



Compare and Contrast

Reading Comprehension Worksheet

Practice

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When we **compare** two things, we tell how they are *alike*.

When we **contrast** two things, we tell how they are *different*.  
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As you read the story, think about how the two types of seals are *alike*, and how they are *different*.

Harbor Seals and Gray Seals

Seals are warm-blooded mammals that live near the sea. The animal we often think of as a seal is actually the seal's cousin, the sea lion. Sea lions can move around on land much more easily than seals. They can be taught to catch a ball on their nose, and do other tricks. Seals don't move around very easily on land. When they do spend time on land, they usually are watching over their newborn "pups." But they spend most of their lives in the water. Seals can dive as deep as 1,000 feet, and can stay under water for over an hour. They can even sleep under water.

The two types of seals most often found in the North Atlantic Ocean are the Gray Seal and the Harbor Seal. Gray Seals are found mostly along the North Atlantic coasts of Europe. Harbor Seals are found on those same European coasts, and also along the east and west coasts of North America. These two types of seals are about the same size, and look very similar, but they have some very different characteristics and behaviors.

Harbor Seals have smaller faces than Gray Seals. They have a forehead, and a small triangular nose. Its face looks something like a kitten's. Gray Seals have no forehead, and a large, wide nose. Harbor Seals' faces look cute, and Gray Seals' faces look rather dangerous. Strangely enough, this is how they behave.

Gray Seals are often very aggressive. If accidentally caught in fishing nets, they put up a fight. They have been known to attack porpoises and other large fish. But Harbor Seals feed mostly on small fish. They are very curious, and will often follow boats, to see what is going on.

Once a Harbor Seal saved a dog's life. The dog slipped and fell into a river just where the water rushes into the ocean. The dog was swept out to sea. A man who was out walking his own two dogs saw it happen, but there was nothing he could do to help. As he watched, a Harbor Seal started swimming around the dog, pushing it toward the shore. By the time rescuers got to the dog, there were three Harbor Seals bobbing up and down in the water just off shore, keeping an eye on the dog. Scientists say that Harbor Seals are protective by nature, and, unlike Gray Seals, are rarely aggressive.

Some of these details are true of just one type of seal. Some are true of both types. Some are not true of either type. Read each detail, and select the best answer.

1. ...are warm blooded mammals
A. Harbor Seals only
B. Gray Seals only
C. Both types of seal
D. Neither type of seal
2. ...move around easily on land
A. Harbor Seals only
B. Gray Seals only
C. Both types of seal
D. Neither type of seal
3. ...can sleep under water
A. Harbor Seals only
B. Gray Seals only
C. Both types of seal
D. Neither type of seal
4. ...can be found on the Atlantic coasts of northern Europe.
A. Harbor Seals only
B. Gray Seals only
C. Both types of seal
D. Neither type of seal
5. ...can be found on the west coast of North America
A. Harbor Seals only
B. Gray Seals only
C. Both types of seal
D. Neither type of seal
6. ...have a small triangular nose
A. Harbor Seals only
B. Gray Seals only
C. Both types of seal
D. Neither type of seal
7. ...are protective by nature
A. Harbor Seals only
B. Gray Seals only
C. Both types of seal
D. Neither type of seal
8. ...are aggressive by nature
A. Harbor Seals only
B. Gray Seals only
C. Both types of seal
D. Neither type of seal

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9. What is one other detail that is *alike* or *different* about the two types of seals?

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## Answer Key

1. C
2. D
3. C
4. D
5. A
6. A
7. A
8. B
9. Accept any reasonable response.