



Learning Project 2 Reading Drama

Inquiry Activity 2-2: Making Inferences

GED test questions are written to elicit different kinds of responses. This question asks the reader to infer (make a judgment about what is, even though it isn't written directly in the story) details that support what has been written. The words in the answers will not be found directly in the passage.

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

1. Identifying the Problem (Items # 17, 18, 19 PA)

Read only the test questions one at a time, to find out what you are being asked to do.

Questions refer to the excerpt from a play introduced in Inquiry Activity 1-1.

17. What has Mrs. Banks had to do in order to visit Corie?

Mrs. Banks has

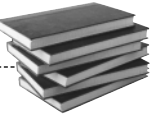
- (1) come from just around the corner
- (2) had to spend her life savings
- (3) driven some distance out of her way
- (4) had to change subways frequently
- (5) flown in from out of town

18. Which of the following best describes what Mrs. Banks thinks about the bedroom?

- (1) It is much too small.
- (2) It is cozy and attractive.
- (3) It is just the right size.
- (4) Paul and Corie will enjoy it.
- (5) Furniture will make it seem larger.

19. Which of the following best describes Paul and Corie?

- (1) mother and son
- (2) young newlyweds
- (3) casual friends
- (4) brother and sister
- (5) mother-in-law and son-in-law



2. Becoming Familiar with the Problem

Pre-reading strategies: Becoming familiar with the passage. Four pre-reading strategies are introduced and used consistently to help the learner develop the pre-reading skills for use with any reading they might do. The pre-reading strategies are:

- Preview the Passage
- Activate Prior Knowledge
- Consider/Build Interest
- Set a Purpose

Resist over-explaining the strategies. Encourage learners to answer the questions for each passage and allow them to come to their own insights about pre-reading.

Remember, in this step, we are focusing on becoming familiar with the questions through pre-reading strategies, not answering them from the passage.

Preview the Questions: Read the questions and the answer choices. Is there anything in the questions you don't understand?

Activate/Build from Prior Knowledge: From reading the questions and scanning the answer choices, what do you already know about this topic of a mother visiting her daughter?

Consider/Build Interest: Are you interested in questions about parents and their adult children? When you see questions like these, how do you react?

Set a Purpose: Look at the title of Inquiry Activity 2-2. What do you think *making an inference* means?

3. Planning, Assigning, and Performing Tasks

The task that you will complete is to read the questions, reread the passage, and then answer the questions.

It is important for the learner to slow down and reread the passage before answering the questions. As comprehension increases, the learner becomes the test-taker and will make decisions about how much rereading is necessary to be successful in answering the questions.

During reading strategies that help with answering questions include **clarifying, analyzing, and questioning**. Each Inquiry Activity will use *clarify* and one other strategy. This IA uses *analyze* as a comprehension strategy.

Doing the Work: Read the questions and reread the passage, alone, with a partner, or in a group. Think aloud about the passage, the questions, and the answer choices.

Clarify:

Read the questions and answer choices and find and mark any words you might not know. See if the questions or answer choices give you enough information to **clarify** the meaning of those words. If not, find the meaning by asking somebody or by looking it up.

1. Were there any places in the passage where you did not understand what was going on?

Note: At some point, your assessment may reveal that some of your students do not recognize this as a comedy. Some discussion of the various points in the dialogue and the summaries that are sure to get laughs in a performance might help people get the point of this selection.

2. Look in the passage to determine who each of the characters are in the play. Determine their relationship to one another.

The passage shows in a number of ways the mother-daughter relationship. Paul, to whom Corie directs a comment, makes only one brief remark. Mrs. Banks' reaction to cramped sleeping conditions and Corie's about "bride's personality" let the reader know that Corie and Paul are newlyweds. The correct answer to question 19 is (2) young newlyweds.



3. Look in the passage to find words Mrs. Banks uses that tell you how she feels about Corie's bedroom. Mark all those places.

4. How do Mrs. Banks' words agree or disagree with what she is actually thinking about the bedroom?

Even though she never admits it, Mrs. Banks clearly thinks the bedroom is much too small, answer choice (1), question 18.

5. What parts of the passage did you have to look at to determine what Mrs. Banks thought of the bedroom?

Analyze:

1. Remind yourself what the questions are asking you to do.

2. Look in the passage to find out who Mrs. Banks is.

3. Look in the passage and mark where information related to the questions appears.

4. Read each answer and decide whether the information in the answer is:

- not in the passage,
- the opposite of the information in the passage, or
- not accurate.

Another method that can be used to **analyze** information is the following graphic organizer. A model appears in Appendix C.

This can be used throughout the reading Learning Projects and will be particularly helpful to your more visual learners.

Take a piece of paper; list the answer choices on the left side and put a circle around each answer. Look in the passage and find details about the subject of the question. List all those details on the right of the paper, then draw an arrow from the detail to the answer choice in the circle.

Determine which answer choice has the support from the passage by looking at your graphic.

This visual approach to synthesizing details to reach a conclusion may help some of the more uncertain readers to make a choice they may not think is specifically supported by what they have read.

4. Sharing with Others

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

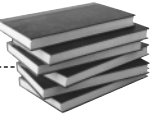
Small Groups: Compare the answers to others in the group. Think about the methods you used to find the answers, and the support for your answers in the passage. Pay attention to the reasons that each learner has for why he/she thinks his/her answers and the support are correct. Agree on the correct answers.

The specific information about Mrs. Banks' routes to and from the apartment may not be clear to those who have never been to New York City. The number of steps, however, makes it clear that this was not as easy as she relates. The correct answer to question 17 is (3) driven some distance out of her way.

Whole Class: Report your group's answers to the questions and indicate the methods used to find the answers, the support for the answers, and your group's strategy for answering questions that ask you to **infer** supporting details from the passage.

5. Reflecting, Extending, and Evaluating

Reflecting: Think about how well you understood the work you did.



Here are some questions to start you thinking about the experience you just had. Thinking about what you 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.

How did you use, or how do you think you can use, the multiple-choice answers to come up with an answer? Explain.

What were your reasons for not choosing each of the answers you thought were wrong?

When an answer is not in the passage, what are the things you might do to arrive at the right answer?

*Describe how your life and your prior experience helped or did not help you **infer** the correct answer.*

How important do you think Paul is to this passage of this play?

Only one line of dialogue and one comment directed to him that does not call for an answer show Paul is not the important character in this scene.

When characters are part of the fiction you read, what are the kinds of things you need to know or figure out about those characters in order to answer test questions?

Plays are more dependent upon characters and their interactions than novels or short stories, because there is no opportunity for the author's voice to interpret what the characters have said or done to each other. You may want to encourage the groups to have a discussion about the role of the actor in performance and how different actors may give other interpretations of the same characters.

Extending: Extend what you learned to new situations.

In extending, you are being asked to transfer the information presented in the Practice Test question to other information or situations.

*Write a play about where you live and the people you know. Write an **inference** question about your play where the answer is not directly told, but has to be **inferred** from the play words.*

If you don't live in a big city, how could you go about answering question 17?

*What did you learn about **inference**? Why is it important to reading?*

*How are **inference** and **predicting** similar or different?*

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

In this last step, you get a chance to review the methods used to learn. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions; it is your chance to look more closely at your learning style and the opportunity to state how you benefited or didn't benefit from the content and/or the methods presented in this IA.

What did you learn from this Inquiry Activity?

What parts of the activity worked best for you? Explain.

What parts did not work well for you? Explain.

What parts of this Inquiry Activity will you use when taking the GED test? Why?

How did reading this way make you feel?