

1. **Let's think about what happens when you read.**

Reading is more complicated than it might seem. When you read, whether you realize it or not, your brain is doing many different things at once: figuring out the main idea, learning new vocabulary words, organizing details, and deciding what is a fact and what is an opinion.

Together, these actions are known as **critical reading**. Understanding how to read critically will help you become a better reader.

2. **Let's learn about explicit and implicit details.**

Some pieces of writing contain details that are clear and can be found easily.

For example, a writer might tell the reader that a character has blue eyes. These kinds of details are called **explicit** details.

Other details, called **implicit** details, are not stated so clearly.

Implicit details must be discovered by reading all of the other details in a piece of writing and then drawing conclusions.

It is the reader's job to recognize implicit details.

3. **Let's practice identifying the important details in a story.**

That First Look

Kimberly kept her eyes closed tight. She had been anticipating this moment for so long that she could not believe it had finally arrived. She felt her heart beating in her chest. It was so hard to sit still that her fingers twitched and her foot tapped restlessly on the floor of the van.

Suddenly, Kimberly heard the crash of the waves on the shore and the eerie cries of the seagulls overhead. She smelled the salty water and felt the wind picking up. She shivered and pulled her faded blue sweater around her shoulders. It was time to open her eyes!

With a gasp, Kimberly looked and saw the Pacific Ocean for the first time. It was even more beautiful than she had imagined, and she knew this was a day she would remember for the rest of her life!

4. Let's look at the first paragraph again and find the explicit and implicit details.

Kimberly kept her eyes closed tight. She had been anticipating this moment for so long that she could not believe it had finally arrived. She felt her heart beating in her chest. It was so hard to sit still that her fingers twitched and her foot tapped restlessly on the floor of the van.

How does the author describe Kimberly? She is aware of "her heart beating in her chest," her fingers are twitching, and her foot is tapping. These are **explicit details**.

What do those details tell the reader about Kimberly? You understand that she is excited or nervous about something. This is an **implicit detail**. It's not said directly, but the reader knows Kimberly is excited or nervous because she cannot stop moving.

5. Now, let's look at the second paragraph and find explicit and implicit details.

Suddenly, Kimberly heard the crash of the waves on the shore and the eerie cries of the seagulls overhead. She smelled the salty water and felt the wind picking up. She shivered and pulled her faded blue sweater around her shoulders. It was time to open her eyes!

How does the author describe the location? Kimberly hears "the crash of the waves" and the "cries of seagulls," and she smells the salty water. These are **explicit details**.

What do these details tell the reader about where Kimberly is? She must be near the ocean. This is an **implicit detail**. It's not said directly, but the reader can guess this because the ocean is saltwater.

6. Now, let's discuss the difference between a fact and an opinion.

Many things you read, such as a class textbook or a magazine article, are full of **facts**. A fact is a statement of information that can be proven.

FACT: Mars is the fourth planet from the sun.

An **opinion** is different from a fact because it cannot be proven. Instead, an opinion is someone's thoughts or feelings about a subject.

OPINION: Chocolate is the best flavor.

You will find opinions in most advertisements. Think of the ads you have seen. They are commonly full of statements that could never be proven. They are written to sell a product.

Often, facts and opinions are mixed together in what you are reading. Understanding how to separate facts from opinions will help you become a better reader.

7. Read this advertisement for a new shampoo.

- Are you tired of dry, wild hair?
- Wish you could have silky, smooth hair like the girls on TV?

Try New

Super Shampoo

It is the answer to all of your hair problems.

Super Shampoo smells just like vanilla. It will wash your cares away as it makes your hair look thicker and shinier. It contains five herbs. It even has a little vitamin B to help keep your hair extra healthy and strong.



It comes in three sizes. Use the cherry cream rinse with it to make your hair look even better. It is just what you need to help you look great and be happy!



Save 50% on your next purchase of **Super Shampoo** with this coupon at participating stores.

8. Which statements in the ad do you think are facts? Remember, a fact is something that can be proven.

Which statements in the ad do you think are opinions? Remember, an opinion is someone's thoughts or feelings about a subject. It cannot be proven.

Facts	Opinions
It contains five herbs.	It will wash your cares away.
It contains vitamin B.	You will be glad you bought it.
It comes in three sizes.	You will look great and be happy.
The shampoo smells like vanilla.	Your hair will look thicker and shinier.
The coupon will save you money.	It's the best shampoo you will ever find.
A cherry cream rinse is also available.	This shampoo is the answer to all of your hair problems.

- Are you tired of dry, wild hair?
- Wish you could have silky, smooth hair like the girls on TV?

Try New

Super Shampoo

It is the answer to all of your hair problems.

Super Shampoo smells just like vanilla. It will wash your cares away as it makes your hair look thicker and shinier. It contains five herbs. It even has a little vitamin B to help keep your hair extra healthy and strong.



It comes in three sizes. Use the cherry cream rinse with it to make your hair look even better. It is just what you need to help you look great and be happy!

✂

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Now, try to work through the next problems step by step.

1. Read this passage and answer the question that follows.

Plant a Little Beauty

Have you ever wanted to do something to make the world a more beautiful place? One of the best ways to do this is by planting a garden. You can put one in your backyard, in a wooden window box, or in a few basic clay pots.

What you plant in your garden is completely up to you. Flowers are a good choice because their brilliant, bright shades will make the summer glow with all the colors of the rainbow. Roses and lilies grow quickly and are good flowers to start your garden.

You can also plant vegetables and when they grow, they can provide food for you or your friends and family. Some of the easiest vegetables to grow are zucchini and radishes. You can even try planting a few fruits, like strawberries or cantaloupes.

Healthy, green plants can certainly make the world a prettier place, so take the time to plant a few seeds today!

Which of these is an opinion in the passage?

- A. "Roses and lilies grow quickly."
- B. "Some of the easiest vegetables to grow are zucchini and radishes."
- C. "You can put one in your backyard, in a wooden window box, or in a few basic clay pots."
- D. "Healthy, green plants can certainly make the world a prettier place."

Is choice A an opinion?

- A no
- B yes

2. Let's look at the passage again.

Plant a Little Beauty

Have you ever wanted to do something to make the world a more beautiful place? One of the best ways to do this is by planting a garden. You can put one in your backyard, in a wooden window box, or in a few basic clay pots.

What you plant in your garden is completely up to you. Flowers are a good choice because their brilliant, bright shades will make the summer glow with all the colors of the rainbow. Roses and lilies grow quickly and are good flowers to start your garden.

You can also plant vegetables and when they grow, they can provide food for you or your friends and family. Some of the easiest vegetables to grow are zucchini and radishes. You can even try planting a few fruits, like strawberries or cantaloupes.

Healthy, green plants can certainly make the world a prettier place, so take the time to plant a few seeds today!

Which of these is an opinion in the passage?

- A. "Roses and lilies grow quickly."
- B. "Some of the easiest vegetables to grow are zucchini and radishes."
- C. "You can put one in your backyard, in a wooden window box, or in a few basic clay pots."
- D. "Healthy, green plants can certainly make the world a prettier place."

Is choice B an opinion?

- A** yes
- B** no

3. Let's take another look at this passage.

Plant a Little Beauty

Have you ever wanted to do something to make the world a more beautiful place? One of the best ways to do this is by planting a garden. You can put one in your backyard, in a wooden window box, or in a few basic clay pots.

What you plant in your garden is completely up to you. Flowers are a good choice because their brilliant, bright shades will make the summer glow with all the colors of the rainbow. Roses and lilies grow quickly and are good flowers to start your garden.

You can also plant vegetables and when they grow, they can provide food for you or your friends and family. Some of the easiest vegetables to grow are zucchini and radishes. You can even try planting a few fruits, like strawberries or cantaloupes.

Healthy, green plants can certainly make the world a prettier place, so take the time to plant a few seeds today!

Which of these is an opinion in the passage?

- A. "Roses and lilies grow quickly."
- B. "Some of the easiest vegetables to grow are zucchini and radishes."
- C. "You can put one in your backyard, in a wooden window box, or in a few basic clay pots."
- D. "Healthy, green plants can certainly make the world a prettier place."

Is choice C an opinion?

- A** no
- B** yes

4. Let's go over the passage one more time.

Plant a Little Beauty

Have you ever wanted to do something to make the world a more beautiful place? One of the best ways to do this is by planting a garden. You can put one in your backyard, in a wooden window box, or in a few basic clay pots.

What you plant in your garden is completely up to you. Flowers are a good choice because their brilliant, bright shades will make the summer glow with all the colors of the rainbow. Roses and lilies grow quickly and are good flowers to start your garden.

You can also plant vegetables and when they grow, they can provide food for you or your friends and family. Some of the easiest vegetables to grow are zucchini and radishes. You can even try planting a few fruits, like strawberries or cantaloupes.

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- C. "You can put one in your backyard, in a wooden window box, or in a few basic clay pots."
- D. "Healthy, green plants can certainly make the world a prettier place."

Is choice D an opinion?

- A no
- B yes

5. Let's try another example.

Spilling Over

Write a journal, the teacher said
You'll be amazed at how fun it is
Record your life on empty pages
Capture moments that might have disappeared
Fill up the lines as your brain spills over
I listened but deep down inside
I knew it was not possible
My brain never spilled over
That skill belonged to writers,
I was a fighter on the football field
Using powerful moves, not words.
Later, faced with the empty page
Laughing at me, sure it would win
I frowned as I was mightier
Than any blank page could be
I tackled the journal, put strength into words
And suddenly my brain spilled over,
Staining every page.

Is choice A an implicit detail?

- A no
- B yes

Which of these is an implicit detail in this poem?

- A. The teacher is instructing students to start a journal.
- B. The person in this poem is a football player.
- C. The speaker is not confident in his ability to write.
- D. The main person in this poem likes to win.

6. Let's look at this once again.

Spilling Over

Write a journal, the teacher said
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Is choice B an implicit detail?

- A yes
- B no

Which of these is an implicit detail in this poem?

- A. The teacher is instructing students to start a journal.
- B. The person in this poem is a football player.
- C. The speaker is not confident in his ability to write.
- D. The main person in this poem likes to win.

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Is choice C an implicit detail?

- A no
- B yes

Which of these is an implicit detail in this poem?

- A. The teacher is instructing students to start a journal.
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- C. The speaker is not confident in his ability to write.
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Is choice D an implicit detail?

- A no
- B yes

Which of these is an implicit detail in this poem?

- A. The teacher is instructing students to start a journal.
- B. The person in this poem is a football player.
- C. The speaker is not confident in his ability to write.
- D. The main person in this poem likes to win.

Now, work these practice problems on your own.

1. **Whales from Outer Space?**

When experts first heard the sounds that dwarf minke whales make, they were confused. It was such an odd noise. They could not believe it was coming from these thirty-foot whales. Instead, they thought the sounds were made by machines or equipment. After all, the noise was very much like the sounds of a laser from a *Star Wars* movie.

To find out just where the sounds were coming from, scientists put special microphones under the water. They recorded over ninety hours of the sounds. They also filmed videos of the area. By looking at what came near the microphones when the sound occurred, they knew what was making the laser-like noise.

Why the whales make this strange sound is still not known. Experts guess it is a mating call. The sound asks the females to come closer. It tells other males to stay away. Whatever it means, it sure is interesting to think about.

Which of the following is an implicit detail from this passage?

- A The dwarf minke whale sound is unusual in the animal world.
- B Experts used underwater microphones to record the odd sounds.
- C At first, the sound was thought to be coming from a machine.
- D The whale's sound is thought to be a mating call of some kind.

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Which of these is an opinion in the passage?

- A "Whatever it means, it sure is interesting to think about."
- B "They recorded over ninety hours of the sounds."
- C "They also filmed videos of the area."
- D "Experts guess it is a mating call."

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Which of the following details is NOT essential to the main idea of the passage?

- A Over ninety hours of sounds were recorded.
- B The sound is most likely a mating call.
- C Experts were confused by the sounds they were hearing.
- D They used underwater microphones.

4. **Another Move**

Emily sighed. Today, her family was moving to a new town. She was not ready to leave her friends and her school.

Grumbling, Emily settled into the van. She looked back at her old house and blinked back tears. It felt like the saddest day of her life.

"I have something for you," said Mrs. Taylor. "I thought this might help. I read these when I was your age."

Emily's mom handed her some books. Emily loved to read.

She glanced at the cover of the first one. It was called *Little House in the Big Woods* by Laura Ingalls Wilder. She opened it and began reading. Soon, she was completely caught up in the story of a young pioneer girl who was also moving.

As Emily read, she grinned at the adventures Laura experienced. The story was very exciting. Maybe moving was not so bad after all!

Which phrase shows that Emily is starting to forget how sad she is?

- A "Soon, she was completely caught up in the story of a young pioneer girl who was also moving."
- B "She looked back at her old house and blinked back tears."
- C "Emily sighed."
- D "Grumbling, Emily settled into the van."

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Which idea is a statement of fact?

- A "Her family was moving to a new town."
- B "It felt like the saddest day of her life."
- C "The story was very exciting."
- D "Maybe moving was not so bad after all!"

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Which of these ideas is clearly stated in this passage?

- A Emily's mother gave her some books to read on the trip.
- B Emily's new house was bigger than the one she was leaving.
- C Emily was doing very well in school this year.
- D Emily was really going to miss her best friend.