

How to Answer Question 7: What Comparisons does the Author Use?

Another notable technique for explaining and emphasizing is comparison.

1. Read the study passage again, looking for **verbs of being** (*is, are, was, were, will be, etc.*) used to compare one concept to another. These can be:
 - **exact comparisons**
example: [wisdom] *is a tree of life* (Prov 3:18).
The verb of being (*is*) indicates **all the attributes of the second item** (*tree of life*) **are also present in the first** (*wisdom*).
 - **qualitative or quantitative comparisons**
example: *it is more blessed to give than to receive* (Acts 20:35)
The first item is **either better or worse (quality) or more or less (quantity)** than the second.
 - **approximate comparisons**
example: *The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field* (Matt 13:44).
example: *light is as thick darkness* (Job 10:22).
example: *who was as strong as the oaks* (Amos 2:9).
example: *be wise as serpents* (Matt 10:16).
The concepts in these examples **are alike in some ways, but different in others.**
 - **contrasts**
example: *The free gift is not like the trespass* (Romans 5:15).
These **ideas are dissimilar.**
2. Look for **verb-phrase comparisons using as... so**
example: *As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul* (Psalm 42:1).
3. Look for **words of exception—*but, although, however, yet***—to find other contrasts.
example: *When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with the humble is wisdom* (Prov 11:2).
4. Record the comparisons and contrasts you discover in your notes or on your study sheets. I write them like this:
 - **exact comparisons:** concept = concept
example: *wisdom = a tree of life*
 - **qualitative or quantitative comparisons:** concept > or < attribute concept
example: *to give > blessed to receive*

- **approximate comparisons:** concept ≈ concept
example: *The kingdom of heaven ≈ treasure hidden in a field.*
example: *light ≈ thick darkness.*
example: *who was strong ≈ the oaks*
example: *be wise ≈ serpents*
- **contrasts:** concept ≠ concept
example: *The free gift ≠ the trespass*

Hints & Hacks

- Carefully examine **discussions of characters** you marked or profiled for Question 3 and the **concepts** you discovered with Question 6; writers sometimes use comparison and contrast to better describe these people or things.
- Note everything you find, even if the comparison doesn't make sense. Future questions will help clarify what you've discovered.