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Lesson 11

Genre: Historical Fiction

SAILING HOME
A STORY OF A CHILDHOOD AT SEA
Told by Gloria Rand • Illustrated by Ted Rand

Genre: Expository Nonfiction

Voyage into the Past
by Ann Collins
Authors of fiction texts may show the relationships between characters, settings, or plot events by pointing out how they are alike and how they are different. To **compare** is to tell how things are alike. To **contrast** is to tell how they are different. Words such as *and, both, too, like, and similarly* signal a comparison. The words *but, unlike, although, while, and nevertheless* signal a contrast.

A Venn diagram is a graphic organizer that may be used to compare and contrast two things.
Each weekend, Maya and Bo go sailing with their dad. They look forward to the outing all week. Maya loves to sit on the deck of the boat and feel the wind and salt spray on her face. Unlike Maya, Bo enjoys staying in the cabin and playing his guitar. Maya and Bo usually take their pet dogs on the boat. The two dogs behave like their owners—Lulu enjoys the wind, while Frankie rests in the cabin.

Look back at the paragraph. What is another comparison the author has made? What clue word helped you identify it?
Captain Cal’s Sailing Tips

Sailing the open sea is not as easy as sailing in local waters. I’ve put together these tips to help new sailors have a safe and successful ocean sailing experience. It’s like taking a class conducted by an expert sailor.

• On a long voyage, some sailors start to act rowdy. Such behavior causes problems. Remind everyone that dignified sailors always act properly. They do not shatter glasses or dishes for fun.
• Be very careful with fire. Although there is water all around you, your ship is still **inflammable**.
• When sailing the seas, you **seldom** have an opportunity to eat fresh fruits and vegetables. Eat your fill of these foods whenever you have the chance.
• Storms create huge waves. Steer your ship’s bow into each swell. A ship that has **broached** is likely to sink.
• Above all, keep your boat shipshape and your mind alert!

**Word Champion**

Your challenge this week is to use the Vocabulary Words outside of your classroom.
Keep a list of the words in a place at home where you can see it. Use as many of the words as you can when you speak to family members and friends. For example, you might ask friends to share a time when they behaved in a dignified manner. Write in your vocabulary journal the sentences you spoke that contained the words.
Genre Study

Historical fiction tells about people, events, or places that are real or could be real. As you read, look for

• a real time and place of the past.
• events that may have happened.

Comprehension Strategy

Monitor comprehension as you read. Stop and self-correct mistakes that change the meaning of the text.
SAILING HOME
A STORY OF A CHILDHOOD AT SEA

by Gloria Rand
illustrated by Ted Rand
Ours was a wonderful childhood, a childhood spent at sea. My sister Dagmar, my brother, Albert, and I, Matilda, grew up aboard the John Ena, a four-masted sailing bark that carried cargo all over the world.

Our father was the ship’s captain; the ship was our home. Only when the cargo was coal, which is highly inflammable, did we have to live ashore.

The John Ena had bedrooms, a bathroom, and a main room that was a combination living room with a pink marble fireplace and a dining room with a big round table. There was a kitchen called the galley, and a storage room full of everything we needed.

Unlike most homes, ours didn’t stay put. At night, the ship kept moving, so every morning we woke up far away from where we’d gone to sleep.
It often seemed as if we lived on a farm, not a ship. Roosters crowed, hens clucked, and ducks quacked. Mother raised them all in neat pens below deck, so we’d have fresh meat and eggs to add to the ship’s food supply. Dagmar and I collected the eggs.

We all took turns caring for our pets as we traveled around the world. There was Minnie the cat and a dog named Murphy. We had a mongoose, a monkey, a pig, and even a kangaroo.

The day the kangaroo accidentally jumped overboard we screamed for help. The crew quickly lowered a life boat and rescued it.

Our pet pig wasn’t so lucky. She fell into a pot of hot tar the men were using to repair the ship’s deck. Piggy died. We had a real funeral for her and a dignified burial at sea.

Instead of a backyard or a playground we had a great wooden deck where we played tag, hide-and-seek, and catch, always with beanbags, because balls bounced overboard. We swung on rope swings and, after our baby sister Ena was born, we took turns wheeling her around the deck in a baby buggy.
When the winds were blowing hard and the sea was full of big waves, we played inside. Our favorite game was sliding across the main room floor in cardboard boxes, crashing into one another as the ship rolled from side to side.

“Time to calm down,” Mother would say softly when we got rowdy. “Let’s read for a while.”

Mother taught us how to read and count. She was a good teacher. Father was a good teacher, too.

“Name that planet,” he’d say, pointing to a bright steady light in the dark night sky. Before long we could tell planets from stars, and even understood about celestial navigation. As a special treat Father gave us our own set of signaling flags, and we learned to send messages. From the stern of the ship we sent messages to Father at the bow, and he signaled messages back to us.

There were no radios then, and when we were out at sea we seldom saw another ship. If a ship did pass close enough for us to see each other clearly, Father, or one of the crew, exchanged greetings and information using signaling flags.
Real school began when Miss Shipman, a governess, came aboard as our teacher. Albert didn’t like her at all. Dagmar said she looked mean, but I thought she was nice.

With Miss Shipman in charge, we went to school at the dining table six days a week, mornings and afternoons, with only an hour off for lunch and no recesses.

Miss Shipman was good at teaching us history, science, mathematics, and languages. But teaching us geography was impossible for her. We’d seen so much of the world, we knew more than she did. We’d tell her about our family picnics in Japan and all about palaces and cathedrals we had visited in Europe. Miss Shipman was impressed, but not with Albert.

Albert didn’t like school. He played hooky a lot. He’d sneak off to mend sails with the ship’s carpenter, or help the crew scrub down the deck with flat stones. Sometimes Albert crawled up and hid in a little cubbyhole by the masthead. Miss Shipman would tattle to Father, and Father would bring Albert back to school.
I liked to get away, too, and be alone up in the rigging, high above the deck. I liked to feel the wind, smell the salty air, and watch the rolling ocean for as far as I could see. But I never got to stay up there for long. As soon as one of the crew spotted me, I’d hear a loud shout, “Get down, Matilda, you little spider!”

The crew watched us all the time to make sure we didn’t get into serious trouble. They watched us even when they were working, scrubbing sails, laying them out to dry, polishing brass cleats and handles, and mending ropes.

The carpenter made toys for us, the sailmaker taught us how to tie nautical knots, and the cook baked us special treats. We had the whole crew for friends.

Even though our life was different from other children’s, we didn’t miss out on anything. We had marshmallow roasts at the fireplace, taffy pulls in the galley, and footraces out on deck. Mother always brought along Christmas and birthday presents, and decorations for every holiday.
Only once, when I was ten, we almost didn’t have Christmas. That year, as we crossed the China Sea, the weather turned wild. We had just started to put up red and green garlands and ropes of sparkling tinsel when Father rushed in.

“Here, grab this end, and tie up that chair,” Father ordered as he unwound a big coil of heavy line.

We all knew what to do. Like experts we tied the piano and all the furniture to the railing that ran along the walls of the main room and to big hooks the carpenter was screwing into the floor. Mother put little things, lamps, knickknacks, and our candy dish into a heavy sea chest. Everything had to be tied up or put away, otherwise, when the ship pitched and rolled, there would have been stuff crashing and flying all over the place.
It wasn’t long before we were in the middle of a terrible storm that stayed with us for days. The sky was black. There were huge bolts of lightning, and thunder roared so loud you could hardly think.

No matter how bad the storm became, Miss Shipman made us go to school. The seas got so rough it wasn’t safe to sit at the dining table, so we all sat on the floor while Miss Shipman conducted class. We slid back and forth across the floor as the ship rode the waves. It was like riding a roller coaster.

After school we pressed our faces against the portholes and cheered as tons of water smashed against the glass. When Mother saw what we were doing she pulled us back.

“I don’t want you to get hurt,” she said. “Those waves could shatter the glass.”

Two of the crew did get hurt when a gigantic wave swept them down the length of the ship. Father dashed out and pulled them to safety. Mother sewed up their bad cuts with ordinary needle and thread. One of the sailors cried.
The storm got worse and worse. Lifeboats were torn loose and smashed into pieces by gigantic waves, and the sails were ripped to shreds by screaming winds. But lucky for us we didn’t get seasick. We never did. Father decided the safest place for all of us to be was on the floor of the ship’s chart room. That’s when we began to get scared. Father tried to get us to think about something else, like having a Christmas party.

“When we get through this storm,” he promised, “we’re going to have a grand holiday celebration. It will be the most wonderful party we’ve ever had. Let’s start planning it now.”

At that moment the ship rolled onto her side, and didn’t roll back. We all clung together.

“Mary,” he said as he kissed our mother, “the ship has broached, and I think we’re about to sink.”

“Yes, dear,” said Mother, looking Father right in the eye and smiling the bravest smile you’d ever hope to see.

Neither of them showed any panic or fear, and that made us children feel brave, too. Father kissed each of us and told us we were great sailors.

It seemed our family stayed hugging together forever, then the John Ena quivered a strange quiver and slowly righted herself!
Gradually, the storm ended, and the sea became calm.
“Time to get our celebration ready,” said Father. He had never sounded so happy.
With all of us helping, everything was soon put back where it belonged.
“Girls, hang all this ribbon and tinsel up everywhere. And Albert, you’re in charge of decorating the wooden Christmas tree, the one the carpenter made for us.” Mother was excited.
“Don’t look, I’m about to bring out the presents. Your father has a surprise for you, too, don’t you, dear?”
We all laughed because we knew what Father’s surprise always was at Christmas. He became Santa.
That night we dressed up in our party clothes. The crew sang “My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean.” They sang the best they had ever sung. The cook filled the table with delicious treats, and we played the gramophone and clapped and cheered watching Father dance with Mother. They were such good dancers.
As promised, it was the best Christmas ever. We were safe, right where we loved to be. We were at home, home on the sea.
Think Critically

1. Compare and contrast Matilda’s childhood with the childhood of a character in another book you have read.
   **COMPARE AND CONTRAST**

2. What did Matilda’s family do to prepare for the huge storm?
   **NOTE DETAILS**

3. What do you think would be the most difficult part of living on a ship?
   **PERSONAL RESPONSE**

4. Explain why the Christmas celebration described in the story was so special.
   **SYNTHESIZE**

5. **WRITE** Matilda and her brother and sisters found many ways to have fun aboard the ship. Use information and details from the story to explain how
   • their activities were SIMILAR to those of children who lived on land; and
   • living on a ship led to DIFFERENT types of activities.
   **EXTENDED RESPONSE**
Gloria and Ted Rand have written and illustrated several books together. The Rands based “Sailing Home: A Story of a Childhood at Sea” on the real adventures of the Madsen family who lived aboard the John Ena. The captain’s granddaughter told Gloria Rand the stories of her family, and Gloria Rand retold them in the book. She advises young writers to write about things that interest them and to research a subject if they don’t know it well. Most importantly, she says, “Don’t talk about writing—write.”
“Men, that’s a shoddy crew line!” shouts the first mate.
“I want you shoulder to shoulder, heel to toe, like mackerels in a sardine can.”

The “men” are boys and girls, ages 9 to 12. They stand at attention aboard the three-masted bark _Star of India_ in San Diego Bay.

The port of San Diego has long welcomed sailors and ships. In the 1800s, many tall masts jutted into the sky. Today, the 136-year-old _Star of India_ is part of the San Diego Maritime Museum. The sailing ship takes children on a one-night imaginary voyage into the past.

They follow the captain’s orders by answering “Aye, aye, sir!” The sailors work hard furling sails, washing the deck, and coiling the heavy lines. Eight seamen raise a staysail by turning the capstan. As they go round and round, they sing a sea chantey to stay in rhythm.

*Gloucester girls, they have no combs.*
*Heave away! Heave away!*
*They comb their hair with codfish bones.*
*We’re bound for Californ-i-a!*

Seaman Strachan is hoisted up the mast.
Below deck, another team hoists a heavy wooden barrel of cargo, using pulleys and ropes called “block and tackle.”

The galley (kitchen) crew prepares beef stew. Fresh carrots and potatoes are washed in a tin pail on deck. Breakfast will be oatmeal porridge.

The crew takes turns “standing watch” during the night. They search the ocean for possible dangers, including icebergs, reefs, whales, and pirates. While a cold wind rattles the rigging, the salty smell of the sea tickles noses.

By the end of the voyage, the “men” have tasted life in the past. Do you think they are happy to return to the present?
Comparing Texts

1. Which story character are you more like, Albert or Matilda? Explain.

2. Compare the experiences of the characters in “Sailing Home: A Story of a Childhood at Sea” to the experiences of the kids in “Voyage into the Past.”

3. In what ways was the school aboard the John Ena similar to schools in the United States today? In what ways was it different?

Vocabulary Review

Word Webs

Work with a partner. Choose two Vocabulary Words. Create a web for each word. In the outer circles, write words and phrases that are related to the Vocabulary Word. Explain how each word or phrase is related to the Vocabulary Word.

- inflamable
- dignified
- rowdy
- seldom
- conducted
- shattered
- broached
- afraid
- tipped over
- rough waves
- broached
**Fluency Practice**

**Partner Reading**

Work with a partner. Find your favorite part of the selection. Read that section aloud with proper intonation, while your partner listens and follows along. When you finish reading, ask your partner for feedback. Then switch roles and repeat the activity.

**Writing**

**Write a Paragraph**

Imagine that you are taught by a governess in your home instead of by a teacher at school. Write a paragraph comparing and contrasting how your learning experience might be different.

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**My Writing Checklist**

- ✔ I used a Venn diagram to plan my writing.
- ✔ I used a variety of complete sentences in my paragraph.
- ✔ I included details to compare and contrast the ideas.