

Annotating Groups of Comparisons: Guidelines

Different Kinds of Comparisons

A **comparison** is the act of evaluating two or more things by determining the relevant characteristics of each thing to be compared, and then determining which characteristics of each are similar to the other, which are different, and to what degree.

An **insulting comparison** is an expression which is disrespectful or scornful. An insulting comparison may be accurate, but at the same time abusive, such as the comparison You are like an inbred.

A (non-insulting) **negative comparison** either contains words that themselves have a negative meaning, or the wording of the comparison makes it clear that it is meant in a negative way. For the purposes of this survey, a negative comparison is also **not insulting**.

Insulting Comparisons vs. Negative Comparisons

Insulting Comparisons

The insulting comparisons presented in this task are **implicit insults**, which means that they do not contain explicitly insulting words but are still perceived as insults.

Examples are:

- *With your mouth open you look as intelligent as you are.*
- *With your weight you have to take 3 seats at the cinema.*
- *You look like a sticky frog.*
- *Your drawings have the charm of a car crash.*
- *Your mouth reminds me of a fish.*

Negative Comparisons

While insulting comparisons are a more specific type of negative expressions, for the purposes of this survey we label comparisons as negative comparisons **if they are negative but not actually insulting**. Often, this is the case for expressions which point out a negative trait in the addressed person, but are more of a **well-meaning criticism**, or an **expression of concern** on the speaker's part.

For example, if you come in to work and notice that your colleague is obviously very sick, you might wish to express your concern without insulting the colleague. You could say something like:

You look like death warmed up. You are as pale as a ghost.

These comparisons are negative, but they are not meant to be insulting. Rather, they express that the speaker has noticed something negative, but wishes to express concern by pointing it out.

Another example would be polite criticism of a colleague's slow progress at work. You would want to express your disappointment or frustration, without actually offending the other person. You could say something like:

Your progress is as slow as an iceberg. Your work is like a half-done cake.

Further examples are:

- *Your expression reminds me of a thunderstorm.*
- *With that dress, you look less beautiful than usual.*
- *Your self-confidence is as brittle as glass.*
- *You look like you have a case of the flu.*

Goal of the Survey

Your task is to look at groups of insulting comparisons and groups of negative comparisons, and identify comparisons that do not belong in a group. Each group is a list of 3-5 comparisons. Your task is to look at the given comparisons and decide whether each comparison is negative or insulting. Then you look at the whole group and their labels to decide whether one of them is "the odd one out", which makes the group **inconsistent**.

This means that in a **group of insulting comparisons**, there might be a **negative** comparison. An example of an **inconsistent group** would be:

A. Your lips are like limp, dead fish.

= **insulting**, because it means calling the addressed person's lips ugly or distasteful

B. Your lips are like slugs.

= **insulting**, because it means calling the addressed person's lips ugly or distasteful

C. Your lips are dry as a desert.

= **negative** and not insulting, because it expresses simple concern over the state of the addressed person's lips;

Comparison C does not belong into the group, because it has a different label.

In a **group of negative comparisons**, there might be an **insulting** comparison. An example of an **inconsistent group** would be:

A. You talk like someone who has been hurt by others.

= negative and not insulting, because it expresses concern over the addressed person

B. You talk like someone with lots on their mind.

= negative and not insulting, because it expresses concern or gentle criticism of the addressed person

C. You talk like a monkey with a mouth full of nuts.

= insulting, because it uses a drastic image that most people will find very disrespectful

Comparison C does not belong in the group, because it has a different label.

It is also possible that you think all members of a group belong together under the same label, because they are **all negative** comparisons or **all insulting** comparisons. In this case, **the group is consistent and you can select NONE** when you are asked if there is a comparison that does not belong.

We also ask you to label the whole group as either insulting comparisons or negative comparisons. If you have identified a comparison that does not fit, then disregard it when labelling the whole group.

Helpful Hints

The only thing that matters for deciding if a **group is consistent** is whether **all members are insulting**, or **all members are negative** comparisons. It does not matter how similar or dissimilar the words used in the group are.

For example:

A. Your eyes are as hard as granite.

B. Your face is like stone.

C. Your expression is like your pet has died.

This group is consistent, even though comparison A and B compare someone to stone/granite, and comparison C is about a dead pet. All that matters is that **all comparisons are negative. None of them are insulting.**

Another example:

A. Your presence is like a stabbing pain in my eye.

B. You make me feel like I'm wearing a straight jacket.

C. You remind me of finely aged feces.

This group is also consistent, even though the comparisons A,B and C use very different words and compare different aspects of a person. **All that matters is that all comparisons are insulting. None of them are negative.**