

## Responding to Comparison/Contrast through Writing: Comparison/Contrast Word Splash Sentences

**Two-sentence summary:** A *word splash* writing activity asks students to craft meaningful sentences that utilize content vocabulary words. Students—alone or in groups—examine a collection of vocabulary words related to more than one concept; then, they negotiate how to use some or all of those words in sentences to show they understand the meaning and relationships of the words.

**Background knowledge needed:** “Splash” some words on the board that all student should already know (see sample words at right). Explain to students, “I’m not looking for you to just make any sentences with some or all of these words. I’m looking for you to make sentences that show you have learned enough about a concept to write different explanations of how several of the words are connected.”



Explain to students that two acceptable sentences from this collection of words would be, “The primary colors are red, blue, and yellow,” or “When you mix the primary colors of red and yellow, you create the secondary color orange.” An unacceptable sentence might be “Primary colors and secondary colors are both types of color” because it shows no knowledge of a concept. Also unacceptable is this type of sentence: “Red and purple and green are all words I am putting in this sentence.”

**Comparing/Contrasting:** For a comparison/contrast word splash, first choose two comparative concepts to which many vocabulary words could relate. “Rock cycle” and “water cycle” are two really big ones that would work, but so too would smaller concepts within those larger concepts: “condensation” and “respiration”; “igneous rock” and “metamorphic rock.”

Once you have determined your two comparative concepts, create a list of vocabulary words that fall under both concepts. You can certainly list some words that have to do with just one concept, and some words that have to do with the other concept, but also try to have some words that relate to both. This will help students’ sentences be comparative in nature.

**Differentiating Instruction Ideas:** Heterogeneous grouping will help your struggling students be involved with creating sentences that have deeper connections to the content.

**A thought on the writing task:** Have students write rough drafts of their sentences on worksheets, like the one on the next page. Require fact-checking and editing by having students share sentences with other classmates. Publish a “best” sentence from each student, pair or group; then, have the whole class decide on which sentences are the five or ten “best” statements of things that have been learned.

Today's two concepts:

placer mining

underground mining



Write two sentences (using vocabulary words from above) about placer mining:

Write two sentences (using vocabulary words from above) about underground mining:

Write two sentences (using vocabulary words from above) that discuss BOTH placer and underground mining:

Your sentences' will be scored using this rubric:

√+	√	√-
All of my sentences show that I have learned new things about placer and underground mining.	Most of my sentences show that I have learned new things about placer and underground mining.	I wrote six sentences, but they really don't show that I've learned <b>anything new</b> about placer and underground mining.