

Name _____

Date _____

Compare and Contrast Details

Detail overlaps and variances refer to comparing information across multiple texts on the same topic. Overlaps are details that appear consistently in different sources, suggesting reliability. Variances are differences in details, which may indicate bias, perspective differences, or errors. Critical readers identify both overlaps and variances to evaluate source credibility, recognize different viewpoints, and develop a complete understanding of complex topics.

Read the following two accounts of the same historical event and answer the questions.

The Great Storm of 1878

September 12, 1878

The most destructive storm in Millfield's history struck our town without warning. The barometer fell rapidly around noon, and by two o'clock, fierce winds of at least 70 miles per hour tore through the valley. The storm lasted approximately six hours, during which the Millfield River rose nearly fifteen feet above its usual level.

The flood waters destroyed seventeen homes and damaged the town's flour mill beyond repair. Most tragically, the collapse of the old wooden bridge resulted in the deaths of the Miller family—James, Elizabeth, and their young son Thomas—who were attempting to reach higher ground when the structure gave way.

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The community rallied in the aftermath, with the church serving as a shelter for twenty-six displaced families. Mayor Thompson organized recovery efforts, and within three months, a new stone bridge was constructed. The state legislature provided \$5,000 in aid, which proved crucial for rebuilding the town center.

Account B:

Remembering the Flood

September 15, 1878

It has been three days since the terrible storm swept through our valley. I have never witnessed such destruction in my forty-two years. The sky turned an eerie green before the winds came, and many now say this was an omen we should have heeded.

Father estimates the winds reached 80 miles per hour or more, as they were strong enough to lift Mr. Peterson's wagon and carry it nearly fifty yards. The rain fell in sheets so thick one could barely see across the street. By nightfall, the river had become a roaring monster, swallowing everything in its path.

Poor James Miller and his family perished when the bridge collapsed. Elizabeth might have survived had she not turned back to help little Thomas, who was only seven years old. The entire town attended their funeral yesterday at the church, which has become home to so many who lost everything.

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Mayor Thompson has been working tirelessly, though some criticize him for not having reinforced the bridge last spring when Engineer Davis recommended it. The \$5,000 promised by the state seems hardly enough to rebuild all that we have lost.

1. Identify two details that appear in both accounts of the storm.

2. What information about the Miller family is included in Account B that is not mentioned in Account A?

3. How do the two accounts differ in their portrayal of Mayor Thompson?

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Compare and Contrast Details – Answer Key

1. Identify two details that appear in both accounts of the storm.

Both accounts mention the deaths of the Miller family when the bridge collapsed, and both note that the state provided \$5,000 in aid for rebuilding efforts after the storm.

2. What information about the Miller family is included in Account B that is not mentioned in Account A?

Account B provides the age of Thomas Miller (seven years old) and explains that Elizabeth Miller might have survived if she hadn't turned back to help her son during the bridge collapse.

3. How do the two accounts differ in their portrayal of Mayor Thompson?

Account A portrays Mayor Thompson positively as organizing recovery efforts, while Account B suggests some controversy, noting that "some criticize him for not having reinforced the bridge" despite earlier recommendations.