

Paired Non-Fiction Passages for Comparing and Contrasting

For 4th - 7th Grades

- Includes Graphic Organizers
- Leveled Passages
- Short Texts
- High Interest Topics

The Grizzly Bear
The grizzly bear is the second largest bear in the world. It is found in North America, Europe, and Asia. Grizzlies are often found in meadows, or river valleys. The bears look "grizzly" or "ragged" because of their long claws. These traits help them catch and eat insects. Grizzly bears may weigh up to 1,200 pounds. They live in the mountains of the United States and Canada. Grizzly bears eat mostly insects, and ground squirrels. Grizzly bears like to live in the mountains of the United States and Canada from January or February until June.

Polar Bear
Polar bears are the largest land carnivore in the world. They live in the Arctic region of the Northern Hemisphere. Polar bears are adapted to live in the cold. They have a thick layer of blubber, or fat, that provides extra warmth. Polar bears also have a thick layer of fur. This fur even covers their ears. Polar bears are excellent swimmers. Their feet are large and flat like oars. This makes polar bears great swimmers. Female bears may reach 9 feet tall. Male bears may weigh up to 1,320 pounds. Polar bears feed mostly on seals. They will occasionally eat walrus, beluga whales, and birds' eggs, but their main source of food comes from seals. Polar bears rarely eat any type of plants or vegetation. Adult polar bears are usually solitary. This means that they prefer to live alone. They do not hibernate.

The Venus Flytrap
The Venus Flytrap plant, unlike most plants, actively seeks insects, not to pollinate, but to feed on! You see, Venus Flytrap plants grow in soils that are poor in nutrients. And Venus Flytraps catch insects and digest them for the nutrients that they cannot get from the soil. Venus Flytrap plants are not tropical plants like some people believe. In fact, they are native to North America. The only place in the world that you can see native Venus Flytrap plants grow is on the coast of North Carolina, in the United States. Venus Flytraps live in wet, humid bogs and wetlands. It is the nutrient-poor soil in these bogs that caused the plant to adapt over time. Despite what people think, Venus Flytrap plants do not eat meat. Do not feed them hamburger. They catch and digest insects and even small frogs. Each trap is only good for 4 to 6 catches. After that, the trap turns brown and falls off. Each trap has six trigger hairs. Three on each trap has two stimulations of one hair to trigger the trap. It takes approximately 10 days for the Venus Flytrap to completely digest an insect, and then reopen its trap. Venus Flytrap plants live 14 hours of sunlight each day. Flytraps go dormant for 4 to 5 months, from October to February.

Pitcher Plant
The neck of the pitcher plant is covered by the hood, where the light is coming downward pointing a hole. The wall forces the very slippery. This makes the insect to escape. Soon the plant begins to digest the insect. The digestion takes one week. The hard parts of the insect remain in the bottom of the plant.



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GE = Grade Equivalent as determined by estimated Lexile levels.

The Ancient Olympic Games

The first Olympic Games were held around 776 BC in Greece. They were held every four years in the village of Olympia. The games were held to honor the Greek god, Zeus. The first games only had one race called, the "stade" race. In this running race, men ran across the length of the stadium. Over the years, more running races were added to the Olympics. Other games like boxing, wrestling, chariot racing, the long jump, javelin throwing, and discus throwing were also added. In the ancient Olympic games, only men could participate. They had to be free men and they had to speak Greek. The prize was a crown of olive leaves. This crown was a symbol of hope and peace. Women were not allowed to take part in the games. They were also not allowed to watch the games.



Modern Olympic Games

Today, the Olympic games are divided into winter and summer games. These games are held every two years. They are held in cities all around the world. These games are held to encourage peace and cooperation. Today's Olympic games have some of the same races played in the ancient games. We have boxing, wrestling, running, and throwing games. Many games have been added to the modern Olympic games. The games include skating, skiing, swimming, and gymnastics. In the modern Olympic games, men and women are both allowed to participate. The prizes given in today's Olympics are medals. The medals can be bronze, silver, or gold.



Grizzly Bears

The grizzly bear is the second largest land carnivore in North America. The grizzly bear is commonly called a brown bear. Brown bears live in parts of North America, Europe, and Asia. Brown bears prefer to live in forested mountains, meadows, or river valleys.

Grizzlies are often dark brown, but can vary from very light cream to black. The long hairs on their backs and shoulders frequently have white tips and make the bears look "grizzled" or grayish. The brown bear has a hump on its back and long claws. These traits help to make the brown bear a great digger. Brown bears may reach seven feet tall. Male bears may weigh up to 700 pounds. Female bears may weigh up to 350 pounds.

Brown bears eat mostly grass, roots, and berries. Brown bears may eat fish, insects, and ground squirrels, or larger mammals if they can catch them.

Brown bears like to live in solitude, or by themselves. They usually hibernate from January or February until April or May.



Polar Bears

Polar bears are the largest land carnivore in the world. Polar bears are only found living in the Arctic. They live near ice packs in the Arctic where wind and water currents are constantly melting and refreezing the ice there. This makes good open spaces for Polar bears to find food.

Polar bears are suited to living in the extreme cold temperatures of the Arctic because of their thick, warm fur. This fur even covers the bears' feet for warmth. Polar bears also have a thick layer of blubber, or fat, that provides extra warmth. Their feet are large and flat like oars. This makes polar bears great swimmers. Polar bears may reach 9 feet tall. Male bears may weigh up to 1,320 pounds. Female bears may weigh up to 700 pounds.

Polar bears feed mostly on seals. They will occasionally eat walrus, beluga whales, and birds' eggs, but their main source of food comes from seals. Polar bears rarely eat any type of plants or vegetation.

Adult polar bears are usually solitary. This means that they prefer to live alone. They do not hibernate.

Lemons

Lemons are tart, yellow fruits that grow on a small tree. Lemons are citrus fruits. Lemon trees grow about 10 to 20 feet high. They produce sweet-smelling flowers that are white on top and reddish purple on the bottom. The fruits, or lemons, grow from these flowers. Lemons are shaped like an oval with a bump on one end. Their rind, or skin, is thick. It starts out green and turns yellow when the fruit is ripe. Inside each fruit is juicy pulp. The juice of lemons is tart, or sour, because it contains a substance called citric acid. Lemon juice is also rich in vitamin C. People use lemons to flavor many kinds of food including pies, drinks, vegetables, and fish. People also use lemons to make jellies, soaps, perfumes, and medicines.



Grapefruit

The grapefruit is a tart, juicy citrus fruit that grows on trees. It is a good source of vitamin C. It is called grapefruit because it grows in clusters like grapes do. The grapefruit tree has spreading branches, thorny twigs, and dark, shiny green leaves. It grows about 25 feet tall in orchards, but it can be larger. It has large, sweet-smelling white flowers. The fruit is round and measures 4 to 6 inches across. It has a yellow rind, or outside covering, when it is ready to be picked. The pulp, or soft inside, is light yellow, pink, or red. The pulp has about ten to fourteen sections. The sections may include seeds. Grapefruit are picked by hand or harvested with a machine that shake the tree's limbs. They are usually eaten fresh. People often drink grapefruit juice because it has many good nutrients.



The Venus Flytrap

The Venus Flytrap plant, unlike most plants, actively seeks insects, not to pollinate, but to feed on! You see, Venus Flytrap plants grow in soils that are poor in nutrients. And Venus Flytraps catch insects and digest them for the nutrients that they cannot get from soil.

Venus Flytrap plants are not tropical plants like some people believe. In fact, they are native to North America. The only place in the world that you can see native Venus Flytrap plants grow are on the coast of North and South Carolina, in the United States of America. These plants live in wet, humid bogs and wetlands. It is the nutrient-poor soil in these bogs that caused the plant to adapt over time.

Despite what people think, Venus Flytrap plants do not eat meat. Do not feed them hamburger! They catch and digest insects and even small frogs. Each trap is only good for 4 to 6 catches. After that, the trap withers, turns brown, and falls off. Each trap has six trigger hairs, three on each lobe. It takes two stimulations of one hair to trigger the trap. It takes approximately 10 days for the Venus Flytrap to completely digest an insect, and reopen its trap.

Venus Flytrap plants love 14 hours of sunlight each day. Flytraps go dormant for 4 to 5 months, from October to February.



Pitcher Plant

The pitcher plant is a type of plant that eats insects, also called a carnivorous plant. They are rare, unique and quite interesting. Regular plants absorb nutrients from the soil, but carnivorous plants grow in soil that has very little nutrients. They get their nutrition from insects.

Pitcher plants are found in wet boggy areas in the southeastern United States. A pitcher plant will produce a tall beautiful flower in the spring which can grow into a seed pod containing hundreds of seeds. A pitcher plant works by creating an inescapable trap for a bug. First, a bug smells a nice nectar smell and is drawn towards the beautiful green, red, yellow, and even purple colors on the plants. As the bug lands on the neck of the pitcher, it becomes shaded by the hood, losing track of where the light is coming from. Sharp downward pointing hairs inside the pitcher plant force the bug down the tube. The wall underneath these hairs is very slippery. This makes it impossible for the insect to escape. Soon, the pitcher plant begins to digest the soft parts of the insect. This digestion takes about one week. The hard parts of the insect remain in the bottom of the pitcher plant .



The Eiffel Tower

The Eiffel Tower is an iron tower that was created as an entrance gate for the 1889 World's Fair in Paris, France. The tower's construction began in 1887 and took only two years to complete. The Eiffel Tower looks like a bronze spider web, with crisscrossed iron beams. The tower is 1,050 feet tall and for 41 years after it was built, was the tallest structure in the world. There are 1655 steps from the ground level to the top. The weight of the metal parts of the structure is 7,300 tons. Over 18,000 iron parts were used in the tower's construction. The Eiffel Tower is painted every 7 years, using about 60 tons of paint. It takes between 15 and 18 months to paint the entire tower.

The tower is the tallest structure in Paris. It is also the most-visited paid monument in the world, with more than 250 million guests so far! The tower is named after its engineer, Gustave Eiffel, who also built part of the Statue of Liberty.

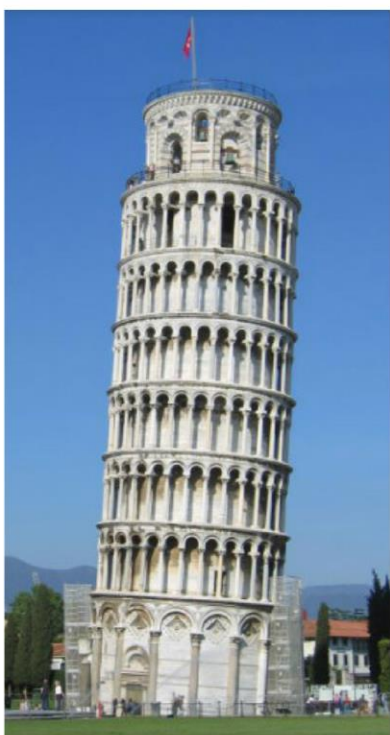


The Leaning Tower of Pisa

The famous Leaning Tower of Pisa is located in the center of the Italian town of Pisa. The tower is the bell tower for the city's cathedral.

Construction of the tower began in 1173 and took almost two hundred years to complete. The tower is almost 56 meters high and has 296 steps to the top. The walls are 4 meters thick at the base, and 2.48 meters thick at the top of the tower. The circular tower has 8 floors, made from limestone. The outside of the tower is covered with marble and decorated with arches and columns.

The town of Pisa took its name from a Greek word meaning marsh or swamp. Because of the unstable land in the area, the tower began to lean almost as soon as it was built. Over the years, there have been many efforts made to help stabilize the tower so that it does not fall over. Today, the top of the tower leans almost 4 meters. Many ideas to straighten the tower have also been suggested over the years. Some suggested taking the tower apart and moving it to a new location. If you look carefully at the tower, you can see that all the efforts to straighten and stabilize it have made the tower curve slightly.



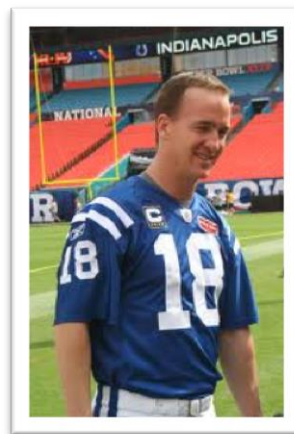
LeBron James

LeBron James is an American professional basketball player for the Miami Heat basketball team. LeBron was born in Akron, Ohio on December 30, 1984. He had great basketball talent from a young age and was recruited to play basketball at St. Vincent-St. Mary High School in 1999. LeBron won several honors for his performance in high school and even helped his team win a state championship. James scored 2,657 points, 892 rebounds and 523 assists during his four years at St. Vincent-St. Mary High School.

James was the first pick of the 2003 NBA Draft. He signed to play with the Cleveland Cavaliers. During his first season in the NBA he was named the NBA Rookie of the Year. At age 20, LeBron was the youngest player to receive the award.

LeBron James continued to play for the Cavaliers for the next six seasons leading the team to great victories and earning recognition for himself. In 2010, James joined the Miami Heat NBA team. He and the team won NBA championship games in 2012 and 2013.

Not only has LeBron James been considered one of the greatest players in the NBA, he has also worked to help others. In 2004, he established a foundation to help children from single-parent homes.



Peyton Manning

Peyton Manning is an American professional football player for the Denver Broncos football team. Peyton was born in New Orleans, Louisiana in 1976. His father, Archie Manning, had been a quarterback in the NFL so football was a part of Peyton's life from an early age. As a boy, Peyton was very competitive with his brothers and it seemed that he would become a quarterback like his father. In high school, he passed the football for more than 7,000 yards and was one of the top high school quarterbacks. After high school, Peyton attended the University of Tennessee where he continued to succeed in football.

In 1998, the Indianapolis Colts selected Manning as the first pick in the NFL draft. Though his first year with the Colts was a difficult one, Peyton's successes grew over the next 13 seasons. Peyton won several Most Valuable Player awards and even led his team to win a Super Bowl championship.

In 2011, Manning had to have 3 neck surgeries to repair a damaged nerve. His team suffered without him. They got a new quarterback and released Peyton. Manning signed a contract in 2012 to play for the Denver Broncos. Manning is a well-known and respected quarterback in the NFL.

Koala

Most people think koalas are a type of bear because they have large, wide faces, white ears, and smooth black noses that make them look like a bear. But Koalas are actually marsupials. Marsupials are mammals that have a pouch where their babies grow. A koala mother usually gives birth to one baby at a time. The baby, called a joey, is only the size of a jellybean. The joey stays in his mother's pouch for about six months until he grows strong enough to ride on her back.

Koalas live in Eucalyptus forests in Australia. They have special physical characteristics that make it easier for them to live in the trees. They have sharp claws and strong thigh muscles to help them climb eucalyptus trees. Extra fur on their bottoms and a thick pad at the base of their spine provide cushion so that the koalas can sit on the tree branches comfortably for hours. They also have a curved backbone and two less ribs than most mammals making it easy for them to curl up in between tree branches.

Koalas also use special adaptations to help them eat. Being very picky eaters, they use their excellent sense of smell to sniff out only the best eucalyptus leaves. The eucalyptus is poisonous to most animals. Koalas have a type of bacteria in their stomachs that allows them to eat the poisonous leaves. However, the koalas get only a small amount of nutrients from their limited diet. This low-calorie diet requires koalas to use only small amounts of energy each day. For this reason, they spend most of their time sleeping. In fact, they sleep for about 18 hours each day!

Opossum

Did you know that the opossum is not a member of the rat family? Many people think that the opossum with its white face, loose gray fur with white tips and scaly tail is related to a rat. However, the opossum is not a rodent at all. It is the only marsupial that lives in North America. A marsupial is a mammal that has a pouch on its belly where its young grow and develop. When the female opossum gives birth, her babies crawl up her fur and into the pouch. The mother opossum may give birth to up to 20 babies in a litter, but many of them do not survive. They are as small as a honeybee when they are born and they stay in the pouch for about two months as they grow. When they are strong enough, they ride on their mother's back for about a month. Then, they follow her around until they learn to take care of themselves.

The opossum usually lives in woodlands near a water source such as streams or swamps. However, opossums adapt to living in many types of habitats and may make their nests in brush piles, hollow trees, and even drainage areas. Because of its varied habitats, the opossum will eat almost anything it can find. They eat birds, small mammals, amphibians, reptiles, insects, worms, leaves, seeds, grains, fruit and nuts.

The opossum has special characteristics that help it adapt to its surroundings. It uses its unique, prehensile tail to grab and wrap around tree branches. This makes it easy to move around in trees. The opossum also has sharp claws that make it a great climber. Opossums are perhaps best known for "playing dead." When threatened by a predator, they pretend to be dead. This often makes the predator lose interest and go away.

Carlsbad Caverns

Carlsbad Caverns National Park is a National Park in the United States located in Guadalupe, New Mexico. Carlsbad Cavern includes a large cave chamber called The Big Room. It is a natural limestone chamber that is almost 4,000 feet long, 625 feet wide, and 255 feet high at its highest point. It is the third largest chamber in the United States and the seventh largest in the world. The National Park includes at least 118 other caves with numerous stalactites, stalagmites, and other fascinating formations.

Carlsbad Cavern is home to about one million Mexican Freetail bats. During the day they crowd together on the ceiling of Bat Cave, which is a passageway near the entrance of the cavern. At nightfall, the bats leave the cave in swarms to feed on moths and other night-flying insects.

Carlsbad Caverns were used for shelter by Native Americans over 1,000 years ago. They were not discovered by settlers until the 1800's when cowboys noticed the swarms of bats leaving the entrance of the cave in the evenings. One cowboy, named Jim White, became fascinated by the caverns and began exploring them. White was eager to share this extraordinary place with others, but many were reluctant to believe such caverns existed. So, White had photos taken inside the caverns in 1915 to display in the town of Carlsbad. People were captivated by the photos and White began taking them on tours of the caverns. By 1923, the caverns became a National Monument named for the town of Carlsbad. Today, the caverns are one of the most celebrated caves in the United States.

Mammoth Cave

Mammoth Cave National Park contains the longest cave system in the world. More than 350 miles of caves have been mapped, and explorers continue to discover new passages. Aboveground, the park covers about 83 square miles of central Kentucky in the United States. The cave lies within layers of limestone that go hundreds of feet underground. Over thousands of years, the flowing and dripping of water has dissolved areas of limestone. This process created the caves and rock formations within them.

Many species of bats live in Mammoth Cave, including the Indiana Bat, Gray Bat, Little Brown Bat, and Big Brown Bat. Other animals that live in the cave are two types of crickets, a cave salamander, two kinds of eyeless cave fish, and cave crayfish and shrimp.

It is believed that the first settlers to discover Mammoth Cave may have been one of two brothers named John and Francis Houchin. It seems that during the year 1797, one of the brothers was bear hunting near the cave. When the bear turned on him and began chasing him, the brother ran into the cave for protection from the charging bear. For many years after the discovery of the caves, they were owned by many different people. Eventually, the caves became very popular with famous writers and actors visiting. Wealthy citizens in Kentucky worked to have the cave named a National Park. It took about 15 years to raise enough money and settle debates about the ownership of the land, but in 1941, it was officially named Mammoth Cave National Park. The park was not named after a Woolly Mammoth as no mammoth fossils have been found in the caves. It was named "mammoth" for its great size.

Graphic Organizer- The Ancient Olympic Games/ The Modern Olympic Games

Ancient Olympic Games Only	Both Ancient and Modern Olympic Games	Modern Olympic Games Only

Graphic Organizer- Grizzly Bears and Polar Bears



Polar Bears



Grizzly Bears

Both

Graphic Organizer- Lemons and Grapefruit

How are they alike?

How are they different?

Lemons



Grapefruit



Graphic Organizer-The Venus Flytrap / The Pitcher Plant

The Venus Flytrap



Both Plants



Pitcher Plant

Graphic Organizer-The Eiffel Tower / The Leaning Tower of Pisa

The Eiffel Tower



Compare/
Contrast



The Leaning Tower
of Pisa

Where is it located?

When was it built?

What was it used
for?

How was it built?

What does it look
like?

What are some similarities between the two towers? Describe how they are alike.

Graphic Organizer- LeBron James and Peyton Manning

Peyton

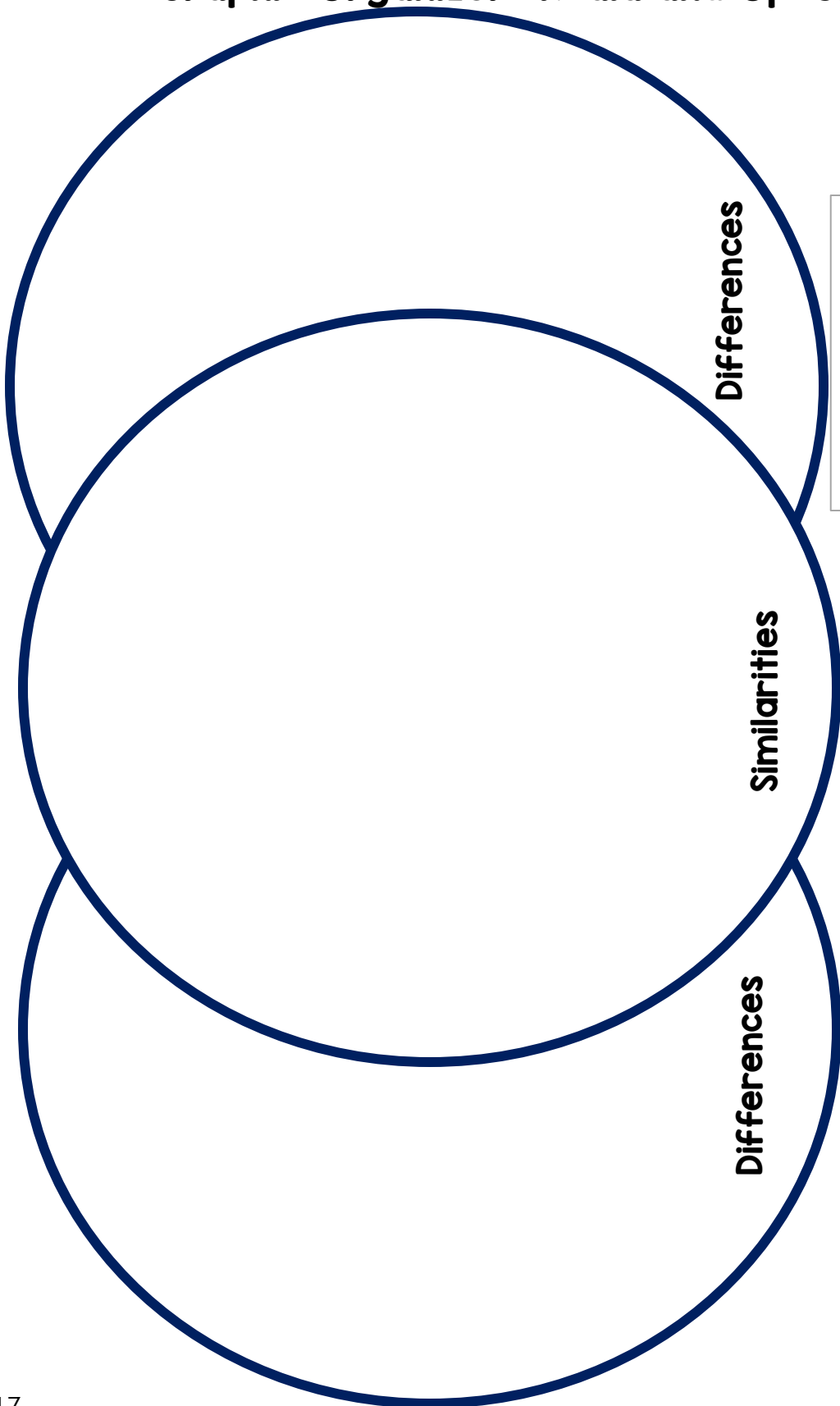


Both



LeBron

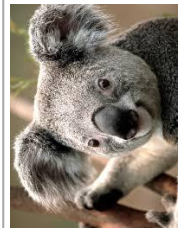
Graphic Organizer- Koala and Opossum



Opossum



Koala



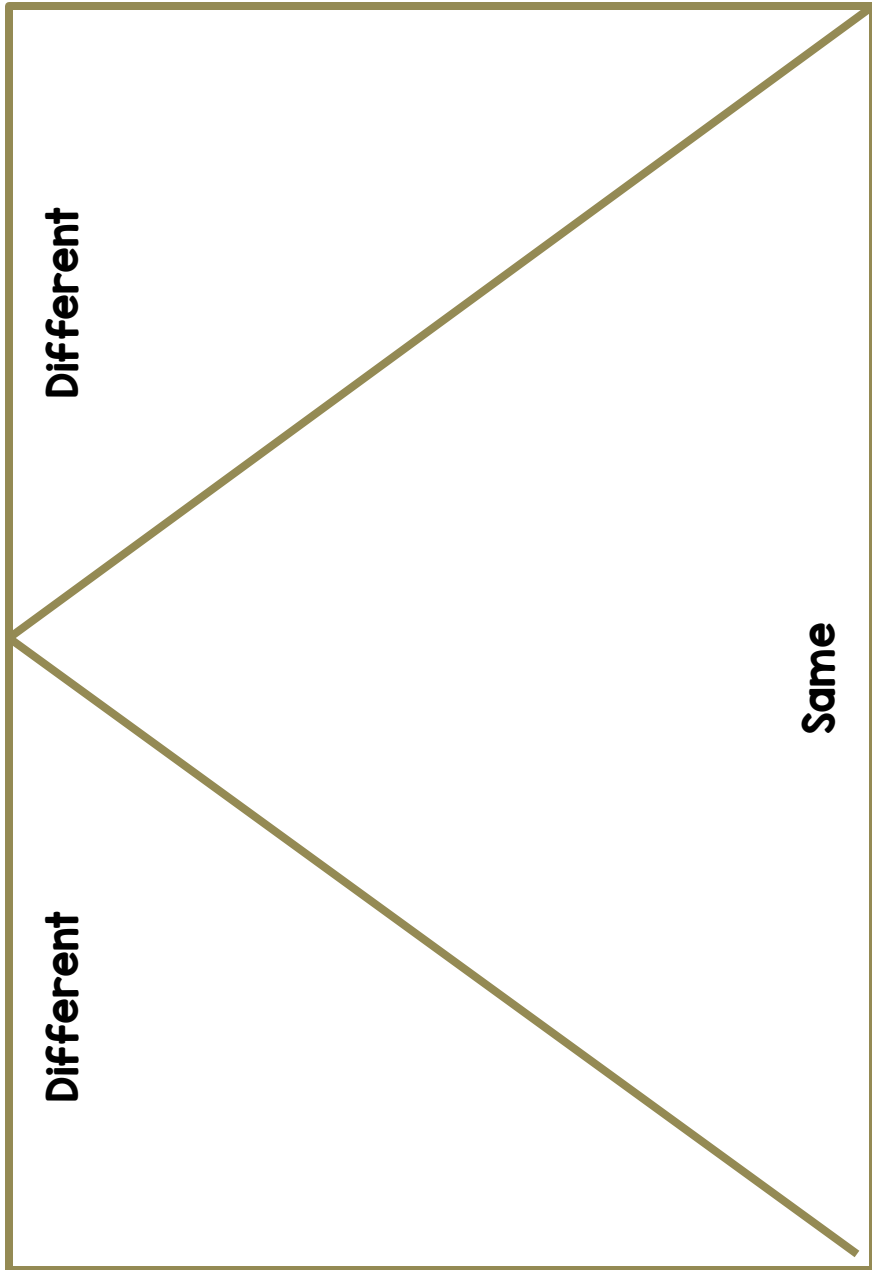
Graphic Organizer- Carlsbad Caverns and Mammoth Cave

Directions: Complete the graphic organizer with details that show the similarities and differences between Carlsbad Caverns and Mammoth Cave.

Mammoth Cave



Carlsbad Caverns



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