

Comparing and Contrasting Characters, Settings, and Events

Name: _____

Date: _____

Score: _____ / 10



Quick Review

Comparing means showing how two things are alike. Contrasting means showing how they are different. Use specific details from the text — what each character SAYS, DOES, and THINKS — instead of general words.

PART 1 — READ

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

The Two Sisters and the Storm

On the cliffs above Carrickbeg, two sisters had grown up in the same gray stone house and learned to read by the same fire, but no one in the village ever mistook one for the other. Saoirse, the older, was the kind of girl who studied a problem from every side before she touched it. She kept a notebook of weather signs in her pocket and always knew where her boots were. Aine, the younger, never owned a notebook. She kept her ideas in her head, where, she said, they were less likely to get wet, and she could find her boots about half the time.

On the morning of the great September storm, their father was out at sea on the fishing skiff, and a wall of black cloud was building over the headland. Saoirse stood at the kitchen window, watching the cloud the way another person might watch a chess board. "It will reach the bay in forty minutes," she said. "Father needs three signal lanterns lit on the south point, exactly as the manual says, before he can find the harbor in the dark." She was already taking the manual down from the shelf.

Aine was already gone. She had grabbed the lanterns by their wire handles, tucked a flint and a square of dry sailcloth under her arm, and was halfway down the path to the south point. "Forty minutes is FOUR minutes too few!" she shouted over her shoulder. "Bring the matches!"

Saoirse caught up at the south point. She set the lanterns at the exact spacing the manual showed; Aine struck the flint into the sailcloth and lit the wicks before the first cold drops hit the rocks. When their father's skiff slid into the harbor that evening, both lanterns and both sisters were waiting on the dock. Neither sister said it, but each thought the same thing: the other had done the part she could not have done alone.

PART 2 — PRACTICE

Use the passage to answer each question.



1. Which sentence BEST contrasts how Saoirse and Aine approach a problem?
 - A. Saoirse is older than Aine, and Aine is younger than Saoirse.
 - B. Saoirse and Aine both grew up in the same gray stone house and learned to read by the same fire.
 - C. Saoirse studies a problem from every side before she acts; Aine acts first and explains while she moves.
 - D. Saoirse keeps a notebook of weather signs; Aine cannot find her boots half the time.
2. Which detail BEST supports the idea that Saoirse and Aine are SIMILAR in one important way?
 - A. Both sisters end up at the south point on time to light the lanterns for their father.
 - B. Both sisters keep notebooks where they write down weather signs.
 - C. Both sisters always know exactly where their boots are.
 - D. Both sisters wait on the dock for their father in silence.
3. How are Saoirse's and Aine's REACTIONS to the approaching storm DIFFERENT in paragraphs 2 and 3?
 - A. Saoirse takes down a manual and plans timing first; Aine has already grabbed the lanterns and started running.
 - B. Saoirse does not believe a storm is coming, but Aine takes it seriously.
 - C. Saoirse is angry at the storm, but Aine is excited about it.
 - D. Saoirse decides not to help, while Aine goes alone.
4. Which detail from paragraph 4 BEST shows that the sisters NEED each other in this event?
 - A. Both lanterns and both sisters were on the dock when their father arrived.
 - B. Aine struck the flint while Saoirse was still walking down the path.
 - C. Their father's skiff slid into the harbor that evening.
 - D. Saoirse set the lanterns at the exact spacing the manual showed; Aine lit the wicks before the first cold drops hit the rocks.
5. What is the MOST IMPORTANT way the SETTINGS of paragraph 1 (the kitchen window) and paragraph 4 (the south point) are different in this story?
 - A. The kitchen is a place for thinking and planning; the south point is where the plan must actually work.
 - B. The kitchen is warm, and the south point is cold and rainy.
 - C. The kitchen has a fire, and the south point has lanterns.
 - D. The kitchen is inside, and the south point is outside.



6. Read this line from paragraph 3: "Forty minutes is FOUR minutes too few!" Compared with Saoirse's earlier line — "It will reach the bay in forty minutes" — what does Aine's line reveal?
- A. Aine has used Saoirse's number to make her own faster decision.
 - B. Aine disagrees with the storm timing Saoirse calculated.
 - C. Aine has done her own measurement and gotten a different result.
 - D. Aine is making fun of Saoirse for being slow.
7. Which sentence BEST compares the sisters' STRENGTHS in this story?
- A. Saoirse is strong because she is older; Aine is weaker because she is younger.
 - B. Saoirse's strength is careful planning; Aine's strength is fast action.
 - C. Saoirse is good at reading; Aine is good at running.
 - D. Saoirse is brave; Aine is afraid of storms.
8. Based on the WHOLE passage, the author MOST LIKELY shows the two sisters together to —
- A. argue that careful planners are always more useful than fast actors.
 - B. explain why younger sisters tend to act more quickly than older sisters.
 - C. describe what life is like in a small Irish fishing village.
 - D. show that two very different people can each do something the other cannot, and need each other.
9. Using two specific details from the passage, contrast Saoirse's and Aine's personalities in ONE sentence.

10. How are the sisters' actions in paragraph 4 DIFFERENT from each other but EQUALLY important to saving their father? Explain in 2-3 sentences using text evidence.



Answer Keys

- 1 A B C D
- 2 A B C D
- 3 A B C D
- 4 A B C D
- 5 A B C D

- 6 A B C D
- 7 A B C D
- 8 A B C D
- 9
- 10

Explanations

1. C	C names the true contrast — careful planning vs. fast action — drawn from paragraph 1 and proven by paragraphs 2 and 3. A is just their ages; B compares how they are alike, not different; D is true but it makes Aine sound careless instead of decisive — it misses the planning-vs-action contrast.
2. A	Different methods, same goal — both act to save their father. B contradicts paragraph 1 (only Saoirse keeps a notebook); C contradicts paragraph 1 (Aine finds her boots about half the time); D is true but trivial — silence on the dock is not a meaningful similarity.
3. A	A maps directly onto the two paragraphs — manual vs. running. B contradicts paragraph 2 (Saoirse times the storm to the minute); C reads emotions the text does not give; D is wrong — Saoirse catches up, she does not refuse.
4. D	D shows two different jobs done by two different people in one moment — that is the literal proof of needing each other. A shows the result, not the partnership; B is incorrect order (Saoirse caught up at the point); C is just the father's arrival.
5. A	The story uses the two settings to contrast THINKING and DOING — that is the meaningful difference. B, C, and D are all literally true but only describe surface features (temperature, light, location) — they do not explain what the settings DO in the story.
6. A	Aine takes Saoirse's forty and converts it into action — proof their styles work together, not against each other. B is wrong: Aine accepts the forty as true; C invents a measurement she never made; D adds mockery the text does not show.
7. B	B names the real strengths the story shows. A reduces strength to age; C is too small (these are skills they show ONCE); D contradicts the text — Aine sprints toward the storm with no fear shown.
8. D	The whole passage shows two contrasting sisters whose differences COMPLETE each other — the last line states this directly. A is one-sided; B generalizes to all younger sisters; C is the SETTING, not the author's purpose.
9.	Answer: Strong answer is one complex sentence with one specific detail per sister, e.g.: "Saoirse keeps a notebook of weather signs and times the storm to the minute, while Aine grabs the lanterns and runs before her sister has finished planning." Acceptable variations: any pair where one detail shows planning/observation (notebook, manual, timing the cloud) and the other shows quick action (already gone, halfway down the path, struck the flint first). NOT acceptable: comparisons (showing how they are alike); general words like "smart vs. brave" with no detail; details that are not actually in the text. Use one detail per sister and connect them with a contrast word like "while," "but," or "whereas."




10.

Answer: Strong answer notes both halves: (1) Saoirse sets the lanterns at the exact spacing the manual shows — without correct spacing, the signal would not match what their father is trained to look for; (2) Aine strikes the flint and lights the wicks before the rain hits — without lit lanterns, the spacing does not matter. Both jobs together produce a working signal; either alone fails. Acceptable variations name spacing/positioning vs. lighting/timing and explain why each is necessary. NOT acceptable: answers that say one sister did more than the other; answers without quotes or paraphrases of the actual paragraph 4 actions. Match each sister to her specific paragraph-4 action, then explain why removing either action would have failed.



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