

Brainstorm and rank comparing/ contrasting phrases

Try to fill the gaps below with as many phrases as you can, putting them in order. If you think they are the same, put them next to each other (like the examples given below).

1. Answers to “How similar are they?”/ “How different are they?”

- absolutely identical/ exactly the same
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
- completely different/ totally different

2. Answers to “How much... er is it (than...)?”/ “How much more... is it (than...)?”

- much much longer/ very much longer/ far far longer
-
-
-
-
-
-
- a tiny bit longer

3. Answers to “How much of a difference is there?”

- an absolutely huge difference
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
- an absolutely tiny difference

4. Answers to “The longest by how much?”

- by far the longest/ the longest by far
-
-
-
-
-
- the longest, but only just

Mixed up answers

Use the words below to help with the task above. It might be possible to put a word in more than one place above, but most only fit in one place. Most need to be combined with words above or other words below to make whole phrases. Some have the same meaning, so should go next to each other above.

- a good deal
- a great deal
- a little
- almost
- almost completely
- almost exactly
- basically
- big
- but not by much
- by a considerable margin
- by a substantial margin
- considerable
- considerably
- fairly
- far
- huge
- large
- major
- minor
- much
- nearly
- only very slightly
- practically
- quite a lot
- rather
- similar
- small
- somewhat
- substantial
- substantially
- tiny
- very
- very minor
- very nearly
- very small
- virtually

Suggested answers

Other answers and rankings are possible, so please check with your teacher if you wrote something different and/ or in a different position. However, the ones in italics with “NOT” and “X” below are not correct.

1. Answers to “How similar are they?”/ “How different are they?”

- **absolutely identical/ exactly the same**
- very nearly the same/ only very slightly different/ almost exactly the same/ almost identical/ virtually identical
- practically the same/ basically the same/ almost the same/ nearly the same/ only slightly different
- remarkably similar/ surprisingly similar
- very similar
- rather similar
- fairly similar
- very different
- almost completely different
- **completely different/ totally different**

NOT almost similar X slightly the same X very identical X a little similar X

2. Answers to “How much... er is it (than...)?”/ “How much more... is it (than...)?”

- **much much longer/ very much longer/ far far longer**
- a great deal longer/ far longer/ much longer
- considerably longer/ substantially longer/ a good deal longer
- quite a lot longer
- somewhat longer
- a little longer/ slightly longer
- **a tiny bit longer**

NOT quite longer X

3. Answers to “How much of a difference is there?”

- **an absolutely huge difference**
- a huge difference
- a large difference/ a big difference/ a major difference
- a substantial difference/ a considerable difference
- a small difference/ a minor difference
- a very small difference/ a very minor difference
- a tiny difference
- **an absolutely tiny difference**

4. Answers to “The longest by how much?”

- **by far the longest/ the longest by far**
- the longest by a substantial margin/ the longest by a considerable margin
- the longest, but not by much
- **the longest, but only just**

NOT much the longest X far the longest X slightly the longest X

Try to agree on comparisons using as many different lines above as you can.