



In this lesson, we show students how to study two or more characters from the same book and consider how they are similar to and different from one another. This includes how our thinking about the two characters is similar and different.

Decide to Teach This Tomorrow if Your Students

- Already know how to independently study characters in one book
- Are reading books with more than one important character
- Ignore secondary characters as they read and form ideas



What You Need:

- A familiar read aloud fiction book
- Your own reading notebook
- Chart paper and markers

Explain Why: Explain that when we focus on just one character in a book, we are missing some of the whole picture of the story. Now that your students know how to study one character, it is helpful to compare the main character to other characters in the text so they can see how each character has his own role and impact on the plot. You might also explain that it can be tricky to read a book with many characters, and it can be helpful to write about each of the important characters to keep them straight and not confuse who is who.

Show How:

- Refer back to a familiar read aloud book with memorable characters or back to a part of a read aloud you already did. This allows you to study the characters in front of students and model your thinking without having to spend time reading a brand-new text.

(Continued)

- Show students how you can use a T-chart or multicolumn chart to keep track of the characters within a book.
- Model how you look across each column to think about how they are similar and different. This can be done in a conversation and also in writing. You might use the following chart to help show the process of comparing characters and the different ways you might compare them.

WE CAN COMPARE CHARACTERS BY THINKING ABOUT

- The roles they play in the story
- What motivates them
- The choices they make
- How they respond to an event or conflict
- Our opinions about them
- The lessons they learn

Percy	Annabeth	Groves	chiron	Rachel
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • son of the mayor god Poseidon • Loves Annabeth and always protects her • very gullible and always believes where they are told • willing to do risky things to preserve the truth • cares about his family and Olympus. • Hates Kronos and wants to destroy him • Best friends with Grover 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • daughter of Athena • Fights with a knife like gave her when she was younger • Is wife above her ages • Ran away from home at a really young age • a very independent individual with many worries and questions about her future. • wants to be an architect when she grows up. • very jealous of Rachel + Percy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • speaks for the trees • Got the god Pan's powers when he died • Is a sayrar • very local and trustworthy • Has a girlfriend named Jupiter • "... Grover put his head to his lips and began to play the instrument 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camp director while Mr. D is gone • He is a centaur so he is 1/2 man, 1/2 horse • very stubborn when it comes to his father Kronos • Part of council of cloveholders • Is in technical terms the voice of the forest nyads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mortal • enjoys painting and being a part of society • Hates her parents because they spoil her • can see through the mist and see all the monsters • lives in NYC • very expressive, happy and difficult to understand at times • Rebellious when she stole
				

Highlighted the main character

Created a column for each character

Listed character roles and behaviors

Pictured each character and drew what she saw based on the roles and behaviors

The chart on the previous page is from a student reading the book *The Last Olympian* (Riordan, 2009), which has several characters with unusual names. She made a five-column chart and listed the characters' roles and behaviors along with pictures of what they looked like.

A Few Tips:

- If you have younger or less experienced students, consider using a short story rather than a full-length book for this lesson.
- If students have trouble deciding which characters are important enough to compare, they can still add them all to their entries and then see which ones they have enough to write about. If they don't have much to say, that helps them decide who is important in the book.

Let's look at how another reader, Marcus, looked at two characters in the same novel called *Emil and Karl* by Yankev Glatshteyn (1940/2006), which is about two boys whose parents are taken away by Nazis during World War II. One of the boys is Jewish, and one is not. In Marcus's entry on the next page, we can thin-slice how he is thinking about both of these characters and notice his type of thinking.

Even though Marcus is studying more than one character, we can still follow the same process, naming what type of thinking he is doing and making a choice about what to teach him next. Notice we labeled the type of thinking in the callouts. Think about what you would choose to teach him tomorrow. Would you reinforce what he is already doing, teach him a new way of thinking, or show him how to do this same thinking in a different text?



Mostly Right-Now Thinking: He bulleted a list of ways the two characters are similar and different. He considered their relationships to be family, friends, and each other.

Emil and Karl

- I noticed that Emil and Karl have the same as mom being gone
- I think the relationship of friends with Emil and Karl will change because of being alone and abandoning him.
- They are caught by Nazi because they eat bread slowly and time consuming.

Emil	Karl
Best friends	Best friend
Emil's mom died	Karl's mom died
Emil's religion is Jewish	Karl is catholic
	no trouble

This is based on information from across the book and shows Over-Time Thinking. He made a T-chart to compare how these two best friends are different.

Emil and Karl

Emil and Karl both have a dream staying peacefully with their mom until Emil wakes up thinking it is a nightmare.

A Janitor is "taking care of Emil" like feed her, taking care of her, and talking to her.

Emil is scared to go outside because of Nazi. Everytime they go outside Karl runs and skips while Emil is nervous tripping over her own feet.

↑
related to butterfly
b/c both girls are scared to go outside

Over-Time Thinking: He notices their behavior and actions are different because of their circumstances. He is also comparing the characters across more than one entry and day.