The OCR Entry Level Guide to

What's different?

Version 1

OCR

This guide on 'What's different?' has been produced by OCR to help you understand the skills and techniques you will need to develop, practice and use in studying for your chosen qualification. This guide has not been written to go with any one qualification but focuses on research skills that are in many areas of both education and work environments. Other skills guides are available at www.ocr.org.uk.

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Introduction

When you get dressed in the morning, you have to decide what to wear. You may have seen the weather forecast which is a mixture of sunshine and showers, so you will need to look at which clothes to put on:

- Should you wear jeans?
- Do you wear a T shirt or jumper? Is it going to warm or cold?
- Trainers or boots? Shoes or sandals?
- Coat or umbrella or both? Is it going to rain?

With all these choices you have to make decisions based on the weather and what you are doing that day.

We do this in many parts of our lives – not just at school or college but at home as well. You may be in a shop and want to buy a chocolate bar but there are so many to choose from so, which do you go for?

- Is it a big bar or a small bar that you want?
- Plain chocolate or one with fruit in?
- Maybe there is a new chocolate bar... should you try it?

We think about these things, narrow down our choices and then choose the one that we want and hopefully are happy with our decisions!

In these two every-day situations, we have had to look at:

- the similarities (or comparing)
- and the differences (or contrasting)

What can we see? We then think about our choices and make our decisions.

In this guide 'What's Different?' we will look at different ways that will help you when you have find out differences and explain them to other people.

Compare and Contrast

When you compare two things, you ask yourself,

"How are these things alike?"

When you contrast two things, you ask yourself,

"How are these things different?"

At school you may have been asked to read a book and then watch a film of the book. Sometimes they are different because the book may have more detailed descriptions of characters which may not be shown in scenes in the film, but also, some things will be very similar.

Think about Charlie and the Chocolate Factory by Roald Dahl. Was the film exactly the same as the book?

Think about the films that star Batman or Spiderman. These characters originally appeared in comic books many years ago. They then were made into TV shows and cartoons and more recently into blockbuster films. How do you think these characters may have changed? Do you think that they are similar or different?

You may be asked at college to write what you think is the same or similar and also what is different about books that are made into films. This means you are comparing and contrasting two different things – the film and the book.

How can you discover Similarities and Differences? (Diagrams)

At home you may decide to cook a meal for your family, but not everyone likes the same thing. You decide to write a list of some of the things that everyone will eat.

Once you have your list you then have to see if you have all the ingredients. If not you may have to think again. Are you going to have a barbeque as the weather is good? Maybe if it is cold, it should be a casserole? Everyone in your family likes pizza but not always the same toppings. In the circles below (which are pizzas) write down all the different ingredients of your family's two favourite pizzas for example cheese, ham etc.

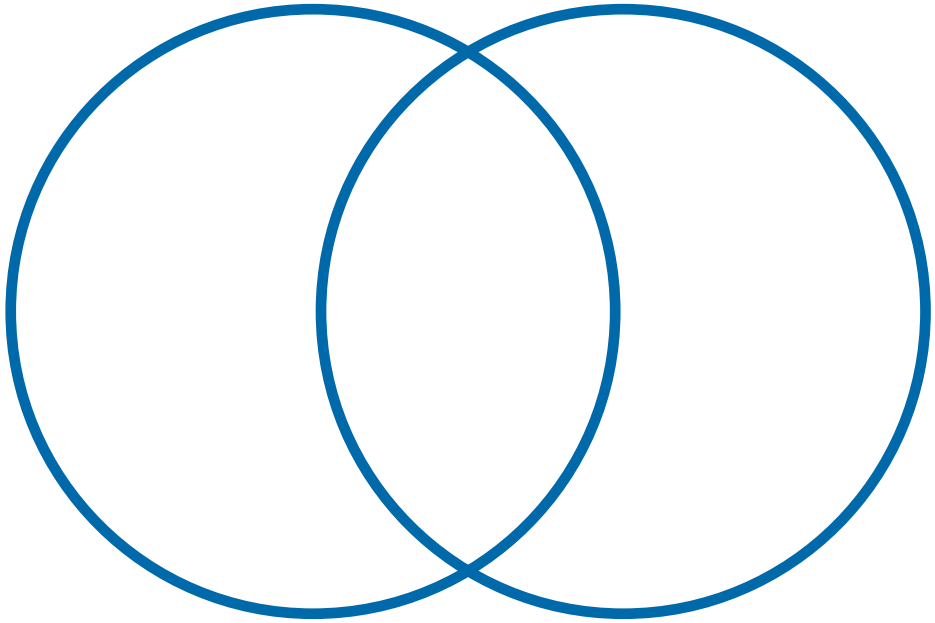
Pizza 1

Pizza 2

Looking at these two pizzas, you will see that there could be some ingredients that are the same and some that are different. Another way of seeing what is the same is by using a Venn diagram. This is when two circles overlap each other as shown below:

Using your pizza examples from before, fill the two pizzas below with the ingredients but this time put the things that are the same in the middle where the two circles overlap. This shows the ingredients that are same (or similar). It makes it easier for you to see the same ingredients so you then don't have to write them out twice!

Pizza 1 Pizza 2



The advantages to using Venn diagrams are:

- They make it easy to see similarities and differences when comparing two things..
- They can be a quick to complete.
- They are good to use when you know that there are many similarities and differences.
- They help you to make decisions quickly.

But, there are disadvantages to using Venn diagrams:

- It can be difficult to use with any new ideas such as a new product for a business as you need to know all the information about the subject before completing the diagram.
- Can really only be used to compare and contrast information.

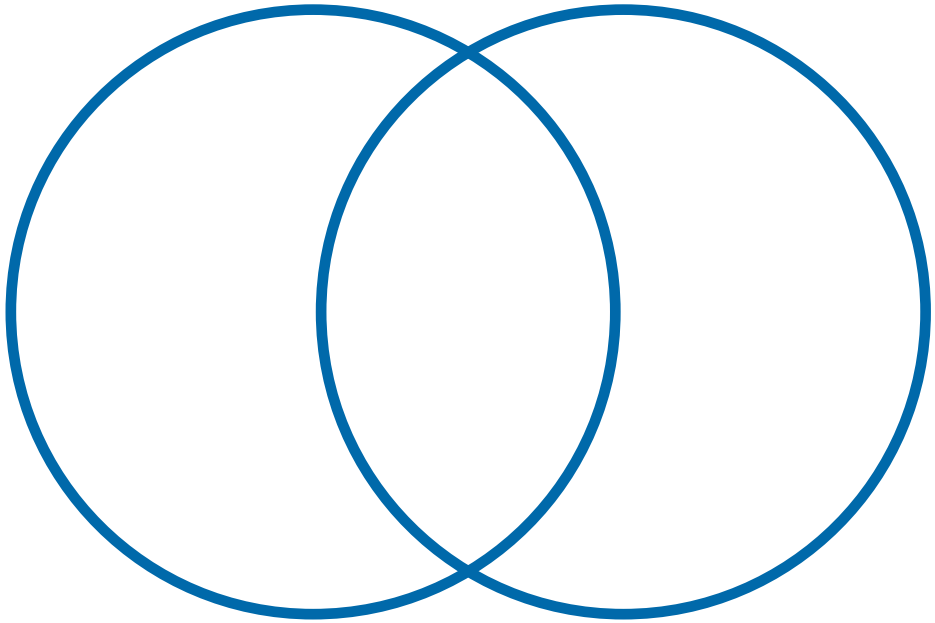
This Venn diagram can be used in all sorts of situations, not just at school or college but in everyday life.

Instead of using a Venn diagram, another way you could do this is by writing a list in a table as below. Fill in the table below for your two pizzas. In the Same column write all the ingredients which are in the bit where the circles overlap. In the Different column write all the other ingredients in the circles.

Same	Different

Let's Discuss

You are going out with friends but don't know where to go. Think of two options and use the Venn diagram below to see the similarities and differences about the options to try to help you come to a decision.



How to organise college work when you compare and contrast

As well as using Venn diagrams to show similarities and differences, there are other things that you can use to 'compare' and 'contrast'.

For example, when trying to find out information for a project or assignment, you may need to do some research on a topic. Think about your mobile telephone and compare it to another mobile phone that one of your friends has.

Did you look at (or compare) lots of phones before you bought your phone?

Why did you choose your mobile phone?

Was it because of:

- cost
- how it looks
- features (what it can do)

Why is your phone the best?

Look at the table below which has information about mobile telephones.

Phone A	Samsung Galaxy S3 RRP: From £29 per month; Around £500 SIM-free Rating: Rated 9 out of 10	The Galaxy S3 is an excellent smartphone. It offers a good design and build quality. Samsung has put together an impressive set of hardware resulting in silky smooth performance and extensive software features. We can't give the number one spot to two smartphones, so the iPhone nudges it on a show of hands, but it really is a matter of personal taste. The S3 really is as good a smartphone as you can buy right now.
Phone B	HTC One X+ RRP: Around £450 inc VAT Rating: Rated 9 out of 10	With a newer version of Android, fixed build quality issues and significantly increased battery life, the One X+ is a polished and honed version of its predecessor. It's now an even better all-round quality smartphone with a reasonable price tag.
Phone C	Motorola Razr i RRP: £345 inv VAT Rating: Rated 9 out of 10	The Motorola Razr i is a great all-rounder smartphone. It offers a great combination of design and performance for a reasonable price. It's worth a look for its price.

Source: http://www.pcadvisor.co.uk/test-centre/mobile-phone/3210667/8-best-smartphones-2013/

Now look at the table below.

Phone A	Samsung Galaxy S3
Cost	Around £500
How it looks	It offers a good design and build quality. It really is a matter of personal taste.
Features	Samsung has put together an impressive set of hardware resulting in silky smooth performance and extensive software features. SIM-free.
Phone B	HTC One X+
Cost	Around £450 inc VAT
How it looks	Polished and honed version of its predecessor
Features	Newer version of Android, fixed build quality issues and significantly increased battery life even better all-round quality smartphone with a reasonable price tag.
Phone C	Motorola Razr i
Cost	£345 inv VAT
How it looks	It offers a great combination of design and performance
Features	Great all-rounder smartphone. It's worth a look for its price .

This information was source in June 2013.

This is called the Subject by Subject way to compare.

This way makes you think about the three different phones, one at a time, using different headings. You can then see what the similarities or differences are between the phones. You can then make or write your choice. You can do this when you have to do research for your college and school work.

The main reasons for using the Subject by Subject way are:

- You may be able to put all the information about one phone into a table and then have two more tables for the other phones.
- The way you write will be clear and easy to read.
- You may be able to reach a decision after looking at all three phones.

The main reason for not using the Subject by Subject way is:

- It could be a list of different points, if you do not explain things.

Another way that you could compare things is by using a Point by Point way. This is when you look at one thing about the phones at a time. You could make a table like the one below.

	Type of phone	Cost
Phone A	Samsung Galaxy S3	Around £500
Phone B	HTC One X+	Around £450
Phone C	Motorola Razr i	£345

Now you could say that phone A is expensive compared to phone B, which is cheaper and phone C is a bit more expensive than phone B. You are comparing the differences and can see the similarities about cost.

You could then look at the *appearance* of the phone and then the *features* of the phone in the same way.

The main reasons for using the Point to Point way are:

- It makes you think and write about one point at a time.
- You can check your thinking at the end of each point.
- It makes it easier for the reader to see if you understand the topic.
- It is a very organised way of researching.
- If you want the things that are similar to be the most important thing, you can write it like that. You can also make the things that are different the most important by organising your work in that way. It's up to you!

For example: You ask 10 of your friends what phones they have. Seven have different iPhones and three have Blackberry phones. You then decide to find out the differences or similarities between the different iPhones based on the most important features to each person. This could take a long time as there are so many different features that some people may or may not use. You would need to decide what you will find the most useful in your research.

Words

You will have to find things that are similar and things that are different many times and, at the time you may not even know you are doing it!

Your teacher/tutor may use different words to get you to compare and contrast information. For example:

Look at the different ways in which……..
On the other hand…….
However,…….

Your teacher/tutor may get you to look at things that are similar by saying:

Look at each……
What is the same……?
Both show…….
Which do you like and why……..?

You will know these words, but did you know that they are the same as saying - compare and contrast - but just using different words?

Activities

Think about all the different ways that you have learnt about how to compare and contrast different things in this guide. Now look at the Activities below and decide which way, a Venn diagram, Subject by Subject or Point by Point, would you use to find the things that are similar and different.

Activity 1

You and your friend want to go on holiday together so you need to decide where to go. Think about all the things you both like to do on holiday:

- Do you like to do the same kind of things or not?
- Should you go away in the UK or go abroad?
- If you go abroad what are the different things you will have to take with you?
- How long will it take you to get there?
- How will you get to your holiday spot in the UK or abroad?
- How much will it cost to go abroad or stay in the UK?

Activity 2

You live in a city but your friend lives in a village.

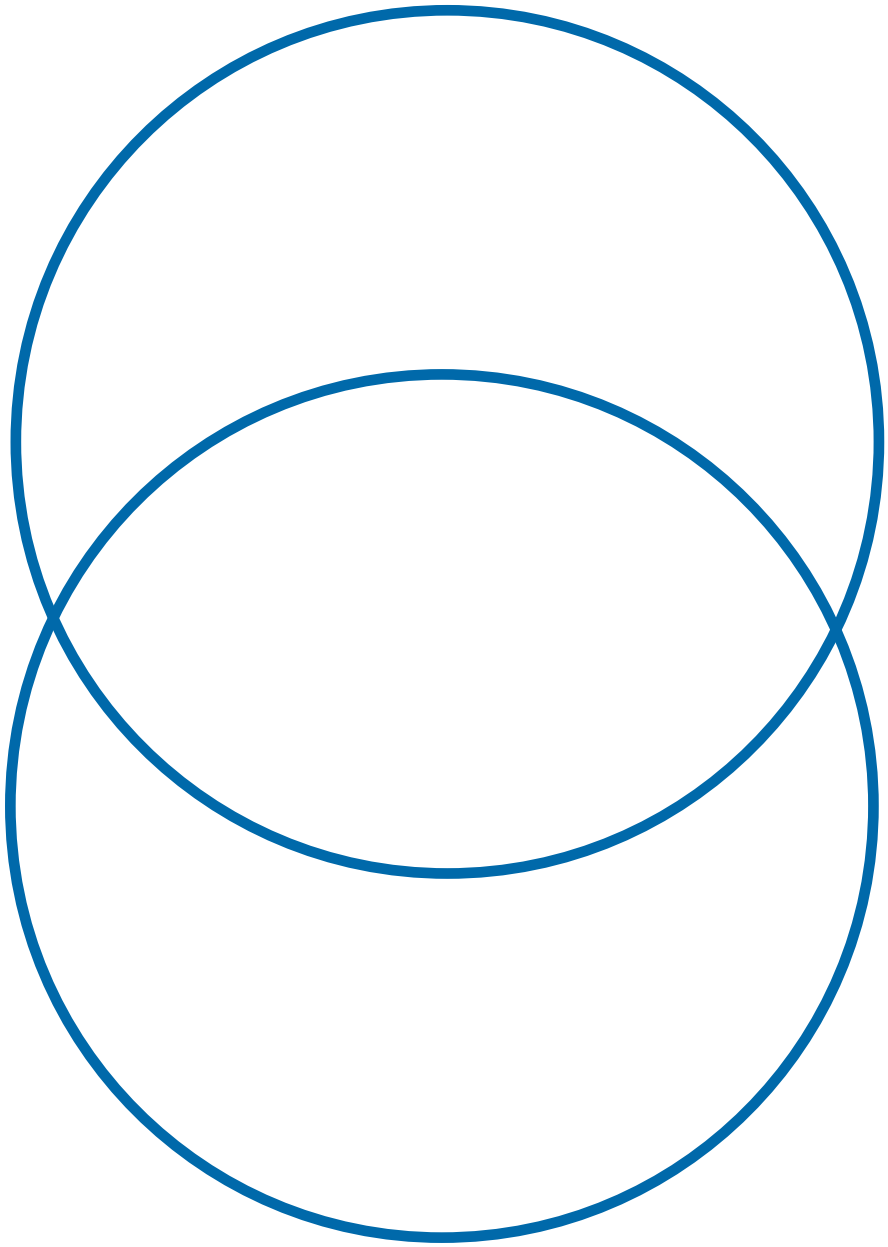
- What things are similar and different about the places that you and your friend live?
- Living in the city do you know lots of people of different ages?
- Does your friend know more people of different ages because of where they live in a village?
- Think about when you meet your friend, how easy it is to travel?
- Do you like living where you live and does your friend like living where he or she lives?
- What are the similarities and differences between your life and your friend's lives.

Activity 3

Think about different consoles you can buy to play video games.

- What are the things that are similar and the things that are different between two game consoles produced by different companies?

Blank Venn Diagram



Blank Subject by Subject Table

Blank Point by Point Table

Useful Links

http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/compcontrast/

http://www.readinginnovations.com/Comprehension/CompareandContrast.html

http://www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/english

http://www.studyzone.org/testprep/ela4/o/comparecontrastp.cfm

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OCR Resources: *the small print*

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