

Lesson 16

Comparing Accounts of the Same Topic



Learning Target

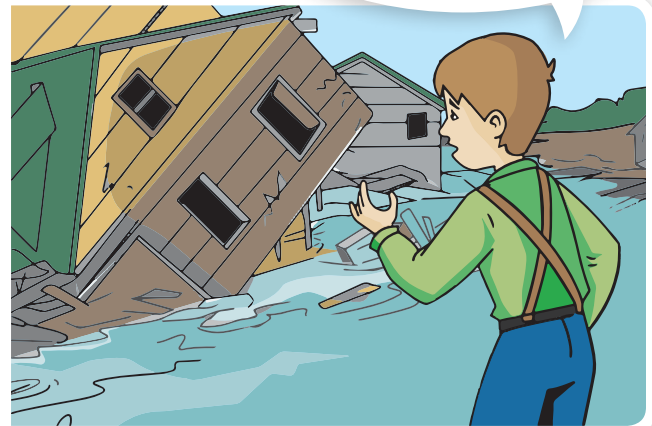


Comparing and contrasting firsthand and secondhand accounts of the same event or topic will help you develop a deeper understanding of what happened.

- **Read** When you **compare** accounts of the same topic, you are studying the writer's viewpoint. A **firsthand account** is written by someone who witnessed or took part in an event as it happened. Someone who heard or read about an event writes a **secondhand account**. You can compare the **information** or facts each writer chooses to emphasize.

I am going to write down everything I have seen so that I can remember it.

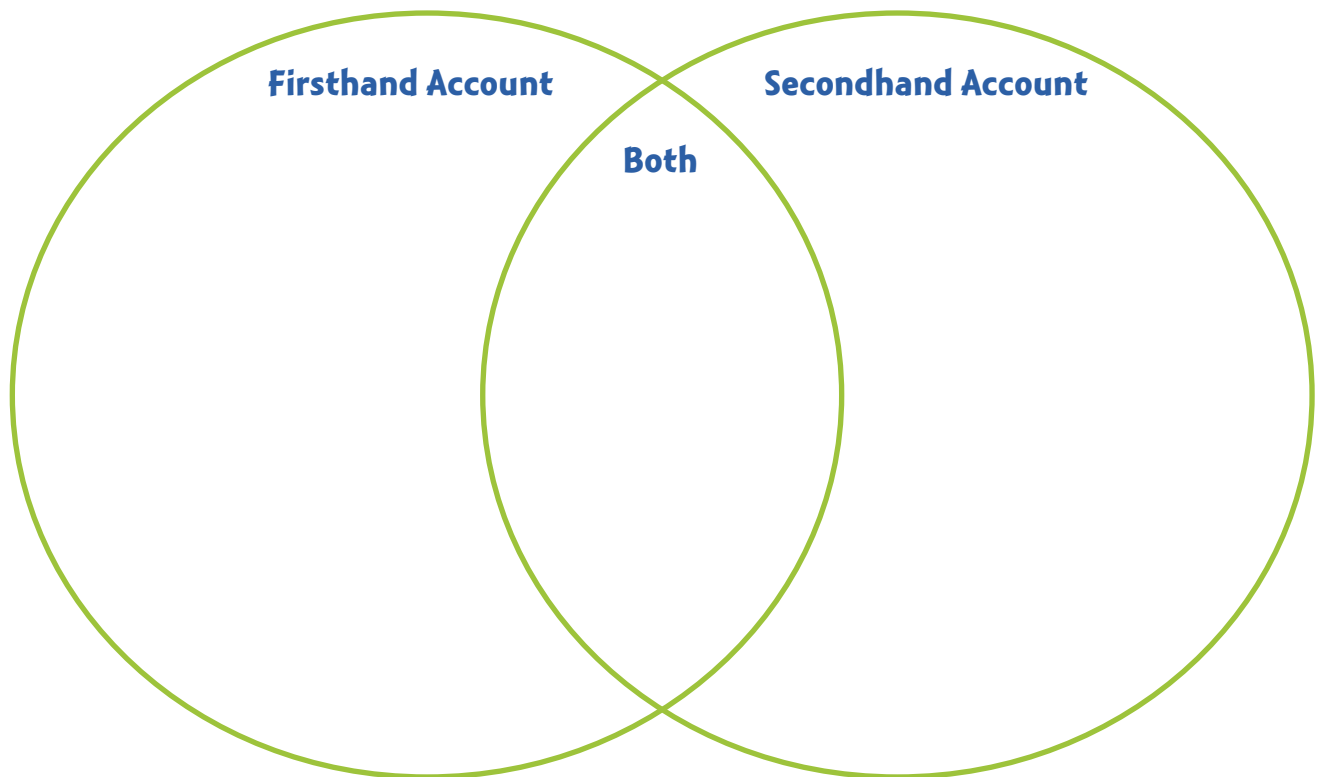
In 1900, a powerful hurricane wrecked the city of Galveston, Texas. It destroyed many homes. This boy watched the hurricane as it was happening. His description of the event would be a firsthand account that includes his thoughts and feelings. He wants to retell what he experienced.



I learned about the Galveston hurricane by reading a new book about it.

The girl was not in Galveston in 1900. She knows about the hurricane from reading a book written about it many years later. The book would be a secondhand account with a broader **focus**. It would include background information and other details from research.

- **Think** Consider everything you've learned so far about firsthand and secondhand accounts. How are they the same? How is the focus of each account different? Use the *Venn diagram* below to compare and **contrast** each type of account and organize your thinking.



- **Talk** Imagine that the boy and the girl write down their thoughts about the Galveston Hurricane of 1900. Based on the details in the cartoons, how would the two accounts be the same, and how would they be different?

**Academic Talk**

Use these words and phrases to talk about the text.

- firsthand account
- focus
- compare
- secondhand account
- information
- contrast

The Unsinkable *Titanic* by Julian Green

- 1 For more than a hundred years, the story of the *Titanic* has fascinated people. It was the largest passenger steamship ever built, already world-famous when it was launched. One magazine proudly called it “unsinkable.” But that pride would crumble on *Titanic*’s first voyage across the Atlantic Ocean.
- 2 There were 2,240 passengers and crew on that voyage. The ship left Southampton, England, on April 10, 1912. It was scheduled to reach New York City ten days later. But at 11:30 on the night of April 14, the *Titanic* hit an iceberg that tore open the ship’s massive hull. As the vessel took on water, it began to sink.
- 3 The ship’s captain told his radio operator to call for help. Then he ordered the crew to lower the lifeboats. In the panic, fleeing passengers launched most of the boats with several empty seats. By 2:20 the next morning, three hours after striking the iceberg, the *Titanic* had sunk. Another ship, the *Carpathia*, was 58 miles away when it received the distress call. The *Carpathia* rushed to rescue the survivors. Only 705 people were saved.
- 4 Newspaper headlines around the world announced the loss of the unsinkable ship. It quickly became the subject of countless books and films. In fact, the first *Titanic* movie appeared just a month later, starring one of the survivors. British and American officials tried to discover the causes of the disaster. They looked at everything, from the way the ship was built to the actions of the crew. In the end, the main lesson of the *Titanic* was that no ship is truly unsinkable.

Close Reader Habits

As you read, **underline** clues that tell you whether this is a firsthand or secondhand account.



Explore

How would a firsthand account and a secondhand account of the sinking of the *Titanic* differ?



In a firsthand account, a writer describes the experience. In a secondhand account, the writer focuses on reporting many different details about the event.

Think

- 1 Who would write a firsthand account about the sinking of the *Titanic*?

Who would write a secondhand account?

- 2 Reread the magazine article. Do you think this is a firsthand or secondhand account? Find evidence in the selection to support what you think.

Talk

- 3 Imagine that a passenger on the *Titanic* writes about that experience. What kind of account would that be? Discuss how that person's account would be similar to and different from the article you just read.



Write

- 4 **Short Response** How would the facts in paragraphs 2 and 3 of the passage differ if a passenger on the *Titanic* described the disaster? Use the space provided on page 250 to write your answer.

HINT What would stand out in a passenger's mind about that night?

The Sinking of the **Titanic**

by James McGough, in
*Sinking of the Titanic
and Great Sea Disasters*

1 As the life-boats pulled away the officers ordered the bands to play, and their music did much to quell panic. It was a heart-breaking sight . . . to see the great ship go down. First she listed to the starboard, on which side the collision had occurred, then she settled slowly but steadily, without hope of remaining afloat.



2 The *Titanic* was all aglow with lights as if for a function. First we saw the lights of the lower deck snuffed out. A while later and the second deck illumination was extinguished in a similar manner. Then the third and upper decks were darkened, and without plunging or rocking the great ship disappeared slowly from the surface of the sea. . . .

3 The sea was calm—calm as the water in a tumbler. But it was freezing cold. None had dressed heavily, and all, therefore, suffered intensely. The women did not shriek or grow hysterical while we waited through the awful night for help. We men stood at the oars, stood because there was no room for us to sit, and kept the boat headed into the swell to prevent her capsizing. Another boat was at our side, but all the others were scattered around the water.

4 Finally, shortly before 6 o'clock, we saw the lights of the *Carpathia* approaching. Gradually she picked up the survivors in the other boats and then approached us.

Close Reader Habits

How are the two accounts of the sinking different? Reread the article and the memoir. **Underline** details in the memoir that give facts not told in the article.



A memoir is usually a firsthand account of what the writer saw, felt, thought, and did. It often uses a personal tone.

Think

Use what you learned from reading the memoir and the article to answer the following questions.

- 1 The facts in the magazine article on page 246 came from earlier news reports and articles about the event. In the memoir on page 248, where did James McGough get his facts?
 - A He read about the events in the magazine article.
 - B He heard about the events from friends on the ship.
 - C He imagined the events and wrote a story about them.
 - D He experienced the events as they happened.
- 2 Which information did McGough give that was not in the article?
 - A The *Carpathia* traveled to the *Titanic*'s location.
 - B Passengers were put into lifeboats.
 - C The lights on the *Titanic* went out deck by deck.
 - D The *Titanic* sank into the ocean.
- 3 Which words and phrases are clues to McGough's feelings on the night that the *Titanic* sank? Write **two** clues in the box below.

Talk

- 4 How are the two accounts of the *Titanic* the same? How are they different? Use the Venn diagram on page 251 to organize your thoughts.

Write

- 5 **Short Response** Use the information in your Venn diagram to describe how the firsthand and secondhand accounts of the disaster are the same and different. Use the space provided on page 251 to write your answer.

HINT Choose a writing structure that shows similarities and differences.



The Unsinkable *Titanic*

4 Short Response How would the facts in paragraphs 2 and 3 of the passage differ if a passenger on the *Titanic* described the disaster?

HINT What would stand out in a passenger's mind about that night?

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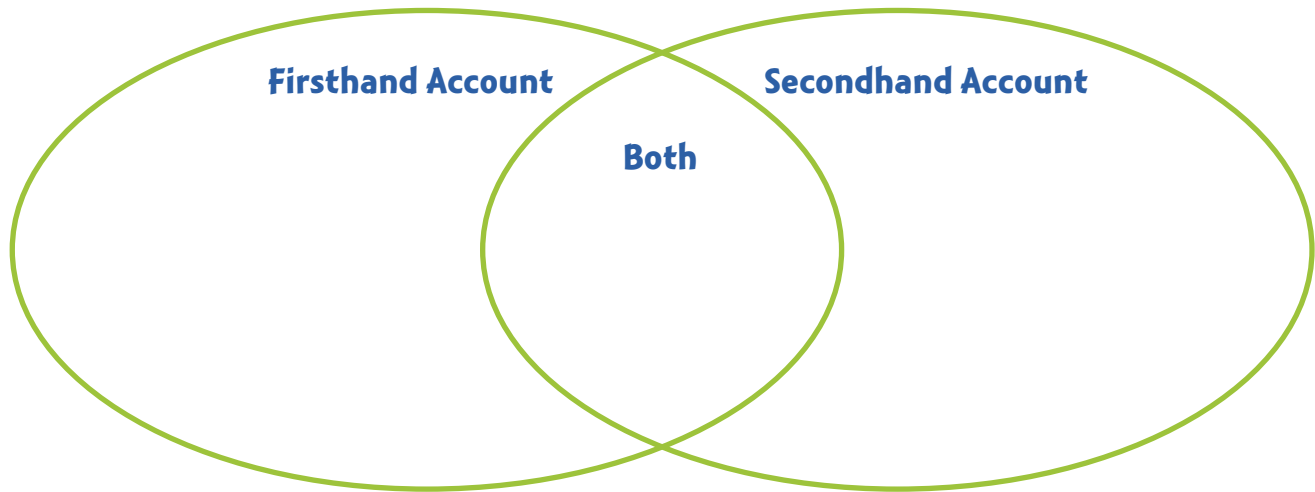
Don't forget to
check your writing.

Check Your Writing

- ☐ Did you read the prompt carefully?
- ☐ Did you put the prompt in your own words?
- ☐ Did you use the best evidence from the text to support your ideas?
- ☐ Are your ideas clearly organized?
- ☐ Did you write in clear and complete sentences?
- ☐ Did you check your spelling and punctuation?

The Sinking of the **Titanic**

- 4** Use the Venn diagram below to organize your ideas.



Write Use the space below to write your answer to the question on page 249.

- 5 Short Response** Use the information in your Venn diagram to describe how the firsthand and secondhand accounts of the disaster are the same and different.

HINT Choose a writing structure that shows similarities and differences.

WORDS TO KNOW

As you read, look inside, around, and beyond these words to figure out what they mean.

- **launch**
- **brilliant**
- **atmosphere**

To Space and Back

by Sally Ride

- 1 Launch minus 10 seconds . . . 9 . . . 8 . . . 7 . . . The three launch engines light. The shuttle shakes and strains at the bolts holding it to the launch pad. The computers check the engines. It isn't up to us anymore—the computers will decide whether we launch.
- 2 3 . . . 2 . . . 1 . . . The rockets light! The shuttle leaps off the launch pad in a cloud of steam and a trail of fire. Inside, the ride is rough and loud. Our heads are rattling around inside our helmets. We can barely hear the voices from Mission Control in our headsets above the thunder of the rockets and engines. For an instant I wonder if everything is working right. But there's no time to wonder, and no time to be scared.
- 3 In only a few seconds we zoom past the clouds. Two minutes later the rockets burn out, and with a brilliant whitish-orange flash, they fall away from the shuttle as it streaks on toward space. Suddenly the ride becomes very, very smooth and quiet. The shuttle is still attached to the big tank, and the launch engines are pushing us out of Earth's atmosphere. The sky is black. All we can see of the trail of fire behind us is a faint, pulsating glow through the top window.

- 4 Launch plus six minutes. The force pushing us against the backs of our seats steadily increases. We can barely move because we're being held in place by a force of 3 g's—three times the force of gravity we feel on Earth. At first we don't mind it—we've all felt much more than that when we've done acrobatics in our jet training airplanes. But that lasted only a few seconds, and this seems to go on forever. After a couple of minutes of 3 g's, we're uncomfortable, straining to hold our books on our laps and craning our necks against the force to read the instruments. I find myself wishing we'd hurry up and get into orbit.
- 5 Launch plus eight and one-half minutes. The launch engines cut off. Suddenly, the force is gone, and we lurch forward in our seats. During the next few minutes the empty fuel tank drops away and falls to Earth, and we are very busy getting the shuttle ready to enter orbit. But we're not too busy to notice that our books and pencils are floating in midair. We're in space!



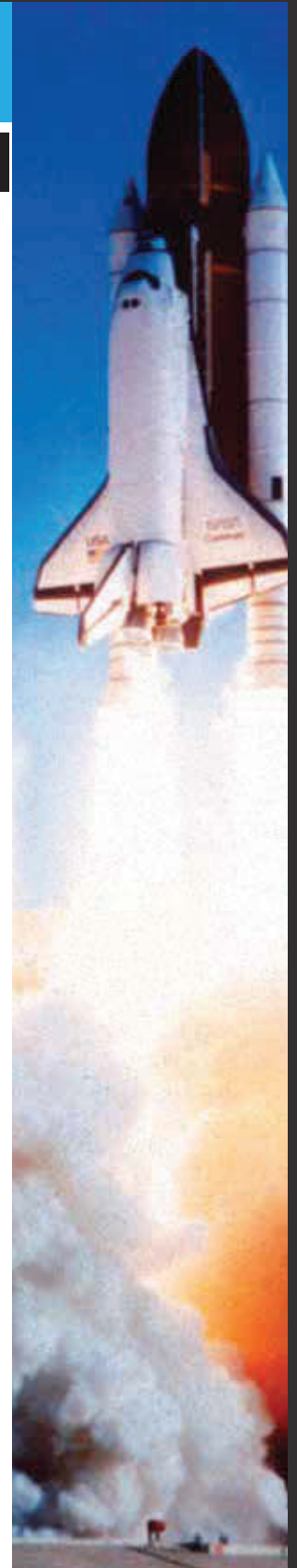
Sally Ride, the first American woman to go into space, shared her thoughts, feelings, and experiences in her memoir, *To Space and Back*.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

June 18, 1983

Memorable Milestones: Space Shuttle Missions

- 1 A crowd of about 250,000 gathered early that bright June morning at Cape Canaveral, Florida, many wearing “Ride, Sally Ride” T-shirts. Across the nation, many others also watched and waited. Suddenly, the engines ignited, and smoke and steam billowed across the site. Then booster rockets lifted the huge space shuttle slowly into the air. Gathering speed, the *Challenger* blasted off into orbit for its second mission.
- 2 At the same moment, one crew member, mission specialist Sally K. Ride, was rocketing into history. Ride was America’s first woman to travel into space. Sally Ride had earned the right to be aboard the space shuttle. A physicist, she had been in astronaut training for six years. She had also worked at Mission Control, relaying messages to shuttle crews during earlier shuttle flights. Ride had even helped develop a robotic arm to use in space. This knowledge and experience had led Captain Bob Crippen to choose her as a crew member. And Ride was ready for the challenge.
- 3 In just over eight minutes, launch engines were lifting *Challenger* to its 184-mile high orbit. During the ascent, Ride acted as flight engineer, calling out checklists to the pilots. She also joked with Mission Control about the exciting ride.
- 4 Once in orbit, the five astronauts wasted little time. In the busy days ahead, the crew completed a number of experiments. This included using radar and a high-resolution camera to study the earth’s atmosphere. Ride helped launch two communications satellites. She also became the first woman to operate the shuttle’s robotic arm by releasing a satellite into orbit.



 **Think**

Use what you learned from reading the memoir and the magazine article to respond to the following questions.

- 1** This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then answer Part B.

Part A

Which statement **best** describes the differences between the two accounts from *To Space and Back* and “Memorable Milestones: Space Shuttle Missions”?

- A** One is a news article. The other is from an eyewitness who watched the launch.
- B** Both are written by people who were at Cape Canaveral on June 18, 1983.
- C** One was written at the time of the launch. The other was written several years later.
- D** One is based only on facts. The other is based on facts and personal experience.

Part B

Write a sentence from each passage that supports your answer to Part A.

To Space and Back _____

“Memorable Milestones” _____

- 2** Which phrase from “Memorable Milestones: Space Shuttle Missions” helps the reader understand the meaning of the word ascent in paragraph 3?

- A** “ready for the challenge”
- B** “lifting *Challenger*”
- C** “acted as flight engineer”
- D** “Once in orbit”

- 3** Complete the chart to compare the different accounts of the same event. Write an X in the box next to a detail that describes *To Space and Back* or “Memorable Milestones: Space Shuttle Missions.” Some details may describe both accounts.

Statement	<i>To Space and Back</i>	“Memorable Milestones”
Describes the launch of a space shuttle		
Explains how the launch affects the author’s body		
Tells why the mission was unlike other missions		
Presents all events as taking place in the past		
Presents events as if they are taking place now		



Write

Describe the difference in focus between Sally Ride’s memoir and the account of the launch in “Mission Milestones.” Reread the two texts. Underline details that show the difference in the focus of each account.

- 4 Plan Your Response** How is the focus of Sally Ride’s memoir different from the focus of the magazine article? Use a Venn diagram to organize your thoughts before you write.
- 5 Write an Extended Response** Using evidence from the texts and information from your Venn diagram, describe how the focus of the firsthand and secondhand account is different.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no text or other markings on the paper.

Learning Target

Now that you've compared and contrasted different accounts about the same events, write about how you developed a deeper understanding of what happened.

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