Literal Comprehension vs. Inferential Comprehension Worksheet

Understanding the Skills

Literal Comprehension

Literal comprehension means understanding information that is **directly stated** in the text.

Example:

"The dog barked loudly at the mail carrier."

Literal Question:

Who did the dog bark at?

Answer: The mail carrier.

Inferential Comprehension

Inferential comprehension means using clues from the text and your own thinking to figure out information that is **not directly stated**.

Example:

"The dog barked loudly and wagged its tail when the owner came home."

Inferential Question:

How did the dog probably feel?

Answer: Excited or happy.

Part I – Identify the Question Type

Write **L** for Literal or **I** for Inferential.

1. _____ What color was Mia's backpack?
2. _____ Why do you think Carlos was nervous before the game?
3. _____ Where did the family go on vacation?
4. _____ How did the character probably feel after winning the contest?
5. _____ What time did the bus arrive?
6. _____ Why might the teacher have smiled at the student?

Part II – Read the Passage – Answer the Question

Passage 1

Jordan looked out the window and sighed as dark clouds covered the sky. He slowly put away his baseball glove and sat on the couch.

7. What is Jordan probably feeling?
   A. Excited
   B. Disappointed
   C. Angry
   D. Confused

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8. Is Question 7 literal or inferential?
   A. Literal
   B. Inferential
9. What clue from the paragraph helped you answer Question 7?

Passage 2

The science fair begins at 6:00 p.m. in the school gymnasium. Students will display projects about animals, space, plants, and inventions. Families are invited to attend.

10. Where will the science fair take place?
    A. Classroom
    B. Library
    C. Gymnasium
    D. Cafeteria
11. Is Question 10 literal or inferential?
    A. Literal
    B. Inferential
12. What time does the science fair begin?

Passage 3

Lena practiced piano every afternoon for two months. On the night of the recital, she smiled proudly after finishing her song while the audience applauded loudly.

13. Why was the audience clapping?
    A. They were leaving
    B. They enjoyed Lena's performance
    C. They were tired
    D. They were confused
14. Is Question 13 literal or inferential?
    A. Literal
    B. Inferential
15. What detail supports your answer?

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