How Two Authors Shape Their Presentation of the Same Topic

Name: _____ Date: _____ Score: _____ / 10

Quick Review

When two authors write about the same topic, they choose different details to EMPHASIZE, different EVIDENCE to use, and different INTERPRETATIONS of what the topic means. Track what each author includes AND what each author leaves out.

PART 1 — READ

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

Two Views of the 1969 Apollo 11 Moon Landing

=== Passage A: "One Small Step" (from a science-magazine retrospective) === When Neil Armstrong stepped onto the lunar surface on July 20, 1969, he completed the most complex engineering project ever attempted. The Apollo 11 mission required more than 400,000 engineers, scientists, and technicians, working across nine years and roughly $25 billion in 1969 dollars. The Saturn V rocket that launched the spacecraft generated 7.6 million pounds of thrust at liftoff — still the most powerful rocket ever flown when measured by useful payload. The lunar module's onboard computer ran on about 64 kilobytes of memory, less than a single email today, and yet it guided two astronauts to a soft landing in a place no machine had ever been. Apollo 11's true legacy is what it proved about the engineering of complex systems: that thousands of moving parts, designed by tens of thousands of people, could be made to work together on the first attempt under conditions no engineer had ever directly tested.

=== Passage B: "What the Moon Cost" (from a history-of-policy column) === It is easy, fifty years later, to remember Apollo 11 only as a triumph. The triumph was real. But Apollo was also a Cold War project, designed and funded mainly to demonstrate American technological power to the Soviet Union, and its costs are often left out of the heroic version of the story. NASA's share of the federal budget reached 4.4 percent in 1966, more than three times its share today, and Apollo's price tag — roughly $260 billion in current dollars — was paid partly by cuts elsewhere. Three astronauts died in a launchpad fire during testing in 1967, and the program's safety record was driven by schedule pressure as much as by engineering judgment. Twelve men eventually walked on the Moon; all twelve were white American military test pilots. The legacy is genuinely impressive, but a fair account has to include the political reasons for the rush, the human cost of that rush, and the narrowness of who got to be a hero.

PART 2 — PRACTICE

Read BOTH short passages. Then answer each question by comparing how the two authors shape their presentations.

1. Which choice BEST describes the DIFFERENCE in what the two authors EMPHASIZE?

   A. Passage A and Passage B emphasize the same details in the same order.

   B. Passage A emphasizes engineering scale and achievement; Passage B emphasizes political motivation, costs, and human consequences.

   C. Passage A emphasizes the Soviet Union; Passage B emphasizes the Saturn V rocket.

   D. Both passages mostly emphasize the astronauts' personal lives.

2. Which detail appears in Passage B but is NOTABLY ABSENT from Passage A?

   A. The fact that the Saturn V generated 7.6 million pounds of thrust.

   B. The Apollo 1 launchpad fire that killed three astronauts in 1967.

   C. The fact that Neil Armstrong stepped onto the surface on July 20, 1969.

   D. The size of the lunar module's onboard computer memory.

3. Which interpretation BEST describes how Passage A INTERPRETS Apollo 11's legacy?

   A. A reckless rush that cost more than it gained.

   B. Proof that complex engineering systems with thousands of parts can be made to work together on the first attempt.

   C. A diplomatic disaster.

   D. A small step that few engineers participated in.

4. Which interpretation BEST describes how Passage B INTERPRETS Apollo 11's legacy?

   A. An engineering miracle whose costs are too small to discuss.

   B. Genuinely impressive but inseparable from Cold War politics, schedule-driven safety problems, and a narrow group of people allowed to participate.

   C. A failure that should be forgotten.

   D. A scientific experiment with no political reasons behind it.

5. Both passages refer to the program's COST. How is the cost USED differently in each?

   A. Passage A uses cost to argue for a smaller program; Passage B uses cost to praise efficiency.

   B. Passage A uses the $25 billion figure as a measure of the engineering investment's scale; Passage B uses the $260 billion figure (current dollars) to argue that the cost matters and was partly paid by cuts elsewhere.

   C. Neither passage discusses cost.

   D. Both passages use cost the same way.

6. Which fact is SHARED by both passages?

   A. The size of the lunar module's onboard computer memory.

   B. The number of astronauts killed in the 1967 launchpad fire.

   C. The 1969 date of the landing.

   D. NASA's share of the federal budget in 1966.

7. How does the AUDIENCE of each passage shape what is emphasized?

A. Passage A's science-magazine readers want engineering scale and technical detail; Passage B's history-of-policy readers want political context, costs, and consequences.

B. Audience never affects what an author emphasizes.

C. Both audiences are the same.

D. Passage A is written for an audience that does not care about engineering.

8. A student writes: "Passage B says Apollo 11 was bad. Passage A says it was good." Why is this comparison INACCURATE?

A. Passage A actually argues Apollo 11 was bad.

B. Passage B does NOT say Apollo 11 was bad — it says the triumph was real AND that costs and limits must be named. The comparison flattens a nuanced both-and interpretation into a single negative.

C. Both passages say Apollo 11 was bad.

D. Both passages refuse to take any position.

9. Choose ONE topic that BOTH passages cover (for example, cost, safety, or legacy). Explain in 2-3 sentences how each author shapes their presentation of that topic differently.

_____

_____

10. What does Passage B include about the Apollo program that Passage A LEAVES OUT? Name TWO specific things and explain in one sentence why a reader might form a different view of Apollo if they read only Passage A.

_____

_____

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	B captures the actual difference: technical-engineering emphasis vs. political-and-cost emphasis. A is false. C reverses the two passages' content. D invents an emphasis neither author uses.
2. B	The 1967 fire is in Passage B and absent from Passage A — exactly the omission the question asks about. A and D are in Passage A. C is in both passages.
3. B	B is the explicit legacy claim in Passage A's last sentence. A is Passage B's interpretation. C invents a claim. D contradicts the 400,000-person figure in Passage A.
4. B	B reproduces Passage B's careful both-and interpretation: real achievement AND costs that must be named. A reverses the author's view. C overstates Passage B's critique. D inverts the author's central claim.
5. B	B correctly distinguishes the two functions: scale-of-investment in A vs. trade-off-and-cost in B. A reverses both authors. C is false. D ignores the difference.
6. C	Only the basic 1969 landing fact appears in BOTH passages. A is in A only. B and D are in B only. A student who guesses 'shared' must actually check each text.
7. A	Source labels at the top of each passage ("science-magazine retrospective," "history-of-policy column") signal the audience, and the content matches each. B is false. C ignores the labels. D contradicts Passage A's content.
8. B	Passage B explicitly says "the triumph was real" before naming costs — the student misses the both-and. A is false. C is false. D contradicts both authors' clear positions.
9.	**Answer:** Strong answer (using cost): Passage A presents cost as a measure of engineering scale — $25 billion and 400,000 workers are evidence of an enormous, coordinated effort. Passage B presents cost as a trade-off — $260 billion in current dollars and 4.4 percent of the federal budget in 1966, paid partly by cuts elsewhere, evidence that something else went unfunded. Same topic, opposite emphasis: A treats cost as proof of scale, B treats cost as proof of opportunity cost. Acceptable variations: students may compare legacy (A — engineering proof; B — both achievement and political and human cost), or audience-related details. NOT acceptable: answers that pick a topic only one passage covers (the 1967 fire is in B only); answers that just describe each passage separately without comparison; answers that say one author 'lies' (both passages stay factual). A 2-point answer (1) names a topic both passages address AND (2) describes how each author's PRESENTATION of that topic differs.

10.	**Answer:** Strong answer: Passage B includes (1) the 1967 launchpad fire that killed three astronauts and the schedule pressure that contributed to it, and (2) the demographic fact that all twelve people who walked on the Moon were white American military test pilots. A reader who saw only Passage A would form a view of Apollo as a pure engineering triumph, missing the human cost and the narrow access that Passage B treats as part of the legacy. Acceptable variations: any pair from B that is absent from A — the Cold War motivation, the 4.4 percent NASA budget share, the cuts elsewhere, the launchpad fire, the schedule-driven safety problems, or the narrowness of who got to be an astronaut. NOT acceptable: details that ARE in Passage A (Saturn V thrust, the 1969 date, the lunar module computer); only one detail; answers without an explanation of how the reader's view would differ. A 2-point answer must (1) name TWO Passage-B-only details AND (2) explain a reader's likely view from Passage A alone.

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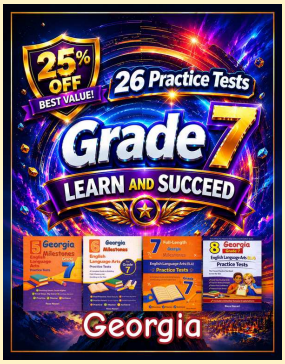

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