

Two Views, One Disaster

Compare how source and purpose shape an account.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.6 "Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Read the source note. Underline two details emphasized in each account, then circle a detail that reveals a different priority.

Two Accounts of the 1906 Disaster

- ① Source note: The April 18, 1906, San Francisco earthquake was followed by destructive fires and displacement. Paragraphs 2 and 3 are classroom paraphrases of identified sources, not quotations. Source A is Battalion Chief John J. Conlon's report of his own firefighting work, preserved by the San Francisco Fire Department Museum. Source B is the National Park Service's later public history article, "1906 Earthquake: Refugee Camps" (updated 2015). Compare the details these authors select; their accounts cover different parts of the same disaster.
- ② Source A: Conlon reports that damaged alarm boxes and a telephone could not be used. He describes broken water pipes and efforts to obtain enough water for firefighting. His crews used water from a vessel after other attempts failed. He also records an unsuccessful attempt to control how a building fell during demolition. He names locations, equipment, obstacles and actions. His report includes both useful improvisation and failure, rather than presenting the response as uniformly successful.
- ③ Source B: The National Park Service describes displaced residents establishing temporary camps. The Army managed 21 of the city's 26 official camps. The article emphasizes how routines emerged: children formed playgroups, and dining halls became gathering places. It then follows the move toward small wooden cottages as winter approached. Its account stretches beyond the immediate emergency to explain organized relief and the rebuilding of daily life.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

- 1** Compare the priorities of Conlon and the National Park Service. Support your comparison with one detail from each.

- 2** Why might a firsthand fire officer's report and a later public history select different details?

- 3** How does Conlon's inclusion of an unsuccessful action complicate a simple story of heroic success?

- 4** Does the emphasis on rebuilding daily life in Source B contradict the difficulties in Source A? Explain.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence comparison of the two authors. Name their perspectives, cite one detail from each, and explain how purpose or time span shapes their emphasis.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Read the source note. Underline two details emphasized in each account, then circle a detail that reveals a different priority. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Compare the priorities of Conlon and the National Park Service. Support your comparison with one detail from each.	Conlon emphasizes operational obstacles and responses, such as finding water. The Park Service emphasizes relief and returning routines, such as children forming playgroups.
2	Why might a firsthand fire officer's report and a later public history select different details?	The officer can account for his own decisions and difficulties; the later history can explain longer-term patterns of recovery to the public. Those purposes help explain their different selections.
3	How does Conlon's inclusion of an unsuccessful action complicate a simple story of heroic success?	It shows limits and mistakes alongside useful actions. His account therefore permits readers to examine practical difficulties rather than assume every response worked.
4	Does the emphasis on rebuilding daily life in Source B contradict the difficulties in Source A? Explain.	No. Both can be accurate: they focus on different activities and time spans. A later recovery pattern does not show that emergency firefighting was easy or uniformly successful.

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Conlon views the disaster through the practical demands of emergency response. His description of failed communications shows obstacles faced by responders. The Park Service views the aftermath through organized relief and recovering community routines. Its attention to later housing explains a longer process that Conlon's operational report does not emphasize.

Accept comparisons grounded in both supplied paraphrases; do not require students to invent motives. Source A: John J. Conlon, report preserved by Guardians of the City, guardiansofthecity.org/sffd/fires/great_fires/1906/conlon.html. Source B: National Park Service, "1906 Earthquake: Refugee Camps," nps.gov/prsf/learn/historyculture/1906-earthquake-relief-efforts-living-accommodations.htm. These are edited classroom paraphrases, not original quotations. Purpose statements in answers are supported interpretations. Compare authorial emphasis without treating omission as proof of indifference or a claim that the earthquake itself could be prevented.