

Close Reading

Identifying Explicit Details

NAME: _____

CLASS: _____

Some of the texts you read are *fiction*. This means the story is make-believe. The events in the story did not really happen. The characters are not real people. The story's details came from an author's imagination. When you read fiction, look for certain details in the story. These details will help you understand the story.

Some details tell you about the story's *setting*. The setting is when and where the story takes place. Details about the setting let you know if the story takes place long ago. Or if the story takes place in the present or at some future time. The setting also lets you know where the action and events take place.

Why does an author tell you information about "when" and "where"? The author does this so there is no confusion or questions about the setting. For example, the author may explain that a story takes place in "a small town" or "a big city." Or the setting may be on "a planet far, far away." An author may use words like "yesterday" or "recently." Or the author may say the story takes place "long ago" or "one day far in the future." Words and phrases like these let you know the time frame of the story.

Other details to look for tell about the story's *characters*. The characters in a story may be people, animals, or make-believe creatures. Authors provide descriptions of how characters look. Authors tell you what characters are feeling. Authors tell you how characters react to things. Authors may even tell you if the character is a hero or a villain.

More details to look for are clues about which characters are speaking, and what they are saying. Keeping track of the words being said, and which character said them, will help you keep track of events and actions in the story.

► Read this part from a make-believe story.



Long ago, in a faraway kingdom, a poor man said to his four sons, "Children, I have nothing to give you, so you must go out into the world and try your luck at finding a trade." The four brothers packed their belongings and said goodbye to their father. Then they all left the house together.

After walking for many hours, the brothers came to a place where the road split in four different directions. The oldest said, "Brothers, here we must part, but four years from this day, let's come back to this spot. In the meantime, we each must try to find a trade to support ourselves."

Each brother went his own way. Soon the oldest met a man. This man asked the oldest brother where he was going. The oldest replied, "I am not sure where I am going, but my father wants me to learn some kind of trade."

Setting -- where?	The author tells you that the action in this story takes place on a road in a kingdom that is far away.
Setting -- when?	The phrase "long ago" tells you that this story takes place in the past.
Character -- descriptions?	Four sons have been living with their father. The family does not have much money. The sons must find work.
Character -- who is speaking?	The father speaks, telling his sons to leave home. The oldest brother speaks, telling his younger brothers they should each go a separate way.

Close Reading

Identifying Explicit Details

NAME: _____

CLASS: _____

► Read these paragraphs and answer the questions that follow.



It was a bright June morning in the Swiss Alps. Two people were about to climb up a mountain path. One person was a young woman. The other was a small girl. The mountain path went from their little village to the top of the mountain.

The hot sun shone down on the pair. The small girl did not look more than five years old. Even in the heat, she was clothed as if to keep off the coldest frost. She had on three dresses, one over the other. She wore a thick red wool coat. On her small feet were heavy boots.

As the pair left their village, a voice called out. "Wait a moment!" said a friendly-looking woman. "If you are climbing up the mountain path, I will go with you."

Deta, the young woman, stood still to wait for the woman from the village. The small girl sat down on the ground.

"Are you tired, Heidi?" asked Deta.

"No," answered the small girl. "I am hot."

1. Which two of the following phrases from these paragraphs provide details about the setting?



- A. one person was a young woman
- B. it was a bright June morning
- C. on her small feet were heavy boots
- D. climbed up a mountain path
- E. she wore a thick red wool coat

2. Which of the following best describes the characters in these paragraphs?



- A. Two people of different ages are climbing a mountain, and the younger one is wearing the wrong kind of clothes.
- B. Three people are lost on a mountain path and they seek help from a friendly villager.
- C. Two people are climbing a mountain, and they are both wearing the wrong kind of clothes for the weather.
- D. A woman from a village is frightened by two strangers who are climbing a mountain path near her home.

Close Reading

Identifying Explicit Details

NAME: _____

CLASS: _____

► Read these paragraphs and answer the questions that follow.



In 1862, I was ten years old. My family moved to the prairie that year. I was unhappy about leaving Virginia, the only place I had ever lived. I knew I would miss it terribly. Ma and Pa decided to pull up their roots in Virginia and settle out West. My brother, Jacob, was 13 years old when we moved, and my little sister, Mary, was only three.

When the caravan arrived in Kansas, all the families went off to settle on their very own plots. "Pa, what happened to all of the trees?" I asked as I looked at the flat, dusty land.

Pa smiled. "Emma, we are out on the plains now. There are very few trees, and the land is mostly flat."

"How will we build our house if there are no trees to cut?"

"We will use what nature has given us," Pa answered.

What could Pa be thinking? There was nothing on the plain but dust and grass.

3. List three details about the setting of these paragraphs.



4. Which character says, "How will we build our house if there are no trees to cut?"



- A. Pa
- B. Ma
- C. Emma
- D. Jacob