them hold out and examine their left hands. Ask **partners** to compare/contrast hands. Share responses with their partners.

How is _____ like _____?

How is _____ different from _____?

Note: The “hands” activity is great readiness. It also taps into different **learning styles** — the visual learners have something to look at, the kinesthetic learners have

something to touch, and the auditory learners have something to say or hear.

The following compare/contrast topics can be practiced with a partner or in small groups.

left/ right hand	seeing/ believing	loafers/ high heels
knights/ nights	newspapers/ magazines	walking/ running
rain forest/ desert	ice cream/ frozen yogurt	landfills / time capsules
freedom/ boundaries	cars/ bicycles	human brain/ computers
building a building/ building a relationship		oranges/ apples
Clinton administration/Bush administration		Sega/hula hoops

History is filled with the application of compare/contrast questions and forced associations. My favorite example is the Quaker housewife who was sitting at her spinning wheel. She glanced out the window and saw her husband and a neighbor sawing a tree with a two-man crosscut saw. She compared the spinning wheel to the saw and — *voila!* She invented the circular saw. Forced association is the beginning of many inventions.

