



Learning Project **6** Finding Details Supported by the Text

Inquiry Activity 6-1: Finding Supporting Details

In both the Science and Social Studies PA tests, one short passage with one question (no graphic) requires learners to find the details in the passage to support the answer choice.

We strongly recommend that your learners do Reading IA 1-1, “Understanding the GED Questions,” prior to this activity. Reading IA 1-1 has examples of finding supporting details.

(Note: Italicized portions should be directed to the students.)

1. Identifying the Problem (Item 10 Science PA)

Look at the item.

What must you do in order to answer the question correctly?

Where else have you seen questions like this?

What will you have to do to be successful in this Activity?

Get down your thoughts, or share them with your partner.

10. The living cells that conduct food and water up and down through the trunk of a tree are located in a relatively thin layer just under the bark. The center part of the trunk contains old, dead cells.

If it were necessary to kill a mature tree, which of the following methods would be most effective?

- (1) Saw a deep cut about halfway into the trunk on one side.
- (2) Remove most of the center of the trunk through a small opening.
- (3) Drive a steel spike through the bark to the center of the trunk.
- (4) Bore a hole through the center of the trunk.
- (5) Cut a deep groove below the bark around the tree trunk.

2. Becoming Familiar with the Problem

Scan the question, and ask yourself questions like the following as your first step to identifying the question.

Is there anything in the question you do not understand?

Have you ever planted or cut down a tree?

Have you ever thought about how to kill a mature tree before?

What do you think “finding supporting details” means?



3. Planning, Assigning, and Performing Tasks

Planning: *You may decide to work by yourself, in a pair, or a small group to do this Activity.*

This IA is best done in pairs or small groups.

Assigning: *Decide with your partner or in your group how you will carry out the task of answering the question.*

Doing the Work: *As you read the question, do the following:*

Scan the passage; find and mark any words you might not know. See if the passage gives you enough information to clarify the meaning of the words. If not, ask someone or look up what the words mean.

Read the answer choices for the question. Find the exact words in the passage that provide the answer. What word or words in the answer choices come closest to the topic of the reading passage.

Living cells...a relatively thin layer just under the bark

You may prefer using the graphic organizer (also used in IA 2-3, "Understanding Charts and Diagrams") or drawing a sketch for this step. Determine which answer choice is correct.

Choice (5) specifies a groove below the bark around the tree trunk. Three of the other choices refer to the center of the tree, which the passage tells us is dead cells. The other choice indicates a cut halfway through the tree. It might kill the tree also, but not as quickly (effectively).

What words used in the question tell you what kind of question it is?

The question asks for a fact.

4. Sharing with Others

Telling people what you know helps you understand the material better. Take this opportunity not only to share the knowledge, but also to learn it more completely.

Small groups: *Compare the answer you found with others in the group. Discuss the methods you used to find the answer, the support for your answer in the passage, and the reasons each learner thinks his/her answer and support are correct.*

Agree on the correct answer and the strategy you would use for answering questions that ask you to draw conclusions from what you have read.

Whole class: *Share with the whole class the steps you used to answer the question. Take notes on any different ways of answering the question other groups gave.*

5. Reflecting, Extending, Evaluating

Reflecting: **Think about what you have learned.**

Here are some questions to start your thinking about the experiences you just had. Thinking about what you have learned and experienced is part of the learning process. When the focus is only on the answer, you don't get much time to think about what was learned.

1. *How helpful will it be to know what type of question is being asked?*
2. *Are questions that ask for details in the passage easy or hard for you to answer? Explain.*
3. *Does it make a difference in how you answer the question if the topic is of interest to you or not? Why might that be?*
4. *Evaluate the approaches you used to find the supporting details to answer this question.*



Extending: Extend what you learned to new situations.

In extending, you are being asked to transfer the information presented in this Inquiry Activity to other information or situations.

1. *What kind of reading might you do on the job or at home that would be looking at supporting details?*
2. *What details were you looking for?*
3. *Discuss in your small groups different ways (strategies) you might use to find supporting details.*
4. *Have you ever seen beaver damage in lowland areas? Have you noticed how the beavers fell trees to build dams? Discuss how might beavers know the facts that are given to this passage.*
5. *Using reference materials in your classroom or library, write an essay about how people take products from trees without killing them (for example: maple syrup, rubber, gum).*

Evaluating: Assess what you learned and how you learned it.

In this last step, you get a chance to review the content of what you learned and the methods used to learn. These questions have no right or wrong answers. This is your chance to look more closely at your learning style and the opportunity to state how you benefited or did not benefit from the content and/or the methods presented in this IA.

1. *What parts of the activity worked best for you? Explain.*
2. *What parts did not work well for you? Explain.*
3. *What ideas in this Inquiry Activity will you use when taking the GED test? Why?*
4. *How does following this 5-step format make you feel?*