

# Venn Diagrams

## Description

Venn diagrams are charts that have two or more overlapping circles for comparing and contrasting topics.

## Purpose

Students use Venn diagrams to compare and contrast topics by writing differences in the parts of the circles that do not overlap and similarities in the parts that do overlap. Teachers often use large Venn diagrams on chart paper to have the class work together. Students may also complete Venn diagrams individually on a sheet of paper. They are useful tools for encouraging students to think more analytically about what they are learning and/or reading.

## Connection to Inquiry and Standards:

Students organize information and make connections between different topics as they compare and contrast using a Venn diagram. Students form ideas and explanations as they make decisions about similarities and differences and how to arrange their data. Pennsylvania Standards for Reading/Writing/Speaking/Listening connections include 1.1 Learning to Read Independently and 1.3 Reading, Analyzing and Interpreting Literature (comprehension and interpretation), 1.5 Quality of Writing (organization), and 1.8 Research (organization). Standard 1.2 Reading Critically in All Content Areas is also addressed (comparison, analysis, and evaluation).

## Materials

A Venn diagram can easily be made by tracing coffee cans and overlapping them on a sheet of paper. Students can make their own if they have a compass or something circular to trace. Teachers may want to have a Venn diagram on butcher paper for the entire class to work on together.

## Procedure

Begin by discussing the similarities and differences of two topics with students. Write topics to compare at the top of the circles. Write words and phrases or draw pictures to represent the differences between the two topics in the outer parts of the two circles. Then, have students write and draw about the similarities in the overlapping part of the circles. Summarize the information in the Venn diagram. Students should be supported in interpreting the information.

## Resources

Tompkins, Gail E. (1998). 50 Literacy Strategies: Step by Step. Columbus, OH: Merrill.

# Venn Diagram

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

