

Compare and Contrast Events

Introduction

The chronological **order of events** within a story is the order in which things happen. A story usually begins with an introduction to the **characters** and the **problem** encountered. The steps taken to solve the problem are additional events in a story. A story ends with the **solution** to the problem. All of these events, with the problem and solution as a central idea, make up the **plot** of a story. It helps to **compare and contrast** these events to better understand the changes that characters undergo.

Model

Celebration!

"It's finally here!" I said to myself as I got off the school bus that Friday afternoon. "And it's going to be great!"

I had been patient. I'd waited and waited for the big family party. It was just one day away. From all over the city and even as far away as Baltimore, my family was meeting at our house for a cookout supper Saturday night. My older sister, Mai, was excited, too. She had promised to decorate our backyard and even string little lights all over the trees and bushes. We talked about it last night.

Now it was time to decorate the yard, but Mai was nowhere to be found. I sat in the backyard waiting for her. I was worried because I knew how enthusiastic she was about decorating.

I called some of Mai's friends to ask them if they knew where Mai was, but none of them knew either. I was confused. Why isn't Mai here to help?

Finally, I went up to my bedroom to read. As I was walking up the stairs, I saw Mai coming out of her bedroom, looking sleepy.

"Where were you?" I exclaimed!

"The high school let us out early today, so I was taking a nap before we begin decorating. I overslept a little bit. Sorry!" she said.

In my excitement, I forgot to look in the most obvious place: Mai's bedroom. After my sister changed her clothes, we had a blast decorating the backyard. I haven't had that much fun in a long time. Best of all, the family was very impressed the next day.

When analyzing a story's **plot**, it helps to determine which **event** introduces the **problem** and which event gives a **solution** to the problem. In most cases, it is clear in the text. Where in the text can you find this information?

- The problem is that the narrator and her sister agreed to decorate their backyard, but the narrator couldn't find her sister when it was time. The solution occurs when Mai emerges from her bedroom after taking a nap, and then they decorate the yard.

In most stories, you will notice a clear change occur from the beginning of the story to the end. In other words, there is a change when the solution to a problem is found. **Compare and contrast** the events occurring when the problem and the solution are presented in this story. Think about the **characters** and the overall **mood** during these events.

- When the narrator realizes there is a problem, she states that she is very worried and confused, and this event changes the mood of the story from a happy one to a sad one. After the solution to this problem has been presented, the mood changes back from sad to happy. During this event, the narrator states that she had a lot of fun decorating with her sister.

Question Stems

1. Which event introduces the problem in this story? Which event gives the solution to the problem? How are these events alike and different?
2. What event changes the mood?
3. How do the characters in story change as the story unfolds?
4. Compare and contrast the events in Act 1 and the events in Act 2.