

# COMPARING AND CONTRASTING

## 1. Find the similarities and differences between the words in pairs.

1. a telescope and a microscope
2. a submarine and a dolphin
3. a computer and a calculator
4. a desert and a jungle
5. a photocopier and an x-ray machine

### Stage 1 Comparison

- 1 Look at Tables 1 and 2 and complete these sentences. If necessary, look at Appendix 1, Section 3, Comparisons. Put one or more words in each space.

Table 1

- a The Nile is \_\_\_\_\_ the Mississippi-Missouri.
- b The Amazon is \_\_\_\_\_ long \_\_\_\_\_ the Nile.
- c The Nile is \_\_\_\_\_ river in the world.
- d The Mississippi-Missouri is \_\_\_\_\_ the Amazon.
- e The Yangtse is \_\_\_\_\_ river in China.

Table 2

- f In Beijing, January is a \_\_\_\_\_ month  
\_\_\_\_\_ December.
- g July is a \_\_\_\_\_ month \_\_\_\_\_  
June.
- h There is \_\_\_\_\_ rain in May \_\_\_\_\_ in March.
- i July has the \_\_\_\_\_ rain; in other words, July is  
\_\_\_\_\_ month.
- j August is \_\_\_\_\_ warm \_\_\_\_\_  
July.
- k December and January are \_\_\_\_\_ months.
- l The rainfall in February is \_\_\_\_\_ in March.
- m April is \_\_\_\_\_ wet \_\_\_\_\_ October.
- n The rainfall in November is \_\_\_\_\_ in May.
- o July is the \_\_\_\_\_ month, and also  
\_\_\_\_\_ month.

Table 1: The Longest Rivers in the World

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | The Nile (Africa)—4,160 miles (6,695 kilometres)                        |
| 2 | The Amazon (South America)—4,080 miles (6,570 kilometres)               |
| 3 | The Mississippi-Missouri (North America)—3,740 miles (6,020 kilometres) |
| 4 | The Yangtse (Asia: China)—3,430 miles (5,520 kilometres)                |

Table 2: Temperatures and Rainfall in Beijing, China

Month	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Temperature (°C)	-4.7	-1.5	5.0	13.7	19.9	24.5	26.0	24.7	19.8	12.5	3.6	-2.6
Rainfall (cm)	0.2	0.5	0.5	1.5	3.6	7.6	23.9	16.0	6.6	1.5	0.8	0.2

Note: The first month is January (J), the last is December (D).



Satellite view of the River Nile

**Stage 2**  
Extended Comparison

**1** Read the following carefully.

Several years ago, some research was conducted at Manchester University into the amount of time that overseas postgraduate students spent listening to spoken English and speaking English. Sixty students co-operated by completing questionnaires.

It was found that an average of  $22\frac{3}{4}$  hours per week were spent listening to English and only  $6\frac{1}{4}$  hours speaking English to English people. An analysis of the time spent listening to English showed that lectures accounted for 5 hours and seminars 2 hours. An estimated  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours were spent in serious discussion while 2 hours were devoted to everyday small-talk. Watching television accounted for  $5\frac{1}{4}$  hours and listening to the radio  $4\frac{1}{2}$  hours. Going to the cinema or theatre only accounted for an average of  $\frac{3}{4}$  hour per week.

The following sentences are based upon the information contained in the text above. Complete the sentences by choosing from the list of words and phrases below: use each word once only. Make sure that you keep the same meaning in the sentences as in the text.

Choose from these words: *biggest; as much . . . as; more . . . than (twice); least; most; not so many . . . as; as many . . . as; the same . . . as; greater . . . than.*

- The students spent considerably \_\_\_\_\_ time listening to English \_\_\_\_\_ speaking it.
- A \_\_\_\_\_ amount of time was spent in lectures \_\_\_\_\_ in seminars.
- Nearly \_\_\_\_\_ hours were spent listening to the radio \_\_\_\_\_ watching television.
- The \_\_\_\_\_ popular way of listening to English was by watching TV.
- \_\_\_\_\_ number of hours was spent in everyday small-talk \_\_\_\_\_ in taking part in seminars.
- The \_\_\_\_\_ popular way of listening to English was by going to the cinema.
- \_\_\_\_\_ hours were spent in serious discussion \_\_\_\_\_ in watching television.
- Nearly \_\_\_\_\_ time was spent in watching television \_\_\_\_\_ in speaking English.
- \_\_\_\_\_ time was spent in serious discussion \_\_\_\_\_ in everyday small-talk.
- The \_\_\_\_\_ surprise in the survey was the small number of hours spent speaking English to English people.

**1** Look at the following table carefully.

*Writing in English: Manchester University (50 students)*

% students	type of writing	(average) frequency	(average) length
52	essay	5 per term	2000 words
34	report	2 per term	4000 words
14	dissertation	1 per year	8000 words
12	thesis	1 after 2-3 years	300-1000 pages

The information in the table can be described (as an alternative to using the table). Notice the construction of the following sentence:

*52% of the students wrote essays, of an average frequency of 5 per term, of an average length of 2000 words.*

Now read the following paragraph, which describes some of the information contained in the table. Complete the spaces with information from the table.

A survey was conducted among \_\_\_\_\_ overseas postgraduate students at \_\_\_\_\_. The purpose of the survey was to discover the type, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of academic writing that was expected of the students by their supervisors or tutors. \_\_\_\_\_ of the students \_\_\_\_\_ reports, of an \_\_\_\_\_ 2 per term, \_\_\_\_\_ average length \_\_\_\_\_.

## Compare and Contrast

- The Venn Diagram allows students to see how two things are alike and how they are different.
- A student could use a Venn diagram to write a comparison/contrast essay by simply using the three sections of the diagram to make three paragraphs (two contrasting paragraphs, and one comparing paragraph).

Examples:

- Compare/Contrast the governments of two countries
- Compare/Contrast mammals and reptiles
- Find the least common multiple of two numbers
- Compare/Contrast a pyramid and a cube

