

2. Similarities and differences

To understand things around us, it helps to think about how they are alike, and how they are different. This is called “comparing and contrasting.” One way to show this visually is with a chart which shows how two things “have some things in common”— they share some characteristics or ways they are alike — but also have differences.

When describing these differences, look for things that are meaningful. The letter that the words begin with is not a good choice; what the things are used for is much better. It’s also better to compare the same kinds of information. If you state that baseball is often shown on television, and that basketball is played indoors, I don’t know whether baseball is played indoors or if basketball is on television, so I don’t know if these are differences or similarities.

Examples:

- socks and shoes
- baseball and basketball
- books and movies
- pens and pencils
- Quidditch and soccer
- Snape and McGonagall
- Gryffindor and Slytherin
- Peeves and Nearly Headless Nick
- History of Magic class and Potions class

After organizing similarities and differences into a chart, you can then make a Venn diagram, where two circles overlap. The similarities are listed in the overlapping section, while the differences are written in the outside parts. This type of diagram is a simple visual way of showing an abstract relationship.

Baseball and basketball

similarities:

often shown on television at professional level
one team plays against another team
being a fast runner is good for both!

differences:

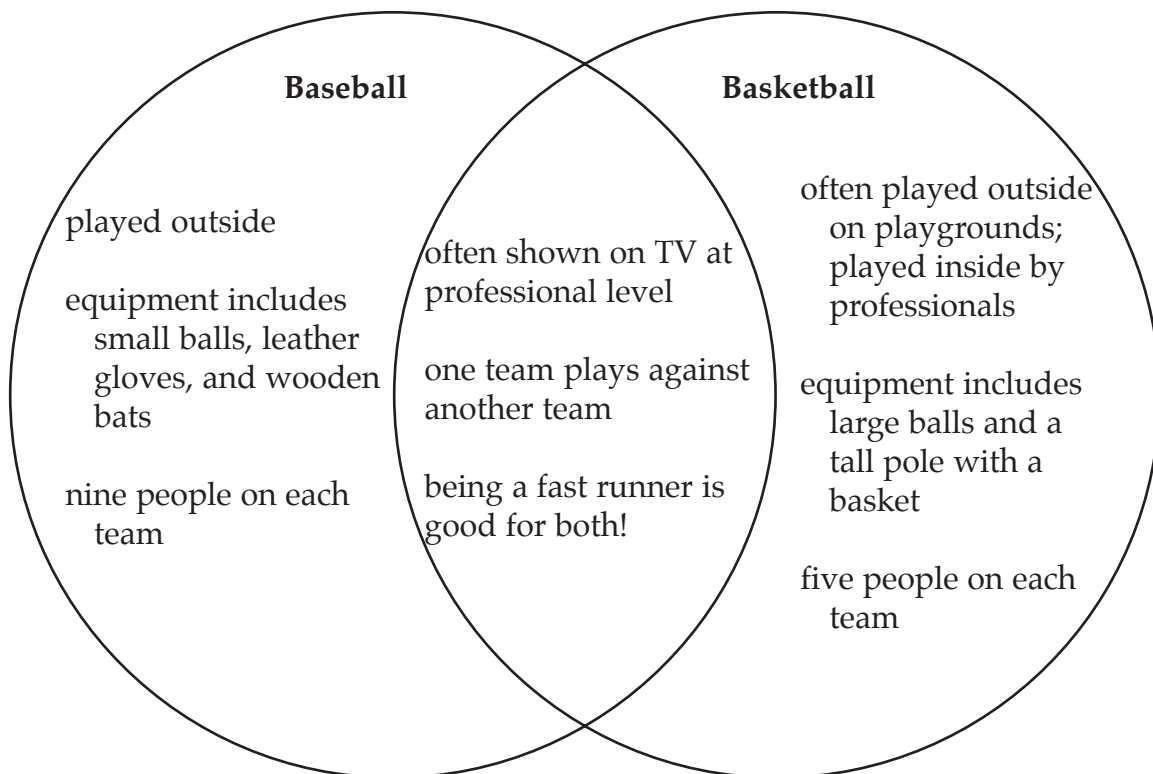
Baseball

played outside

equipment includes small balls, leather gloves and wooden bats
nine people on each team

Basketball

often played outside on playgrounds;
played inside by professionals
equipment includes large balls and a tall pole with a basket
five people on each team



Choose three of the other examples on page 73 and make your own charts to show similarities and differences.

similarities:

differences:

