Same Race, Two Tellings

Teacher		**Class**	Grade 6
Subject	ELA	**Topic**	Comparing two accounts of the same event
Date		**Room**	
Lesson length	60 minutes	**Country**	United Kingdom

Students learn how a memoir and a biography present the same event differently. They color-code two relay accounts and write a contrast paragraph with evidence.

Curriculum links

- Compare and contrast one author's presentation of events with that of another (e.g., a memoir written by and a biography on the same person).

Learning objectives

- Students will compare a memoir and a biography of the same relay race.
- Students will contrast point of view, focus, and word choice using textual evidence.
- Students will write a paragraph explaining how the two presentations differ with quotes.

Success criteria

- I can name who tells each account and how they know it.
- I can find two facts both authors share and two differences.
- I can write a contrast paragraph using two quoted words or facts.

What students already know

Ask: What does I tell you about who is speaking? Show I vs he on board. Cold-call one difference between telling what you felt and reporting what you saw.

Key words

memoir	a true story written by the person who lived it
biography	a true story about a person written by someone else
point of view	who is telling a story and what they can see or feel
tone	the feeling of words, like funny, serious, or proud
evidence	words or facts from the text that prove what you say

Materials

- Slides 1-4, 7, 9-12
- Video clip 1 (0:00-1:53) tested
- Worksheet Task D (page 4) - Claim, Support, Question: Read both accounts on this page. Make a claim, support it, and ask a question - Two Accounts of the Dropped Baton, class set
- two short accounts: Account 1 memoir paragraphs 1-2 and Account 2 biography paragraphs 3-4
- paragraph frame handout with starters

Before the lesson

- Print class set of Worksheet Task D (page 4) Claim, Support, Question: Read both accounts on this page. Make a claim, support it, and ask a question and paragraph frame handout with starters
- Load Slides 1-4, 7, 9-12 and test Video clip 1 (0:00-1:53) for sound
- Place green, blue, orange pencils at each pair table and clear aisles for movement

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- colored pencils in green, blue, and orange, one set per pair
- whiteboard and markers
- Pre-mark teacher copy: one shared fact in green to model comparison

Lesson outline

0–8 min **Starter** 8 min · Whole class

Activates prior ideas about who tells a story and hooks interest in comparing accounts.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 1 Same Event, Two Stories [title]: Memoir vs. biography: who tells it best?
2. Show Slide 2 Which would you pick? and take a quick vote: Memoir by the person who lived it, Biography by a researcher who studied it, Both.
3. Say the hook and hold up three pencils: green for shared, blue and orange for different.
4. Preview goal: today you will write a paragraph contrasting two authors presentations.

STUDENTS DO

1. Vote by hands for memoir, biography, or both and give one quick reason.
2. Turn and talk with a partner about which account might show feelings more.
3. Collect green, blue, orange pencils for later color-coding.

Say: Grab three colors — we are going to make differences pop off the page. You want to learn about a 12-year-old's big win. Which do you read first? Today we compare how the person who lived it and the researcher tell the same race.

Ask: Which would you read first to feel what the race was like inside? (The memoir, told by the person who lived it in I-voice.) · Which would you read first for measured facts like time and place? (The biography, told by a researcher using outside information.)

Check understanding: Hands show clear split with reasons; if unsure, restate I lived it versus someone else studied it and revote.

Support: Offer sentence frame: I pick ___ because it will tell me ___. **Stretch:** Ask: When would reading both give you a fuller picture than one alone?

Use: Slides 1–2

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8–20 min **Teaching** 12 min · Whole class

Teaches memoir tools versus biography tools and what to compare.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 3 photo and explain: A student lived this game. A reporter watched and asked questions.
2. Play Video clip 1 (0:00-1:53) to model I-voice vs he/she-voice and memory clues vs research clues.
3. Show Slide 4 mindmap: Who is telling? What facts stay same? What is added or left out? Words and feelings, Point of view clues.
4. Show Slide 7 fact: A memoir uses memory. A biography uses research. Same life, different tools — so details and tone shift, with extensive discussion [2].

STUDENTS DO

1. Watch clip and signal I when you hear I or my and point outward when you hear he, she, or the runner.
2. Repeat the four compare points with teacher and copy point-of-view clues in notebooks.
3. Track with finger on paragraph numbers as teacher models same versus different.

Say: A memoir uses what the writer remembers and feels. A biography uses research like times, interviews, and observations. So we compare who is telling, what stays the same, what is added or left out, and the words and feelings.

Worked example: Same event, two tellings. Paragraph 1: I stood at the last turn with the baton shaking in my hand. Paragraph 3: In the final relay, the anchor runner for the leading team dropped the baton at the last exchange. Step 1 same fact: baton dropped at last turn or exchange. Step 2 difference in tools: memoir adds inside feeling - my heart was pounding so loud I thought everyone could hear it. Biography adds measured result - The runner lost about four seconds, fell from first to third place, and finished three seconds behind the winner.

Ask: What pronouns and clues tell you paragraph 1 is a memoir? (I, my, my heart was pounding, What I remember most - firsthand lived experience.) · What clues tell you paragraph 3 is a biography? (The runner, according to interviews, recorded split time - third-person research from outside.) · Do different details mean one author is lying? (No, different tools and focus change what is included and the tone.)

Check understanding: All hold up I-card or He-She-card for paragraph 1 and 3; reteach pronouns if mixed, using highlighted I and he on board.

Support: Give version with I, my, he, the runner already highlighted to show point of view. **Stretch:** Ask: Why would the memoir writer choose fear and learning to keep going while the biographer chooses split time?

Use: Slides 3–4, 7 and Video clip 1 (0:00–1:53)

20–35 min **Guided practice** 15 min · Pairs

Practices finding shared facts and unique details together from the relay accounts.

YOU DO

1. Hand out Worksheet Task D (page 4) and have pairs Read both accounts on this page - Account 1 memoir paragraphs 1-2 and Account 2 biography paragraphs 3-4 for abundant reading [2].
2. Model color-code on board: green for shared, blue for memoir-only feeling, orange for biography-only measured fact.
3. Show Slide 9 task: Student A tells it as I played - memoir voice. Student B retells it as reporter - biography voice. Together list 2 same facts and 2 differences.
4. Start Worksheet Task D Claim, Support, Question: Read both accounts on this page. Make a claim, support it, and ask a question and circulate to prompt evidence.

STUDENTS DO

1. Read paragraphs 1-4 aloud in pairs, Student A reads memoir, Student B reads biography.
2. Color-code and list 2 same facts like dropped baton and finished third and team cheering, and 2 differences like fear versus four seconds lost.
3. Read both accounts on this page. Make a claim, support it, and ask a question for Task D, e.g. claim The memoir focuses on feelings while the biography focuses on results, with one underlined clue.

Say: Read both accounts on this page with your partner. Color green what both agree on. Color blue what only the memoir adds and orange what only the biography adds. Then list two same facts and two differences to support your claim.

Ask: What is one fact both authors agree on? (Baton dropped at last exchange, finished third, teammates encouraged runner at finish.) · What does only the memoir include and only the biography include? (Memoir only: fear, legs burned, wanted to cry, learning to keep going. Biography only: four seconds lost, three seconds behind winner, crowd of about 200 people.)

Check understanding: Pairs hold up two fingers for two same and two different; visit pairs with fewer than four and point to paragraph numbers 1, 2, 3, 4.

Support: Pre-highlight the first matching fact so students see what counts as shared information [1] and give word bank for proud, embarrassed, calm [2]. **Stretch:** Pairs add one sentence about why each author chose different details linked to first-person versus third-person.

Use: Slide 9, Worksheet Task D Claim, Support, Question: Read both accounts on this page. Make a claim, support it, and ask a question

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35–50 min **Main activity** 15 min · On their own

Writes an evidence-based contrast paragraph showing how presentations differ.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 10 fact: Small word choices can change the whole feeling. One author writes chaotic crowd; the other writes buzzing crowd of fans.
2. Hand out paragraph frame with starters Both describe, however the memoir emphasizes and model topic sentence.
3. Set timer for frequent process-based writing [2]: draft Worksheet Task G PEEL paragraph: Write a PEEL paragraph that compares the two relay accounts on page 4.
4. Remind to underline topic sentence and circle two quoted pieces of evidence.

STUDENTS DO

1. Finish color-coding paragraphs 1-4 in green, blue, and orange.
2. Write Worksheet Task G PEEL paragraph: Write a PEEL paragraph that compares the two relay accounts on page 4 using frame and two quotes.
3. Underline topic sentence and circle two pieces of quoted evidence, then self-check clarity.

Say: Color similarities in green and differences in blue and orange across the two relay accounts. Then use the frame to draft your contrast paragraph. Use at least two short quotes as evidence for tone, focus, and point of view.

Worked example: Model starter solved: Both describe a dropped baton and a third-place finish. However the memoir emphasizes fear and learning to keep going, with evidence my heart was pounding and I wanted to cry. The biography emphasizes results, with evidence lost about four seconds and presents the event as a close, exciting contest.

Ask: Which two quotes best prove tone or focus is different? (Memoir feeling words like shaking, pounding, burned, wanted to cry versus biography measured words like four seconds, third place, about 200 people.) · How will you link the difference to point of view? (Firsthand I-voice shows inside memory; secondhand he-voice shows outside research.)

Check understanding: Scan for underlined topic sentence and two circled quotes; if missing, point to frame and have student add before plenary.

Support: Provide paragraph frame with starters like Both describe, however the memoir emphasizes to gradually release responsibility so students can assume ownership [1]. **Stretch:** Add a last sentence evaluating which account feels more trustworthy and why.

Use: Slide 10, Worksheet Task G PEEL paragraph: Write a PEEL paragraph that compares the two relay accounts on page 4

50–60 min **Plenary** 10 min · Whole class

Returns to success criteria and checks understanding of comparing two accounts.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 11 mystery: Close up: two lenses on a table. How does this show two accounts? Elicit Two lenses, same table — like two authors seeing the same event differently.
2. Show Slide 12 True or false and vote on all three statements with reasons using extensive discussion [2].
3. Collect exit tickets and link back to objectives: who tells, what is same or different, paragraph with evidence.
4. Preview homework: ask a family member for their version of one shared event.

STUDENTS DO

1. Discuss lenses analogy in small circle and share one big difference and one reason authors see it that way.
2. Vote true or false with thumbs and correct the false one: biography and memoir do not always agree.
3. Complete three-question exit ticket on their own.

Say: Two lenses, same table — like two authors seeing the same event differently. A memoir is I lived it. A biography is someone else studied it. They will not always agree because tools and purpose differ. Show me what you can do on your exit ticket.

Ask: A memoir is written by the person who lived the event - true or false? (True - firsthand I-voice shows lived experience.) · A biography and a memoir of the same person always agree - true or false? (False - memory versus research leads to different inclusion, tone, and focus.)

Check understanding: Use Slide 12 votes plus exit tickets; if many miss always agree, reteach tomorrow with new pair of short accounts.

Support: Give discussion sentence frames like Student A focuses on ___ while Student B focuses on ___.
Stretch: Connect the difference to first-person versus third-person point of view and author purpose.

Use: Slides 11–12

Common mistakes

Mistake	How to spot it	How to fix it
Thinking different word choice means one author is lying.	Says biography is true and memoir is made up because feelings differ from times.	Reteach tools: memory shows inside view, research shows measured view [2]; both can be true with different focus.
Mixing up I-voice and he/she-voice clues.	Labels paragraph 3 memoir because it has details like four seconds.	Underline pronouns I, my versus the runner, he; sort two quotes under Memoir sign or Biography sign.
Listing topic instead of contrast in paragraph.	Writes only both are about a relay without how presentations differ.	Use frame Both describe, however the memoir emphasizes ___ while the biography ___ with two circled quotes.

Support

- Provide paragraph frame with starters Both describe, however the memoir emphasizes and pre-highlighted pronouns I and he.

Stretch

- Add last sentence evaluating which account feels more trustworthy and why.
- Rewrite one neutral sentence two ways to favor each author's tone and point of view.

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- Give word bank with definitions for proud, embarrassed, calm and allow partner reading of paragraphs 1-4.

For the LSE or teaching assistant

Sit with pairs needing reading support during Worksheet Task D Claim, Support, Question: Read both accounts on this page. Make a claim, support it, and ask a question; prompt to find I versus the runner, read paragraph 2 aloud, and check green shared marks before writing.

Check for understanding

Question	Answer
Who tells Account 1 and Account 2, and how does each know it?	Account 1 memoir by runner from memory and feeling; Account 2 biography by researcher from observation and interviews.
Give one shared fact and one difference with a short quote.	Shared: dropped baton and finished third. Difference: memoir fear - my heart was pounding versus biography result - lost about four seconds.
Why do the two presentations differ even about the same race?	Different point of view, tools, and focus: inside memory versus outside research changes inclusion and tone.

Homework

Ask two people at home how they remember the same recent event and list one same fact and one difference.

Sources

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