Observations and Inferences in Reading and Writing

High School English Language Arts Worksheet

- An **observation** is something you can directly see, hear, read, or otherwise identify from available evidence.
- An **inference** is a logical conclusion you reach by combining evidence with what you already know.

Part I – Observation or Inference?

Directions: Write **O** if the statement is an observation and **I** if it is an inference.

_____ **1.** The classroom clock reads 10:15.

_____ **2.** The teacher is probably going to give a test today.

_____ **3.** Marcus is wearing a raincoat.

_____ **4.** It must be raining outside.

_____ **5.** The novel contains 250 pages.

_____ **6.** The main character is afraid of what will happen next.

_____ **7.** The character's hands are shaking.

_____ **8.** The character is nervous.

_____ **9.** The paragraph contains three examples.

_____ **10.** The author probably included the examples to make the argument more convincing.

Part II – Making Inferences

Directions: Read each situation. Then answer the question by making a reasonable inference.

11. Jamal walked into the kitchen, grabbed an umbrella, and looked out the window. He sighed when he saw the dark clouds.

What can you infer about the weather?

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12. Maria studied her notes for several hours. She highlighted important information and practiced answering questions without looking at her book.

What can you infer about Maria?

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13. The dog ran to the door when its owner picked up a leash. It wagged its tail and jumped excitedly.

What can you infer about the dog?

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14. After receiving his test paper, Carlos smiled and immediately showed it to his friend.

What can you infer about Carlos's test result?

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15. The restaurant was nearly empty. Several tables had "Reserved" signs, but no customers were sitting at them.

What is one reasonable inference about the restaurant?

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Part III – Evidence Supports an Inference

Directions: Read each passage. Identify the **observation/evidence** and then make a reasonable **inference**.

16. The sidewalk was covered with puddles, and people walking down the street carried umbrellas.

Observation/Evidence:

Inference:

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17. When the principal entered the cafeteria, the students quickly became quiet and returned to their seats.

Observation/Evidence:

Inference:

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18. Samantha's desk was covered with textbooks, flash cards, and handwritten notes. She had been studying for several hours.

Observation/Evidence:

Inference:

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19. The character carefully avoided looking at the envelope on the table. When someone asked about it, he changed the subject.

Observation/Evidence:

Inference:

Part IV – Reading for Inferences

Read the passage.

Daniel stared at the clock above the classroom door. He had checked it several times during the last ten minutes. His backpack was already zipped, and his pencil was tucked inside. When the teacher continued explaining the assignment, Daniel sighed and glanced toward the window. As soon as the bell rang, he was the first student out of the room.

20. Which detail is an **observation**?

A. Daniel was bored.
B. Daniel disliked the class.
C. Daniel repeatedly looked at the clock.
D. Daniel was worried about his grade.

21. Which inference is best supported by the passage?

A. Daniel was eager for class to end.
B. Daniel had forgotten his backpack.
C. Daniel enjoyed the assignment.
D. Daniel wanted to speak with the teacher.

22. Which piece of evidence BEST supports your answer to Question 21?

A. Daniel's backpack was zipped.
B. Daniel had a pencil.
C. Daniel looked at the clock several times and was first out when the bell rang.
D. The teacher explained the assignment.

Part V – Observations and Inferences in Writing

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Directions: Read each statement. Identify whether the writer is presenting an **observation** or an **inference**.

23. "The author uses several statistics to support the claim."

Answer: _____

24. "The author clearly wants readers to agree with the argument."

Answer: _____

25. "The final paragraph begins with the phrase 'In conclusion.'"

Answer: _____

26. "The author probably included this example because it makes the argument easier to understand."

Answer: _____

27. "The character says, 'I don't want to go.'"

Answer: _____

28. "The character is afraid to leave home."

Answer: _____

Part VI – Strong or Weak Inferences?

Directions: Determine whether each inference is **strong** or **weak** based on the evidence provided.

29. Evidence: The student has three unfinished assignments on her desk.
Inference: The student may be having difficulty keeping up with her schoolwork.

Answer: _____

30. Evidence: The student has three unfinished assignments on her desk.
Inference: The student hates school.

Answer: _____

31. Evidence: The character repeatedly checks the locked door and looks nervously toward the window.
Inference: The character may be worried that someone will enter.

Answer: _____

32. Evidence: The character repeatedly checks the locked door and looks nervously toward the window.
Inference: The character is definitely being chased by a professional criminal.

Answer: _____

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