Compare two texts without merging their claims

Original skill preparation; versioned source scope

Comparing Two Texts Without Merging Their Claims

- Make a **cross-text comparison 跨文本比较** of two short texts.
- Find where they agree, and the precise point where they disagree.
- Predict how one author would respond to the other's **interpretation 解释** or **evidence 证据**.
- Recognise when an author offers an **alternative explanation 其他解释**.

Summarise each text separately

- Write one sentence for Text 1 and one for Text 2 before comparing them.
- Note each author's claim, evidence and attitude: certain, cautious, critical.
- Keep the authors apart: do not give one author's reason to the other.

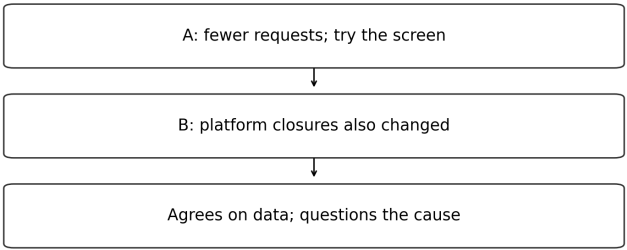
Agreement and disagreement

- Two texts often agree on the facts and disagree on what they mean.
- Disagreement can be partial: "yes, but only under these conditions" or "possibly, but there is another cause".
- The right answer names the exact point of difference, not a general "they disagree".

Predicting a response

- Ask: what in Text 2 bears on Text 1's claim? A new fact, a limit, a different cause?
- Check every part of the claim you are testing: the size, the cause and the scope.
- A cautious author rarely "rejects" anything outright; choose an answer with matching strength.

Figure: Predicting a response



- Worked steps: A: fewer requests; try the screen → B: platform closures also changed → Agrees on data; questions the cause
- Match each part of the diagram to the text.

Practice texts

- **Text A.** During a two-week trial, a station displayed route information on a large screen.
- Requests for platform directions fell from 60 in the preceding fortnight to 36.
- The screen seems a promising way to help travellers find their platforms, and other stations should consider a trial.
- **Text B.** Fewer requests were recorded during the screen trial, but several platforms were closed for repairs at the same time.

Worked example: agreement and disagreement

- Text A: requests fell, so the screen looks promising and should be tried elsewhere.
- Text B: requests fell, but platform closures happened at the same time, so the cause is unclear.
- Agreement: requests fell, and a further trial is reasonable.
- Disagreement: whether the screen explains the fall. Text B offers an **alternative explanation**; it does not say the screen fails.

Worked example: testing a strong claim

- The size is right for one station: $\dfrac{60 - 36}{60} = 40\%$.
- "Caused": B questions this, because of the closures.
- "Every station": there are no data from other stations. So B would reject the claim's certainty and scope, not its arithmetic.
- Useful further evidence: similar periods with the same platforms open, counting travellers as well as requests.

Common errors

- Merging the two texts into one view.
- Saying the authors "completely disagree" when they share the facts.
- Choosing a response that is stronger than the author's tone.

Common errors (2)

- Testing only one part of a claim.
- Giving Text 2's evidence to Text 1's author.

Key terms

- **cross-text comparison**: Comparing the claims, evidence and attitudes of two texts.
- **interpretation**: An explanation of what facts mean.
- **evidence**: Facts or data offered to support a claim.
- **alternative explanation**: A different possible cause for the same observation.

Check yourself

- Text 1 says a diet improved health. Text 2 says participants also exercised more. What does Text 2 offer?
- Is "Text 2 rejects Text 1's data" a good description in that case?
- What should you write before comparing two texts?