

Citing Evidence to Make Inferences

Theme: *The Competitive Spirit*

When you **analyze** something, you examine its parts to see how they work together. For example, you might analyze how the parts of a bicycle work to help a person move forward.

Reading involves analyzing, too. When you analyze a text, you sometimes look at what the text says **explicitly**, or directly. “The crowd clapped and cheered wildly when the home team won” is an example of explicit information because you know what happened and why. Other times, though, you must make an inference to figure out what the text is really saying. An **inference** is a reasonable guess based on textual evidence and what you already know.

Find the slowest runner in the picture below. Is he sad about losing? How can you tell?



Circle details in the picture that support an inference that the runner isn’t sad about losing. Then complete the chart below to describe what details support this inference.

Text Evidence	+ Background Knowledge =	Inference
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The expression on the runner’s face is _____. This runner says _____. 	<p>A person who loves a sport also enjoys participating in it.</p>	<p>The runner is just happy to compete. Competing is more important to him than winning.</p>

To get the most out of your reading, you must analyze texts to understand what they say directly and make inferences about what they say indirectly. When you find evidence to make and support inferences, you’ll find you won’t get stuck as often trying to figure out what a text is saying—like when a bike is stuck in gear and can’t move forward.



Read the first three paragraphs of an article that showcases Michael Jordan.

Genre: Article

The Flu Game *by Maureen McBride*

Game 5 of the 1997 basketball playoffs should have been the game that the Chicago Bulls lost. It should, in fact, have marked the Utah Jazz’s first NBA championship win. Michael Jordan, the Bulls’ star player, had spent the previous 24 hours bedridden and dehydrated with what doctors had diagnosed as the stomach flu. He had lost weight and had missed two key days of practice leading up to the game. It was a recipe for disaster.

But three hours before the start of Game 5, the best player in the history of basketball suited up and appeared on the court.

Though Jordan was visibly weak in the first quarter, he had scored 17 points by the second, putting the Bulls ahead at half time. However, while Jordan spent the third quarter overcome by nausea and fatigue, Utah managed to reclaim the lead.

(continued)

Explore how to answer these questions: “What is Michael Jordan’s attitude toward competition? What text evidence supports your idea?”

Michael Jordan’s attitude is not stated, so you must use evidence in the text to infer what he thinks.

Look for evidence of Jordan’s feelings about competition. One detail is shown in the chart below. Write another detail in column 1. Use this information to complete the inference in the last column.

Text Evidence	+	Background Knowledge	=	Inference
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jordan was diagnosed with the flu before Game 5. . 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jordan’s team depended on him greatly. Playing sports while sick requires determination. 		<p>Michael believes that competition</p> <p>_____.</p>

What text evidence supports the inference that Michael Jordan is a fierce competitor? With a partner, find evidence in the article that supports your answer, and write it on the lines below.



Close Reading

Which sentence best shows that Jordan is a talented player? Find and **underline** a sentence on this page showing this.

Hint

Look for the choice that shows Jordan’s talent, not his dedication or his luck.

Continue reading about Michael Jordan in “The Flu Game.” Use the Close Reading and the Hint to help you answer the question.

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“In the third quarter, I felt like I couldn’t catch my wind,” Jordan said. “I was just trying to get myself through it.”

In the fourth quarter, Jordan scored 18 more points. Then, with only 25 seconds left in the game, he scored a 3-point shot, and the Bulls beat the Jazz by only two points. At the end of the game, Jordan collapsed into the arms of his teammate Scottie Pippen.

“I almost played myself into passing out just to win a basketball game,” Jordan admitted later. “If we had lost, I would have been devastated.”

Circle the correct answer.

Which sentence from the passage best supports the idea that Michael Jordan is a talented basketball player?

- A** “‘In the third quarter, I felt like I couldn’t catch my wind,’ Jordan said. ‘I was just trying to get myself through it.’”
- B** “In the fourth quarter, Jordan scored 18 more points.”
- C** “Then, with only 25 seconds left in the game, he scored a 3-point shot, and the Bulls beat the Jazz by only two points.”
- D** “‘I almost played myself into passing out just to win a basketball game,’ Jordan admitted later.”



Show Your Thinking

Michael Jordan is a dedicated basketball player. Find and write down a sentence from the passage that supports this statement. Then explain your answer.



With a partner, make an inference about why Michael Jordan collapsed into Scottie Pippen’s arms. Support your inference with evidence from the text and background knowledge.



Read the following historical account. Use the Study Buddy and the Close Reading to guide your reading.

Genre: Historical Account



As I read, I'll look for evidence that tells more about each explorer. Then I can make inferences about what each one was like.

Close Reading

What factors led to Scott's failure? **Underline** details from the text that show the kind of trouble he and his men ran into.

What did Amundsen have going for him that Scott did not? **Circle** details that show Amundsen's advantages.

Race to Reach the South Pole: Scott vs. Amundsen *by Alarik Fjelstad*

- 1 In 1911, Englishman Robert Falcon Scott and Norwegian Roald Amundsen raced to reach the South Pole first. Scott, captain of the *Terra Nova*, had nearly made it to the South Pole seven years earlier. He was confident he would succeed this time. Scott publicly announced that he would be using the latest in technology: motor sleds. He recruited scientists, sailors, and even a paying guest who insisted on bringing ponies to the coldest place on Earth.
- 2 Amundsen worried that competitors might try to prevent his attempt to reach the South Pole. He refused to share his dream with anyone, including his shipmates. Amundsen finally told his men where they were going midway through the Atlantic. Though he told them they could quit, they decided to continue the journey with him. They were all veteran Arctic explorers trained to use skis and sled dogs. At this time, Amundsen sent Scott an unsettling telegram telling him he was on his way to Antarctica.
- 3 Both vessels landed in Antarctica in January of 1911, but Amundsen set up his base camp deep inland on ice, while Scott made camp at the shoreline. With expert planning, Amundsen and his crew arrived at the South Pole with sled dogs on December 15, 1911. Meanwhile, Scott's motor sleds failed to work in the minus 40 degree Celsius cold, and the ponies died and were eaten by Scott's crew. Scott arrived at the Pole 33 days after Amundsen and was shocked to find the Norwegian flag. Disillusioned and weak, Scott and his men died of starvation on the return trip, just 11 miles from their nearest supply station.



Hints

Which choice provides evidence that Amundsen was not very trusting?

Think about what finally happened to Scott and his men. Which choice explains their fate?

What did Amundsen have in his favor that Scott did not? Think about his shipmates and forms of transportation.

Use the Hints on this page to help you answer the questions.

1 A student makes the following inference about Captain Amundsen:

Amundsen was a very secretive person.

Which sentence from the text best supports this inference?

- A** "... Amundsen set up his base camp deep inland on ice, while Scott made camp at the shoreline."
- B** "Amundsen finally told his men where they were going midway through the Atlantic."
- C** "At this time, Amundsen sent Scott an unsettling telegram telling him he was on his way to Antarctica."
- D** "Scott arrived at the Pole 33 days after Amundsen and was shocked to find the Norwegian flag."

2 Based on the text, which of the following statements explains why Scott and his men were unsuccessful?

- A** Scott and his men were not truly prepared for the trip's hardships.
- B** Scott planned to use outdated technology on the trip.
- C** The English expedition camped at the shoreline instead of inland.
- D** They were unfamiliar with the challenge of Arctic exploration.

3 Explain why Amundsen succeeded. Include at least two details from the text that support your inference about what led to his success.



Read this excerpt from a back-to-school speech. Then answer the questions that follow.

from “The President’s Speech to Students”

by President Barack Obama

1 You’re this country’s future. You’re young leaders. And whether we fall behind or race ahead as a nation is going to depend in large part on you. So I want to talk to you a little bit about meeting that responsibility.

2 It starts, obviously, with being the best student that you can be. Now, that doesn’t always mean that you have to have a perfect score on every assignment. It doesn’t mean that you’ve got to get straight As all the time—although that’s not a bad goal to have. It means that you have to stay at it. You have to be determined and you have to persevere. It means you’ve got to work as hard as you know how to work. And it means that you’ve got to take some risks once in a while. You can’t avoid the class that you think might be hard because you’re worried about getting the best grade if that’s a subject that you think you need to prepare you for your future. You’ve got to wonder. You’ve got to question. You’ve got to explore. And every once in a while, you need to color outside of the lines.

3 That’s what school is for: discovering new passions, acquiring new skills, making use of this incredible time that you have to prepare yourself and give yourself the skills that you’re going to need to pursue the kind of careers that you want. And that’s why when you’re still a student you can explore a wide range of possibilities. One hour you can be an artist; the next, an author; the next, a scientist, or a historian, or a carpenter. This is the time where you can try out new interests and test new ideas. And the more you do, the sooner you’ll figure out what makes you come alive, what stirs you, what makes you excited—the career that you want to pursue....

4 So that’s a big part of your responsibility, to test things out. Take risks. Try new things. Work hard. Don’t be embarrassed if you’re not good at something right away. You’re not supposed to be good at everything right away. That’s why you’re in school. The idea, though, is that you keep on expanding your horizons and your sense of possibility. Now is the time for you to do that. And those are also, by the way, the things that will make school more fun.

5 Down the road, those will be the traits that will help you succeed, as well—the traits that will lead you to invent a device that makes an iPad look like a stone tablet. Or what will help you figure out a way to use the sun and the wind to power a city and give us new energy sources that are less polluting. Or maybe you’ll write the next great American novel....

6 But I also want to emphasize this: With all the challenges that our country is facing right now, we don’t just need you for the future; we actually need you now. America needs young people’s passion and their ideas. We need your energy right now. I know you’re up to it because I’ve seen it. Nothing inspires me more than knowing that young people all across the country are already making their marks. They’re not waiting. They’re making a difference now....



7 There are students like Will Kim from Fremont, California, who launched a nonprofit that gives loans to students from low-income schools who want to start their own business. Think about that. So he's giving loans to other students. He set up a not-for-profit. He's raising the money doing what he loves—through dodgeball tournaments and capture-the-flag games. But he's creative. He took initiative. And now he's helping other young people be able to afford the schooling that they need...

8 The point is you don't have to wait to make a difference. Your first obligation is to do well in school. Your first obligation is to make sure that you're preparing yourself for college and career. But you can also start making your mark right now. A lot of times young people may have better ideas than us old people do anyway. We just need those ideas out in the open, in and out of the classroom...

9 When I meet young people like yourselves, when I sit and talk to [a student at this school], I have no doubt that America's best days are still ahead of us, because I know the potential that lies in each of you. Soon enough, you will be the ones leading our businesses and leading our government. You will be the one who are making sure that the next generation gets what they need to succeed. You will be the ones that are charting the course of our unwritten history. And all that starts right now—starts this year...

1 Which of these statements is **not** supported by the remarks made in President Obama's speech?

- A** Work hard in school and try out new possibilities.
- B** While in school, acquire a variety of skills and interests.
- C** Figure out different ways to become energetic leaders.
- D** Explore a wide range of ideas and career options.



2 This question has two parts. Answer Part A, and then answer Part B.

Part A

What is President Obama’s opinion about students as it is expressed in the speech?

- A** They should focus on getting good grades.
- B** They should focus on one subject or goal.
- C** They should take responsibility for their futures.
- D** They should help older people make decisions.

Part B

Underline **one** sentence from the passage that **best** supports the answer in Part A.

That’s what school is for: discovering new passions, acquiring new skills, making use of this incredible time that you have to prepare yourself and give yourself the skills that you’re going to need to pursue the kind of careers that you want. And that’s why when you’re still a student you can explore a wide range of possibilities. One hour you can be an artist; the next, an author; the next, a scientist, or a historian, or a carpenter. This is the time where you can try out new interests and test new ideas. And the more you do, the sooner you’ll figure out what makes you come alive, what stirs you, what makes you excited. . . .

3 Read the statement below, and then answer the question that follows it.

President Obama believes that creativity is a valuable trait for people to have.

Explain how you can tell that the above statement is true. Write a paragraph responding to this question. Use at least **two** details from the passage to support your response.



Self Check

Go back and see what you can check off on the Self Check on page 2.