

9

Inferences

THIS CHAPTER IN A NUTSHELL

- Ideas are often suggested rather than being stated directly. We must **infer**, or figure out, those ideas.
- To make logical inferences, we must look closely at the information available and use our own experience and common sense.

Inferences are ideas that are not stated directly. They are conclusions that we come to based on what we see, hear, and read.

Look at the cartoon below. What can you figure out about it? Check (✓) the **two** inferences that are most logically based on the information suggested by the cartoon. Then read the explanation on the next page.



- ___ The boy’s mother approves of body piercings.
- ___ The boy had not warned his mother what he was going to do.
- ___ In the past, the boy had asked if he could get body piercings.
- ___ The boy did not really get body piercings.
- ___ The boy’s mother has a few body piercings of her own.

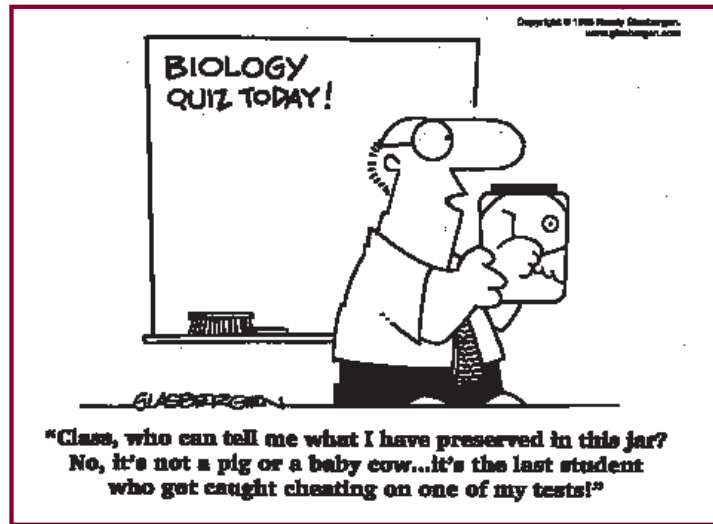
Explanation:

1. The boy's mother would not seem so shocked by her son's appearance if she approved of body piercings. Also, her son is telling her to relax, a sign that she is upset.
2. If the boy had warned his mother what he was going to do, her hair would not be standing on end and her eyes bugging out. She is clearly shocked by her son's appearance. You should have checked this item.
3. Nothing suggests that the boy had asked if he could get body piercings.
4. The boy is telling his mother that what appear to be body piercings are only macaroni. You should have checked this item.
5. Nothing in the picture or words suggests that the boy's mother has body piercings of her own.

With visual material such as cartoons, book covers, and photographs, we can infer a great deal from all the clues provided. With written material, we can “read between the lines” and pick up ideas the writer only suggests, or implies. This chapter will give you practice in making inferences from both visual and reading materials.

INFERENCES ABOUT VISUAL MATERIALS**Cartoon**

Look at the cartoon on the next page. Put a check (✓) by the **two** inferences that are most logically based on the information given in the cartoon. Then read the explanation that follows.



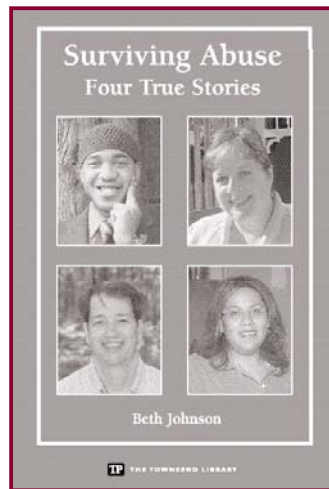
- The class has just finished taking a test.
- The specimen in the jar is really a baby pig.
- The teacher is strict about cheating in his class.
- The teacher wants his students to be afraid to cheat.
- More students cheat in biology class than in other classes.

Explanation:

1. Experience tells us that teachers give warnings like this *before* the test begins, not after.
2. We can safely assume that the specimen in the jar is not really a student, since teachers are not permitted to “preserve” students. It may be a baby pig, a baby cow, or just a “pretend” animal. However, we don’t know exactly what it is.
3. From the stern warning the teacher gives the class as he holds up the jar, we can infer that he is strict about cheating in his class. You should have checked this item.
4. Holding up the preserved “cheating student” is a sign the teacher wants his students to be afraid to cheat. You should have checked this item.
5. Nothing in the cartoon suggests that students are any more likely to cheat in a biology class than in other classes.

Book Cover

Look at the following cover of a book titled *Surviving Abuse: Four True Stories* by Beth Johnson. Put a check (✓) by the **two** inferences that are most logically based on the information given on the cover.



- ___ The people pictured here are all abuse survivors.
- ___ Men are seldom abuse victims.
- ___ Some of the people pictured are abusers, and some are abuse victims.
- ___ Abuse is a problem for more than one ethnic group.
- ___ Once a person has been abused, his or her life is ruined.

Explanation:

1. The title *Surviving Abuse: Four True Stories* suggests that the four people pictured on the cover are all abuse survivors. You should have checked this item.
2. Two of the abuse victims are men and two are women. There is nothing to suggest that more women than men are victims of abuse.
3. The title indicates that the stories tell of surviving abuse, not being an abuser. Also, an abuser would not want to be pictured on the cover of a book.
4. The people on the cover represent three ethnic groups, suggesting that the problem of abuse cuts across all ethnic boundaries. You should have checked this item.
5. The smiling faces of the people on the cover suggest that being the victim of abuse need not ruin a person's life. So does the title, *Surviving Abuse*.

Photograph

Look at the following photograph. Put a check (✓) by the **two** inferences that are most logically based on the information given in the photograph.



- The man is a drug addict.
- The man in the photo is homeless.
- A passing child gave the stuffed animal to the man.
- The stuffed animal helps keep the man warm.
- The man does not have any legs.

Explanation:

1. Although experience tells us that people who sleep in the streets are often drug addicts, we can't say for sure that the man is a drug addict.
2. Common sense tells us that a man who has a home would not be sleeping in a trash-strewn area. You should have checked this item.
3. Nothing in the photo indicates that the man got the stuffed animal from a passing child. Most parents would probably not allow their child to interact with a homeless man.
4. The man appears to have wrapped himself in a blanket or sleeping bag in order to keep warm. The stuffed animal which rests on top of him suggests that he is also using it to keep warm. You should have checked this item.
5. Although the nearby wheelchair suggests that the man has a physical disability, we can't say for certain that the man has no legs.

A Final Comment about Visual Materials

As the preceding examples—the cartoons, the book cover, and the photograph—make clear, we live in a world full of images, and we make inferences about such visual materials all the time. In other words, making inferences is a skill all of us already possess. This chapter will now go on to strengthen your ability to make good inferences when reading.

INFERENCES ABOUT READING MATERIALS

You have already practiced making inferences while reading an earlier chapter in this book. Do you remember the following sentence from the “Vocabulary in Context” chapter?

Assets such as good health, a loving family, and an enjoyable job make life worth living.

The sentence does not tell us exactly what *assets* means. However, it does suggest that assets are valuable things such as good health, a loving family, and an enjoyable job. We can then infer that *assets* means “things of value.” For all the sentences in chapter 3, you inferred the meanings of words by looking closely at the surrounding context.

In our everyday reading, we often “read between the lines” and pick up ideas that are not directly stated in print. To make such inferences, we use clues provided by the writer, and we also apply our own experience, logic, and common sense.

Inferences in Passages

Check Your Understanding

Read the following passage and then check (✓) the **two** inferences that are most firmly based on the given information.

¹My wife is a murderer. ²I got her a plant as a surprise one-month anniversary gift, and she proceeded to kill it. ³She wasn't trying to kill it, but she doesn't exactly have a green thumb. ⁴In the belief that all living things require water, she began flooding the plant on a daily basis. ⁵“Be careful not to overwater it,” I warned. ⁶“Plants need air as well as water.” ⁷“Okay,” she replied, and then dumped on another gallon of water. ⁸The sicker the plant got, the more she watered it. ⁹Finally, it melted away into an oozing heap. ¹⁰One day I returned home to see that the plant and its pot had simply disappeared. ¹¹We had not been married that long yet, but I figured the safest thing to do was to say nothing.

- ___ 1. The woman did not believe the man’s advice.
- ___ 2. The women intentionally killed the plant.
- ___ 3. The man knows more about plants than his wife does.
- ___ 4. The man is very angry at his wife.
- ___ 5. The man was surprised that the plant died.

Explanation:

1. The woman continues to water the plant heavily after her husband’s warning; she obviously did not believe his advice. You should have checked this item.
2. The man says that his wife wasn’t trying to kill the plant, but that she simply lacks a green thumb. We can infer that she accidentally, not intentionally, killed the plant. The man states that his wife is a “murderer” for comic effect. People cannot “murder” plants.
3. Since the man knows that overwatering is not good for plants, he must know more about plants than his wife does. You should have checked this item.
4. The man says that “the safest thing to do was to say nothing.” His words suggest that he fears her reaction if he says something about the dead plant. If he had been very angry at her, he probably would have said something.
5. The wife’s continued overwatering of the plant, which the man notices and comments upon, suggests that he is not surprised that the plant died.

➤ **Practice 1**

Read each passage and then check (✓) the **two** inferences that are most firmly based on the given information.

- A.** ¹In the 1600s, the word *spinster* referred to any female. ²Spinning thread or yarn for cloth was something every woman did at home. ³By 1700, *spinster* had become a legal term for an unmarried woman. ⁴Such women had to work to survive, and spinning was their most common job. ⁵Before long, however, spinning was done in factories. ⁶*Spinster* then suggested someone who was “left over” or “dried up,” just as the job of home spinning had dried up for women. ⁷Today, with so many women working and marrying later and later, most single women consider the word *spinster* an insult.

- _____ 1. Women who could spin were thought to make especially good wives.
- _____ 2. The word *spinster* was not originally an insulting term.
- _____ 3. Today's single women should be proud to be called spinsters.
- _____ 4. At one time in history, unmarried women were looked down upon.
- _____ 5. Today, single women are no longer called spinsters.

B. ¹Sentenced to execution, some condemned American criminals have used their last moments to share a witty last word with observers. ²George Appel was electrocuted in 1928. ³Just before the switch was pulled, he joked with the onlookers: "Well, folks, soon you'll see a baked Appel." ⁴James W. Rodgers was shot by firing squad in 1960. ⁵When asked if he had a last request, he replied, "Why, yes—a bullet-proof vest." ⁶James French was sent to the electric chair in 1966. ⁷On the way to his execution, he caught the attention of a nearby reporter. ⁸"I have a terrific headline for you in the morning," he said; "French Fries." ⁹Jesse Bishop was sentenced to die by gas chamber in 1979. ¹⁰His last words were: "I've always wanted to try everything once . . . Let's go!"

- _____ 1. Different methods of execution are used in the United States.
- _____ 2. Appel, Rodgers, and Bishop were innocent of the crimes they were accused of.
- _____ 3. Appel, Rodgers, and Bishop all wanted to die.
- _____ 4. There are generally witnesses watching an execution.
- _____ 5. People watching the executions were shocked by the convicted men's remarks.

C. ¹In 1857, a group of Egyptian salesmen tried to convince Congress that camels should be used in desert outposts in the West. ²The salesmen pointed out that camels could carry up to 1,000 pounds more than an elephant. ³They said a camel's energy was almost limitless. ⁴As proof, they had a camel race a horse across difficult land covering 110 miles. ⁵The horse won the race, but died of fatigue shortly afterward. ⁶To show how much staying power the camel had, the salesmen had the camel run again the next day. ⁷The camel covered the same area at the same speed. ⁸The salesmen then pointed out how little water camels need. ⁹Camels barely sweat, and they regulate their body temperatures depending on the heat. ¹⁰Congress was convinced and bought seventy-five camels for soldiers to use. ¹¹However, soldiers hated the beasts and turned them loose in the desert. ¹²Most disappeared, but there are still occasional sightings of camels in remote desert regions today.

- _____ 1. Camels are bad-tempered animals.
- _____ 2. The Egyptian salesmen were trying to cheat Congress.
- _____ 3. Camels could have been valuable in the American West.
- _____ 4. Camels travel at a steady pace without using much energy.
- _____ 5. The camels could never have survived in the American desert.

INFERRING MAIN IDEAS

Sometimes a paragraph does not have a main idea. In such cases, the writer has decided to let the supporting details suggest the main idea. The main idea is unstated, or **implied**, and you must **infer** it—figure it out—by deciding upon the point of the supporting details.

Asking two questions will help you to determine the writer’s main idea:

- What is the topic, or subject, of the paragraph? In other words, what is the whole paragraph about?
- What is the main point being made about the topic?

The following paragraph has no stated main idea. Ask the two questions above to help you decide which of the four answers that follow the paragraph states the implied main idea. In the space provided, write the letter of that answer. Then read the explanation that follows.

¹When you have a relationship with someone, it is almost certain that you will argue now and then. ²To keep an argument from causing hard feelings, listen to the other person’s point of view. ³Don’t just hear what you want to hear, but focus on what the person is saying. ⁴Also try to identify with his or her point of view as much as you can, remembering that a view other than your own may be valid. ⁵Another way to keep an argument from causing hard feelings is to concentrate on behavior that is annoying you, not on the other person’s character. ⁶For example, say, “This bothers me a lot,” not, “Only a stupid idiot would act the way you are!” ⁷Finally, when the argument is over, put it behind you.

_____ The **unstated main idea** is:

- A. People often argue with each other.
- B. When you have a relationship with someone, you should try not to argue with him or her.
- C. There are guidelines you can follow to ensure that an argument does not cause hard feelings.
- D. The most important point in knowing how to argue is to put an argument behind you once it is over.

Explanation:

If you answered the question “Who or what is the paragraph about,” you probably found the topic: arguing. The next question to ask is “What is the main point being made about arguing?” To answer that question, consider the supporting details:

- The details of the paragraph are not about how often people argue or the importance of trying not to argue, so answers A and B are wrong.
- The details of the paragraph are specific guidelines for keeping an argument from causing hard feelings: “listen to the other person’s point of view,” “try to identify with his or her point of view,” “concentrate on behavior that is annoying you, not on the other person’s character,” and “when the argument is over, put it behind you.” Therefore answer C is correct—it makes a general statement that covers the specific guidelines listed.
- Answer D is wrong because it is too narrow: it is about only one of the guidelines.

➤ Practice 2

The following paragraphs have implied main ideas, and each is followed by four sentences. In the space provided, write the letter of the sentence that best expresses the implied main idea.

- _____ 1. ¹Because turnips were often eaten by the poor, other people often turned up their noses at them. ²Carrots were also once held in low esteem. ³They grew wild in ancient times and were used then for medicinal purposes. ⁴But they weren’t considered fit for the table in Europe until the thirteenth century. ⁵Similarly, in the early seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, some Europeans considered potatoes fit only for animals. ⁶They were thought to cause leprosy in humans.

The **unstated main idea** is:

- A. Vegetables are a healthy addition to any diet.
- B. In previous centuries, some Europeans thought potatoes were unhealthy for humans.
- C. Through the centuries, people have had mistaken ideas about certain vegetables.
- D. While potatoes were once considered unhealthy, carrots were once used as medicine.

- _____ 2. ¹A minister in Louisiana gave his cat away to a granddaughter who lived in New Orleans. ²Three weeks later, the cat showed up at the minister's home. ³It had traveled 300 miles and crossed the Mississippi and Red Rivers on its own. ⁴A German man took his cat on a family vacation from Germany to Turkey. ⁵At the border, the cat was nowhere to be found. ⁶However, two months and 1,500 miles later, the cat returned to his home in Germany. ⁷An American man took his cat with him when he moved from Utah to Washington. ⁸Soon after arriving in his new home, the cat disappeared. ⁹Over a year later, the cat showed up on the front porch of the man's Utah home 850 miles away. ¹⁰The man's former neighbors recognized the animal and offered him a new home.

The **unstated main idea** is:

- A. Cats do not adjust well to new homes.
 - B. Lost pets are often found thanks to the kindness of people.
 - C. People should not get a cat unless they are sure they will not be moving.
 - D. Cats can have an incredible sense of direction.
- _____ 3. ¹To become president of the United States, a person must be at least thirty-five years of age. ²He or she must have lived in the United States for the last fourteen years. ³In addition, he or she must be a natural-born citizen of the country. ⁴A convicted felon cannot be president of the United States.

The **unstated main idea** is:

- A. There is an age limit to becoming president.
- B. There are specific rules about who can become an elected official of a country.
- C. The requirements for becoming a president of the United States are too limiting.
- D. There are certain requirements for becoming president of the United States.

CHAPTER REVIEW

In this chapter, you learned the following:

- Making inferences is a skill we practice all the time with much of what we see and read.
- Important ideas in reading may not be stated directly, but must be inferred.
- To make good inferences, we must use the information presented, our own experience, and common sense.

The final chapter in Part One—Chapter 10—will deepen your ability to think in a clear and logical way.



On the Web: If you are using this book in class, you can visit our website for additional practice in making inferences. Go to www.townsendpress.com and click on “Online Exercises.”

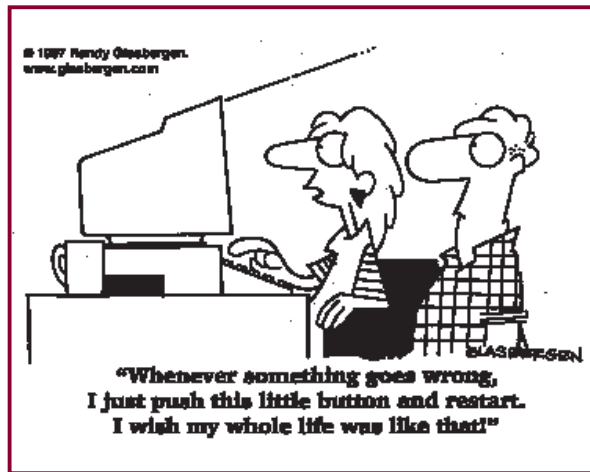
► Review Test 1

To review what you've learned in this chapter, answer each of the following questions by filling in the blanks.

1. To fully understand a cartoon, book cover, ad, or other visual image, we often must make _____.
2. When we read, we often “read between the lines” and pick up ideas that are implied rather than directly _____.
3. When making inferences, it is (*a mistake, useful*) _____ to draw upon our own experience as well as clues provided.
4. When the _____ of a paragraph is not stated directly, you can often figure it out by looking at the paragraph's supporting details.

► Review Test 2

- A. (1–2.) Put a check (✓) by the **two** inferences that are most logically based on the information given in the following cartoon.



- _____ 1. The woman dislikes using a computer.
- _____ 2. The woman spends too much time in front of a computer.
- _____ 3. Something has gone wrong on the computer, but the woman knows what to do about it.
- _____ 4. The woman knows that many problems in life have no easy solutions.
- _____ 5. The man and the woman are not getting along with each other.

- B.** (3–4.) Read the following passage and then check (✓) the **two** inferences that are most firmly based on the given information.

¹Because children have to attend school until they are 16, our classes are crowded with troublemakers who do not want to be there. ²These troublemakers make it difficult for serious students to get an education. ³Teachers must spend most of their time merely trying to keep the troublemakers under control, rather than actually teaching the good students. ⁴By the time a student is 13, it is clear whether he or she is serious about school or is only going to play the fool there. ⁵At that age, the troublemakers should be allowed to drop out, so that the good students can get on with their education.

- _____ 1. Required attendance in school creates more problems than it solves.
_____ 2. Students today are creating more problems than they ever did in the past.
_____ 3. Students who are troublemakers at age 13 often mature and turn out to be good students.
_____ 4. If troublemakers were allowed to drop out at age 13, serious students would get a better education.
_____ 5. Students want to drop out of school because schools and teachers are not doing a good job.

- C.** Read the following paragraph and then, in the space provided, write the letter of the sentence that best expresses the implied main idea.

¹Most American parents wait until their children are at least two years old before teaching them how to use the toilet. ²Teaching infants to use the toilet early will help keep them comfortable and happy. ³The young children will not have to deal with irritating moisture and uncomfortable diaper rash. ⁴Early toilet training can also save parents and communities a lot of cash. ⁵Parents can save up to \$3,000 on disposable diapers, and communities will not have to deal with the expenses caused by so much trash. ⁶In addition, toilet training may help parents form early bonds with their infants. ⁷Parents must pay close attention to their children's signals so that they know when their children need to use the toilet. ⁸By giving their children more attention and learning how to understand these signals, parents can start building a strong relationship with their children at a very early age.

- _____ 5. The **implied main idea** of this paragraph is:
A. It is extremely difficult to toilet-train an infant.
B. Most parents are too busy to toilet-train an infant.
C. There are real benefits to toilet-training children at younger ages.
D. Forcing infants to use the toilet makes them angry and resentful of adults.

► Review Test 3

Here is a chance to apply your understanding of inferences to a full-length reading. The selection is by Dr. Ben Carson, who grew up poor with his single mother in inner-city Detroit. He was considered the “dummy” of his fifth-grade class until he realized he could learn and do well in school. Today, he is one of the world’s most respected surgeons. In this excerpt from his book *The Big Picture*, he shares a message with young people of today.

Following the reading are questions on inferences. There are also questions on the skills taught in previous chapters.

Words to Watch

Below are some words in the reading that do not have strong context support. Each word is followed by the number of the paragraph in which it appears and its meaning there. These words are marked in the reading by a small circle (°).

deplorable (2): wretchedly bad; miserable

cavernous (4): resembling a cave

spontaneous (5): unplanned; impulsive

graphically (8): vividly

gratification (8): satisfaction

bevy (9): group

DARE TO THINK BIG

Dr. Ben Carson

1 I do not speak only to parent groups. I spend a lot of time with students, such as those I encountered not long ago on a memorable visit to Wendell Phillips High School, an inner-city school on Chicago’s south side.

2 Before I spoke, the people who invited me to the Windy City held a reception in my honor. There I met and talked with school officials and local religious leaders, many of whom informed me about the troubled

neighborhood where the school is located. They indicated that gang influence was prevalent, living conditions were deplorable° in the surrounding public housing developments, dropout statistics were high, and SAT scores were low.

3 It sounded like a lot of other high schools I have visited around the country. Yet so dire were these warnings that, on the crosstown drive to the school, I could not help

wondering what kind of reception I would receive from the students.

4 I need not have worried. When I walked into Wendell Phillips High School, its long deserted hallways gave the building a cavernous^o, empty feel. The entire student body (1,500 to 2,000 strong) had already been excused from class and was assembled quietly in the school's auditorium. A school administrator, who was addressing the audience, noted my entrance through a back door and abruptly interrupted his remarks to announce, "And here's Dr. Carson now!"

5 All eyes turned my way. Immediately students began to applaud. Some stood. Suddenly they were all standing, clapping, and cheering. The applause continued the entire time I walked down the aisle and climbed the steps onto the auditorium stage. I couldn't remember ever receiving a warmer, more enthusiastic, or more spontaneous^o reception anywhere in my entire life.

6 I found out later that a local bank had purchased and distributed paperback copies of my autobiography, *Gifted Hands*, to every student at Wendell Phillips. A lot of those teenagers had evidently read the book and felt they already knew me. By the time I reached the microphone, the noise faded away. I felt overwhelmed by their welcome.

7 I did what I often do when facing such a young audience. I wanted them thinking seriously about their lives and futures. So I quickly summarized my earliest years as a child, about my own student days back at Southwestern High School in Detroit. I referred briefly to the incident when my anger nearly

caused a tragedy that would have altered my life forever. I recounted my struggles with peer pressure, which sidetracked me for a time.

8 Then I talked about the difference between being viewed as cool and being classified as a lowly nerd. I find that serves as a graphically^o relevant illustration for my message on delayed gratification^o—a theme I hit almost every time I speak to young people.

9 The cool guys in every school are the ones who have earned a varsity letter in some sport—maybe several sports. They wear the latest fashions. They know all the hit tunes. They can converse about the latest blockbuster movies. They drive sharp cars and seem to collect a bevy^o of beautiful girlfriends.

10 The nerds are the guys always hauling around an armload of books, with more in their backpacks. They wear clean clothes—and often big, thick glasses. They even understand the science experiments. They ride the school bus, or worse yet, their parents drive them to school. Most of the popular girls would not be caught dead speaking to them in the hallway between classes.

11 The years go by, and graduation draws near. Often the cool guy has not done well in school, but his personality wins him a job at the local fast-food franchise, flipping hamburgers and waiting on customers. The nerd, who has won a scholarship, goes off to college.

12 A few more years go by. The cool guy is still flipping burgers. Maybe he has even moved up to Assistant Shift Manager by now. The girls who come in to eat lunch may notice and smile at him. He is still cool.

13 The nerd finishes up at college and does very well. Upon graduation he accepts a job offer from a Fortune 500 company. With his first paycheck, he goes to the eye doctor, who replaces those big, old, thick glasses with a pair of contacts. He stops at the tailor and picks out a couple of nice suits to wear. After saving a big chunk of his first few paychecks, he makes a down payment on a new Lexus. When he drives home to visit his parents, all the young women in the old neighborhood say, “Hey, don’t I know you?” Suddenly, they do not want to talk to the guy behind the fast-food counter anymore.

14 The first guy—the cool guy—had everything back in high school. So what did he get for all that?

15 The other guy was not cool at all—but he was focused. Where did he go in the long run?

16 “And that,” I told my audience, “is how we have to learn to think about life! With a long-term view. A Big-Picture perspective!”

17 Those students at Chicago’s Wendell Phillips High School could not

have been more attentive as I recounted the things this former nerd has seen and done. They listened to me explain and illustrate the incredible potential that resides in the average human brain. They even seemed receptive to my challenge that they begin to use those brains to plan and prepare for the future. So, as I wrapped up my talk by daring them to THINK BIG, I did something I had never done before, though I realized it could backfire if I had read this audience wrong. But since they had been such a responsive group, I decided to risk it.

I concluded by asking that auditorium full of high school students for a show of hands. “How many of you are ready, here today, to raise your hands and say to me, to your teachers, and to your peers, ‘I want to be a nerd’?”

19 Although many of them laughed, almost all the students of Wendell Phillips High School raised their hands as they stood and applauded and cheered even louder than when I had walked in.

Questions about the Reading

For each question, write the letter of your answer in the space provided.

Vocabulary in Context

- _____ 1. In the sentences below, the word *prevalent* (prĕv'ə-lənt) means
- A. absent.
 - B. widely present.
 - C. desirable.
 - D. unimportant.

“There I met and talked with school officials and local religious leaders . . . about the troubled neighborhood where the school is located. They indicated that gang influence was prevalent. . . .” (Paragraph 2)

- _____ 2. In the sentences below, the word *dire* (dīr) means
- A. alarming.
 - B. misleading.
 - C. reassuring.
 - D. amusing.

“They indicated that . . . living conditions were deplorable in the surrounding public housing developments, dropout statistics were high, and SAT scores were low. . . . [S]o dire were these warnings that, on the crosstown drive to the school, I could not help wondering what kind of reception I would receive from the students.” (Paragraphs 2–3)

Central Point and Main Ideas

- _____ 3. Which sentence best expresses the central point of the entire selection?
- A. Dr. Ben Carson, a famous surgeon, was considered a nerd in high school.
 - B. The student body of a tough inner-city high school listened politely to Dr. Ben Carson’s talk.
 - C. In a talk to high-school students, Dr. Ben Carson encouraged them to focus on long-term goals.
 - D. Guys who earn varsity letters, know all the current music, and drive sharp cars seem to collect the most girlfriends in high school.

- _____ 4. Which sentence best expresses the main idea of paragraph 13?
- A. The nerd does well in college and even lands a job with a Fortune 500 company.
 - B. After a well-paying job lets him afford contacts, nice clothes, and a nice car, the nerd becomes more attractive to women.
 - C. When the nerd graduates from college, he can afford a cool wardrobe.
 - D. Later in life the cool guy is sure to envy the nerd's accomplishments.

Key Supporting Details

- _____ 5. Dr. Carson arrived at Wendell Phillips High School
- A. worried about how the students would respond to him.
 - B. confident that his speech would be a big success.
 - C. favorably impressed by what he had heard from community leaders.
 - D. very late.
- _____ 6. The students at Wendell Phillips High School
- A. worked in fast-food restaurants.
 - B. had unusually high SAT scores.
 - C. skipped school on the day that Dr. Carson spoke.
 - D. had been excused from class to hear Dr. Carson speak.
- _____ 7. Peer pressure
- A. sidetracked Dr. Carson for a while during his teenage years.
 - B. never affected Dr. Carson during his teenage years.
 - C. was less of a problem during Dr. Carson's teen years than it is now.
 - D. affected Dr. Carson in positive ways during his teenage years.

Inferences

- _____ 8. From the article, the reader might conclude that
- A. Dr. Carson was considered cool in high school.
 - B. Dr. Carson hardly ever speaks to parent groups.
 - C. planning for the future can mean giving up some pleasure today.
 - D. the visit to Wendell Phillips High School was Dr. Carson's first to Chicago.
- _____ 9. Dr. Carson implies that
- A. girls in high school aren't impressed by cool guys.
 - B. the cool guy in high school wasn't thinking about his future.
 - C. the cool guy in school had a "Big Picture" perspective on his life.
 - D. when the nerd got his first paycheck, he should have saved it instead of spending it on clothes and contact lenses.

- _____ 10. What audience did Dr. Carson seem to have in mind when he wrote this essay?
- High-school administrators
 - High-school students
 - Parents of high school students
 - High-school dropouts

Discussion Questions

- It doesn't seem likely that Dr. Carson, a highly educated adult, often uses words like "cool" and "nerd" in his own conversation. Why, then, do you think he chose to use such language in his speech at Wendell Phillips High School? What effect do you think it had on the students?
- Although Dr. Carson was a good student, he admits that peer pressure and his own hot temper sometimes got in the way of his success. What are some obstacles—internal and external—that stand in the way of your being the best student you can be? What are some ways you might overcome these obstacles?
- Dr. Carson speaks frequently to high school students because he has learned something about life that he believes can be of value to them. If you were asked to give a single piece of advice to a group of younger students, what would you say?

Note: Writing assignments for this selection appear on page 480.

Check Your Performance

INFERENCES

| <i>Activity</i> | <i>Number Right</i> | <i>Points</i> | <i>Score</i> |
|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------|--------------|
| Review Test 1 (4 items) | _____ | × 5 = | _____ |
| Review Test 2 (5 items) | _____ | × 4 = | _____ |
| Review Test 3 (10 items) | _____ | × 6 = | _____ |
| TOTAL SCORE | | | = _____% |

Enter your total score into the **Reading Performance Chart: Review Tests** on the inside back cover.