

Compare and Contrast Common Core Lesson Plan for Fifth Grade

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How We Are Smart is a rich text to explore compare and contrast within the same book. Particularly for fifth graders and students in middle school, the historical figures featured within these pages offer engaging material for young minds ready to tackle complex subjects that extend beyond personal experiences, such as prejudice, racism, and sexism.

I have created sample questions to teach towards and check mastery of each of the three Common Core categories. These are by no means the only questions to ask in each category, but these provide an overview of the progression in question complexity and mastery of the texts.

By creating a range of compare and contrast questions across the standards, we are able to differentiate for students within a class, provide extension opportunities for ready learners, or move the whole class from literal- to higher-level thinking over the course of several lessons.

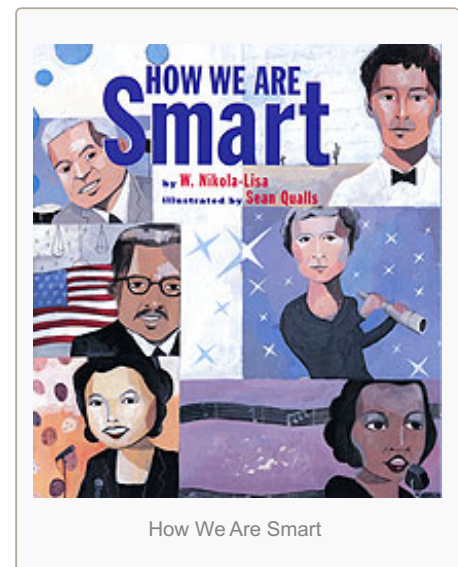
Text:

How We Are Smart (level: T)

Why: I have chosen this text because the content requires readers to take on diverse perspectives and examine human problems related to hardship and identity. *How We Are Smart* presents mature themes and problems of society, not just individual character struggles, which makes it appealing to and rigorous for preadolescents. Additionally, the author's choice to structure the profiles and biographical information in a unique format lends itself to extensive questions about craft and structure.

Key Ideas and Details:

1. What is the central idea of each profile? What is the central idea of all the portraits taken together? How are the central ideas of each profile similar or different to the central idea of the overall book?
2. What are the characteristics of body smart? Logic smart? Define the characteristics of the eight types of smart in your own words. What makes each type of smart unique and what do they have in common? Which of the portraits belongs to each type of smart?
3. Compare two profiles together. Recommended pair comparisons include: Matthew Henson and Ynes Mexia, Luis Alvarez and Annie Jump Cannon, Patsy Takemoto Mink and Thurgood Marshall,



or Marian Anderson and Tito Puente together. What type of smart are they? How are their character traits similar and how are they unique? Even though their areas of expertise are different, how are their achievements and contributions similar? How were their family relationships similar or different? What challenges did they each face on their paths to success? What role did education play in their achievement in their fields?

4. Compare who was selected into this book. Even though they represent different types of smart, what character traits do they share? How were their obstacles and methods for overcoming their challenges similar?

Craft and Structure:

1. Each profile covers a unique individual who accomplished a lot in his or her own field and represents one of the eight types of smart. Yet, the book has a central idea. What words, phrases, and other literary devices does the author use to connect all the profiles together and convey the central idea?
2. Author, W. Nikola-Lisa, never explicitly says what kind of smart each of these historical figures is. What words or phrases does the author use to show readers what kind of smart each of the high-achievers is? How do the words and phrases in a profile of someone who is *body smart* compare to the words and phrases used in a profile of someone who is *logic smart* and the other types of smart?
3. What evidence do you have that these profiles are nonfiction? What nonfiction text features does each profile have?
4. How is the information in *How We Are Smart* arranged? What evidence do you have that each biography profile is organized by chronology, comparison, description, classification, cause/effect, or problem/solution? How does the text structure in each profile affirm the central idea?
5. Each biography profile is titled using the subject's name, rather than what type of smart he or she is. What does this choice by the author demonstrate about the book's central idea?
6. For each profile, the author includes a quotation from the person being profiled, a poem narrated by the author, and then a third person description. Why does the author present the information this way throughout the book? How does this repetitive format and structure contribute to the book's overall central idea?
7. Each poem ends with "Are you smart like....?" Why would author address the reader? What is the author's purpose in ending each poem that way? How does this choice of phrase contribute to the central idea?

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

1. The illustrator, Sean Qualls, chose NOT to use photographs for any of the chapters. Instead, he painted portraits of the historical figures. What images in the paintings reveal what type of smart each figure is? What do the images suggest about the book's central idea?
2. The author chose to profile each high-achiever and their contributions through a poem and then a brief description. How is this format similar or different to other biographies?
3. Find another biography (print or online) on one of these twelve figures. Compare the text structure, images, tone, and central ideas of that biography with the *How We Are Smart*'s profile.

What have you found successful in teaching how to compare and contrast? Share with us at curriculum@leeandlow.com!

For further reading on teaching literacy in Fifth Grade:

- [What Does Close Reading Look Like In Fifth Grade?](#)
- [Integrating Reading, Writing, Speaking & Listening In Grades 4-5](#)

For further reading on Compare and Contrast series:

- [How To Compare And Contrast With The Common Core In Kindergarten](#)
- [How To Compare And Contrast With The Common Core In First Grade](#)
- [How To Compare And Contrast With The Common Core In Second Grade](#)
- [How To Compare And Contrast With The Common Core In Third Grade](#)
- [How To Compare And Contrast With The Common Core In Fourth Grade](#)