Comparing Two Authors on the Same Topic

Name: _____ Date: _____ Score: _____ / 10

Quick Review

Two authors writing about the same topic often choose DIFFERENT facts, DIFFERENT angles, and DIFFERENT words. Comparing them means asking: where do they agree, where do they disagree, and what is each author MOST trying to make me feel or think?

PART 1 — READ

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

Two Views on Backyard Chickens

=== Passage A: by Dr. Elena Marquez, agricultural extension agent === In the last decade, backyard chicken-keeping has spread from rural farms to suburban yards across the country. Done well, it is a rewarding small project: hens give eggs almost daily during their best laying years, eat household food scraps, and produce manure that, when composted, enriches a garden. A small flock of four hens, by the standard estimate from cooperative extension offices, can produce about 1,000 eggs per year, save a family roughly $400 in egg purchases at current prices, and reduce kitchen food waste by 20 to 30 percent. The trade-offs, however, are real. Hens need a clean, predator-proof coop, daily water and food, fresh bedding every week or two, and a plan for winter months when they may not lay at all. A new keeper should expect to spend about thirty minutes a day, on average, and a few hundred dollars on the initial coop. With this preparation in place, backyard chickens are a reasonable household project for families who want a small, hands-on connection to where food comes from.

=== Passage B: by Marcus Bennett, public-health writer === The rise of backyard chicken-keeping is one of the most charming trends of the last ten years — and one of the most underestimated public-health stories. Live poultry, even healthy-looking poultry, often carry Salmonella bacteria in their feathers and droppings. Between 2015 and 2023, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recorded more than 8,000 illnesses tied to backyard flocks, with roughly one in four cases involving children under five. Many new keepers do not realize that the same coop that brings fresh eggs to the table can also bring serious bacterial illness if hands are not washed or if young children are allowed to hold the birds. None of this means backyard chickens should be banned. It does mean that families considering a flock should understand the hidden cost: hens are not pets in the usual sense, and the rules around handling them — wash hands every time, no kissing the birds, no children under five inside the coop — exist because real children have ended up in real emergency rooms.

PART 2 — PRACTICE

Read BOTH passages. Then answer each question about how the two authors present the same topic.

1. What is the MAIN focus of Passage A?
   - **A.** The public-health risks of backyard chicken-keeping.
   - **B.** A balanced practical guide to what backyard chickens can give a family and what they require.
   - **C.** An argument that all families should keep chickens.
   - **D.** A history of chicken farming in the United States.
2. What is the MAIN focus of Passage B?
   - **A.** A guide to coop construction.
   - **B.** A warning about the public-health risks of handling backyard poultry.
   - **C.** An argument that backyard chickens should be banned.
   - **D.** A list of every type of chicken sold in the United States.
3. Which fact does ONLY Passage A include?
   - **A.** Salmonella illnesses tied to backyard flocks between 2015 and 2023.
   - **B.** An estimate of 1,000 eggs per year from a four-hen flock.
   - **C.** A rule against kissing the birds.
   - **D.** A statistic about children under five.
4. Which fact does ONLY Passage B include?
   - **A.** The cost of an initial coop.
   - **B.** More than 8,000 illnesses tied to backyard flocks between 2015 and 2023.
   - **C.** An estimate of 20 to 30 percent reduction in kitchen waste.
   - **D.** A daily time estimate of about thirty minutes.
5. Where do the two authors AGREE?
   - **A.** Both authors say that backyard chickens should be banned.
   - **B.** Both authors say that backyard chickens are a serious project that requires real preparation — not a casual purchase.
   - **C.** Both authors say that hens never get sick.
   - **D.** Both authors say that families with young children should never keep chickens.
6. How do the two authors DIFFER in TONE about backyard chickens?
   - **A.** Both authors share the same enthusiastic tone.
   - **B.** Marquez is encouraging-with-conditions; Bennett is concerned-with-conditions.
   - **C.** Marquez is dismissive; Bennett is celebratory.
   - **D.** Marquez is angry; Bennett is sarcastic.

7. Which sentence BEST shows how the two authors choose DIFFERENT evidence for the same topic?

A. Both authors quote the same Stanford University study.

B. Marquez uses economic and yield numbers (eggs per year, dollars saved); Bennett uses CDC illness data (8,000 illnesses, age of cases).

C. Marquez uses no numbers, while Bennett uses no numbers.

D. Neither author uses any source at all.

8. Suppose a reader knows ONLY Passage B. What important information would the reader MISS?

A. That backyard chickens can carry bacteria.

B. That children should wash hands after handling birds.

C. That backyard chickens can provide hundreds of dollars in egg savings and reduce kitchen waste.

D. That hens may not lay in winter.

9. In 2-3 sentences, explain how the two passages would lead a reader to a DIFFERENT first impression of backyard chickens even though both authors are writing about the SAME topic. Use one detail from each passage.

_____

_____

10. If a family wanted to make a careful decision about keeping backyard chickens, why might reading BOTH passages give them a better understanding than reading either one alone? Answer in 2-3 sentences.

_____

_____

Answer Keys

1	A	**B**	C	D	6	A	**B**	C	D
2	A	**B**	C	D	7	A	**B**	C	D
3	A	**B**	C	D	8	A	B	**C**	D
4	A	**B**	C	D	9	See below			
5	A	**B**	C	D	10	See below			

Explanations

1. B	Passage A names the benefits AND the time/money costs and ends with a measured recommendation — a balanced practical guide. A is Passage B's focus. C overstates Passage A as a recommendation for everyone. D is not in the text.
2. B	Passage B centers on Salmonella illness and safe-handling rules. A is Passage A's territory (coop, bedding). C overstates: the author writes "None of this means backyard chickens should be banned." D is not in either text.
3. B	The 1,000-eggs estimate appears in Passage A's third sentence and nowhere in Passage B. A, C, and D are all Passage B's evidence.
4. B	The 8,000-illness figure is unique to Passage B. A, C, and D all come from Passage A.
5. B	Marquez names time, cost, and predator-proof coops as preparation; Bennett names handwashing rules and child-handling cautions — both agree the project is serious. A misreads Bennett's "none of this means banned." C contradicts both texts. D overstates Bennett's child-under-five rule into a blanket ban.
6. B	Marquez writes that chickens are "a reasonable household project for families who want…" — warm but conditional. Bennett begins with "charming" but pivots to underestimated risks — concerned but not opposed. A erases the difference. C reverses each tone. D overstates both.
7. B	The contrast in evidence — yield vs. illness data — is exactly how the authors shape different stories from the same topic. A invents a shared source. C is the opposite of both passages. D contradicts both.
8. C	Passage A's economic benefits are absent from Passage B. A and B are central to Passage B. D appears only in Passage A but is not the broader benefit Passage B misses — economic value is the more obvious gap.
9.	**Answer:** Strong answer: Passage A leads with the picture of a small, productive household project — for example, 1,000 eggs a year and about $400 in savings — so a reader might first think of backyard chickens as a hands-on family activity. Passage B leads with the public-health risk — for example, more than 8,000 illnesses tied to backyard flocks between 2015 and 2023, with one in four cases involving children under five — so the same reader would first think of backyard chickens as a hidden cost. The TOPIC is the same; the EVIDENCE the authors choose creates very different first impressions. Acceptable variations: any pairing that names a yield/economic detail from A AND a public-health detail from B. NOT acceptable: answers using only one passage; answers that claim the two authors say the same thing; answers without any specific number, fact, or quote. A 2-point answer needs ONE concrete detail from Passage A AND ONE concrete detail from Passage B, plus a sentence about the different first impressions.

10.	**Answer:** Strong answer: Reading only Passage A would show the family the rewards (eggs, savings, waste reduction) and the basic time and money costs, but it would not warn them about the Salmonella risk or the handling rules around young children. Reading only Passage B would warn them about illness but would not tell them about the yield or daily care a flock actually requires. Together, the two passages give a full picture — what the family can gain AND what they must protect against — so the decision is based on both halves of the trade-off. Acceptable variations: any answer that names ONE thing missing from each passage and explains how reading both fills the gap. NOT acceptable: answers that say one passage is better than the other; answers that fail to name something specific the family would miss; answers that conclude the family should not keep chickens (neither author makes that call). A 2-point answer (1) names something the reader would MISS from Passage A alone AND (2) names something the reader would MISS from Passage B alone.

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