

“Borders” by Thomas King vs. “Everyday Use” by Alice Walker

Students will compare and contrast excerpts from each short story to explore the theme of cultural identity



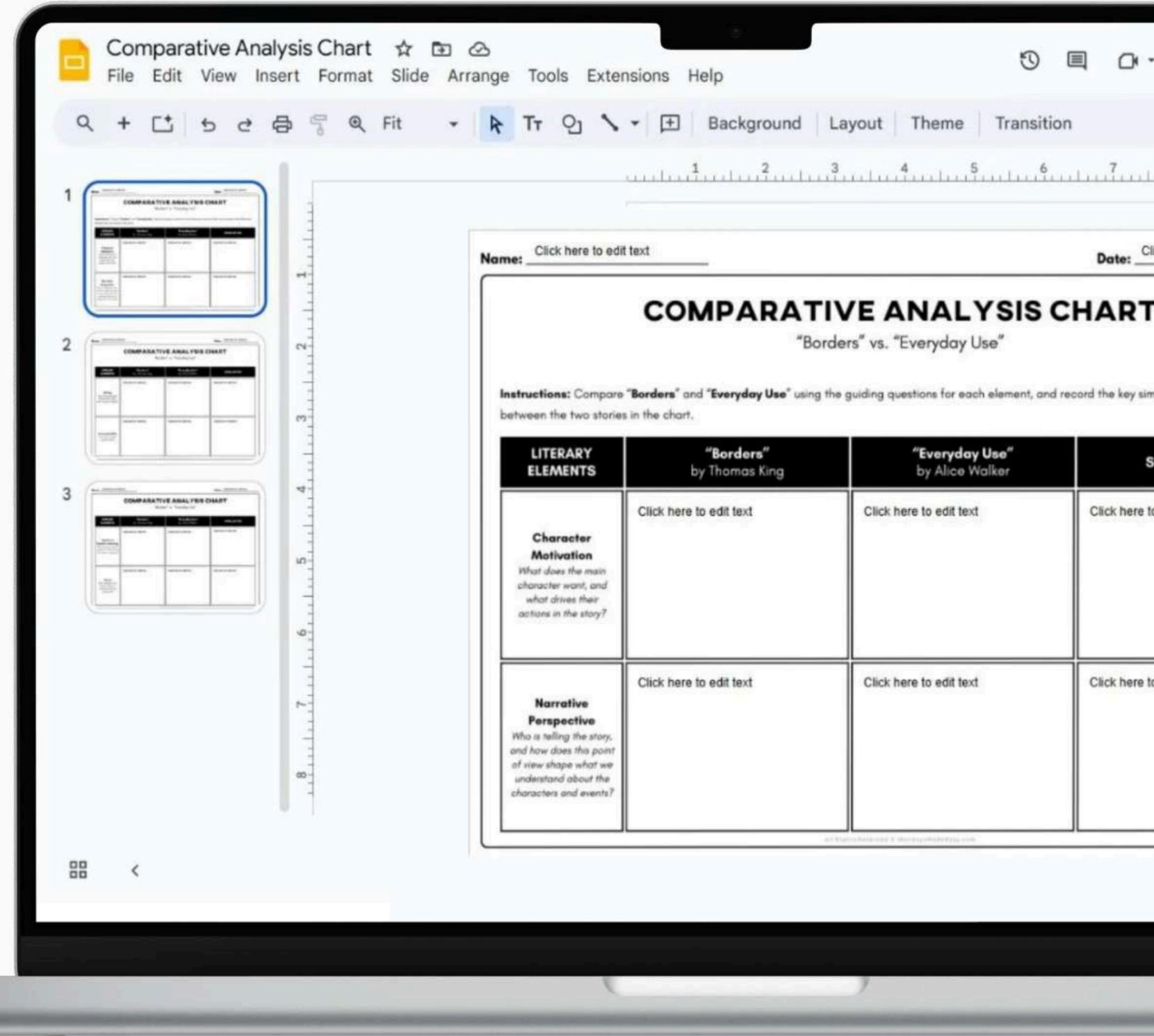
- **Guide comparative literary analysis** with structured organizers that support side-by-side evaluation of character, conflict, and representations of identity.
- **Build contextual understanding** using author biographies that connect cultural background to themes of heritage, pride, and belonging.
- **Strengthen critical thinking** through close-reading and reflection tasks that examine excerpts, literary elements, and authorial influence on meaning.

Explore personal and cultural identity with this activity!

PURCHASE HERE

Included with this resource:

- ✓ **Author Biographies** – Alice Walker and Thomas King
- ✓ Comparative Analysis **Graphic Organizer**
 - Guide students through a side-by-side comparison of key elements in “Borders” and “Everyday Use”
- ✓ Short Passage Excerpts **Analysis Worksheet**
- ✓ Story vs. Author **Reflection Worksheet**
 - Prompt deeper thinking
- ✓ **Student Examples** to Model Expectations
- ✓ **Teacher Instructions** for how to use this resource



Includes Digital Version for Google Drive®

Explore Personal and Cultural Identity Through Literary Analysis

Guide students through a comparative literary analysis and encourage thoughtful discussion about identity, culture, and perspective using two popular short stories for teens

Name: _____ Date: _____

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

"Borders" vs. "Everyday Use"

Author Information: Thomas King

Thomas King is an American-born, Canadian writer, scholar, and broadcaster known for his fiction, nonfiction, and commentary on Indigenous issues in North America. He was born in California and later immigrated to Canada, where he became a citizen and taught Native Studies at the University of Lethbridge for many years. King's academic work focused on Indigenous oral storytelling traditions, which strongly influenced his narrative style.



King writes across multiple genres, including novels, essays, short stories, radio scripts, and children's literature. His novel *Medicine River* portrays the everyday lives of modern Blackfoot community members and is known for its dialogue-driven, non-linear structure. He is also the author of *The Inconvenient Indian*, a widely read nonfiction work examining Indigenous history and representation.

In recent years, King has publicly shared that he does not have Indigenous ancestry, correcting a long-held belief about his family background. Despite this, his work remains influential for its critical examination of Indigenous representation, colonial history, and storytelling. King has received numerous honors, including the Governor General's Award and membership in the Order of Canada.

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Name: _____ Date: _____

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

"Borders" vs. "Everyday Use"

Author Information: Alice Walker

Alice Walker is an American novelist, poet, essayist, and activist, best known for her novel *The Color Purple*. She was born in Georgia and grew up in the racially segregated American South, experiences that strongly shaped her writing and worldview. Walker's work often explores themes of race, gender, identity, resilience, and social justice.



Walker is a prominent voice in contemporary American literature and has been deeply involved in civil rights and feminist movements. Her writing frequently centers on the lived experiences of Black women and highlights the effects of systemic racism and sexism. She is also credited with popularizing the term *womanism*, which emphasizes Black women's perspectives within feminist thought.

Throughout her career, Walker has written across genres, including fiction, poetry, and nonfiction essays. She has received numerous awards for her contributions to literature, including the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction. Her work continues to be widely studied for its emotional depth, cultural significance, and social impact.

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Includes Author Biographies for Thomas King and Alice Walker!

Compare and Contrast Key Elements

Students will examine similarities and differences in character motivations, conflicts, and the ways each story presents cultural belonging and identity

The screenshot shows a Beamer presentation slide with a title bar containing 'Comparative Analysis Chart', navigation icons, and a 'Share' button. The slide content includes a 'Name:' field, a 'Date:' field, and a table for analysis. The table has four columns: 'LITERARY ELEMENTS', '"Borders" by Thomas King', '"Everyday Use" by Alice Walker', and 'SIMILARITIES'. The rows are for 'Character Motivation' and 'Narrative Perspective'. Each cell contains a 'Click here to edit text' placeholder.

LITERARY ELEMENTS	"Borders" by Thomas King	"Everyday Use" by Alice Walker	SIMILARITIES
Character Motivation <i>What does the main character want, and what drives their actions in the story?</i>	Click here to edit text	Click here to edit text	Click here to edit text
Narrative Perspective <i>Who is telling the story, and how does this point of view shape what we understand about the characters and events?</i>	Click here to edit text	Click here to edit text	Click here to edit text

This thumbnail shows a 'Comparative Analysis Chart' with a table structure similar to the one in the Beamer slide. It includes fields for 'Name:' and 'Date:', and a table with columns for 'LITERARY ELEMENTS', '"Borders" by Thomas King', '"Everyday Use" by Alice Walker', and 'SIMILARITIES'. The rows are for 'Character Motivation' and 'Narrative Perspective'.

This thumbnail shows a 'Comparative Analysis Chart' with a table structure similar to the one in the Beamer slide. It includes fields for 'Name:' and 'Date:', and a table with columns for 'LITERARY ELEMENTS', '"Borders" by Thomas King', '"Everyday Use" by Alice Walker', and 'SIMILARITIES'. The rows are for 'Setting' and 'Theme'.

This thumbnail shows a 'Comparative Analysis Chart' with a table structure similar to the one in the Beamer slide. It includes fields for 'Name:' and 'Date:', and a table with columns for 'LITERARY ELEMENTS', '"Borders" by Thomas King', '"Everyday Use" by Alice Walker', and 'SIMILARITIES'. The rows are for 'Significant Symbol & Meaning' and 'Theme'.



Short Passage Excerpts Analysis Worksheets

Prompt students to analyze how literary elements like characterization and theme contribute to the authors' messages about identity.

The image displays four overlapping worksheets, each titled "SHORT PASSAGE EXCERPTS ANALYSIS" and comparing "Borders" by Thomas King and "Everyday Use" by Alice Walker. Each worksheet includes a "Name:" and "Date:" field at the top. The worksheets are organized into five thematic sections, each with a numbered arrow icon and a title:

- Section 1: IDENTITY CHOICES & PERSONAL AGENCY** (Passage 1)
- Section 2: CULTURE, COMMUNITY & BELONGING** (Passage 2)
- Section 3: POWER DYNAMICS & PERSONAL BOUNDARIES** (Passage 3)
- Section 4: PARENT-CHILD DYNAMICS & EMOTIONAL CONNECTIONS** (Passage 4)
- Section 5: VALUES, PRIDE & PERSONAL PRINCIPLES** (Passage 5)

Each section contains two columns of text excerpts from the stories, enclosed in quotation marks. Below the excerpts are three numbered questions with corresponding horizontal lines for student answers. For example, in Section 1, the questions are:

- How does each character assert control over how they are identified?
- In what ways do these identity choices challenge authority or tradition?
- What consequences follow from these choices in each text?

At the bottom of each worksheet, there is a small copyright notice: "All Rights Reserved © MondaysMadeEasy.com".

Includes excerpts from both short stories!

Story vs. Author Reflection Worksheet

Students will reflect on how the authors' personal backgrounds may (or may not) influence the meaning of the texts

Short Passage Excerpts Analysis

File Edit View Insert Format Slide Arrange Tools Extensions Help

Background Layout Theme Transition

SHORT PASSAGE EXCERPTS ANALYSIS
"Borders" vs. "Everyday Use"

Name: Click here to edit text Date: Click here to edit text

Instructions: Read the paired passages from "Borders" by Thomas King and "Everyday Use" by Alice Walker. Then, answer the questions that follow each pair. Use text evidence to support your analysis.

IDENTITY CHOICES & PERSONAL AGENCY

"Borders" by Thomas King

"Everyday Use" by Alice Walker

1 How does each character assert control over how they are identified?
Click here to edit text

2 In what ways do these identity choices challenge authority or tradition?
Click here to edit text

3 What consequences follow from these choices in each text?
Click here to edit text

Name: _____ Date: _____

STORY VS. AUTHOR REFLECTION SHEET

"Borders" vs. "Everyday Use"

Instructions: Answer the questions in complete sentences. Think carefully about the story's lessons, the author's background, and how comparing the two stories deepens your understanding of identity and cultural belonging.

1 One lesson or theme I learned from "Borders":

2 One lesson or theme I learned from "Everyday Use":

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Name: _____ Date: _____

STORY VS. AUTHOR REFLECTION SHEET

"Borders" vs. "Everyday Use"

3 Does knowing anything about Thomas King or Alice Walker's background change how you interpret these lessons? Why or why not?

4 Do an author's experiences matter when telling a story? Why or why not?

5 How can comparing these two stories help me better understand identity and cultural belonging?

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Example Answers Provided!