

**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.

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- 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.

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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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 Staining every page.

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.
- B. The person in this poem is a football player.
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 Staining every page.

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. The Forgotten President**

What American presidents can you think of off the top of your head? You may have thought of Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, or Thomas Jefferson. Did you think of Millard Fillmore? Most likely, you did not. His is a name that many people do not seem to remember.

Millard Fillmore was this country's thirteenth president. He was an excellent one too. He served from 1850 to 1853. He had eight brothers and sisters. Before he became president, he was a farmer. He did not go to college. In fact, he went only to a one-room schoolhouse. That must have been interesting.

Fillmore's wife, Abigail, started the White House library. That was a wonderful thing to do.

Fillmore is not easily remembered. Yet, he was just one of the many men and women who helped make this country the great place it is today.

**Which of these is an opinion in this passage?**

- A** "He served from 1850 to 1853."
- B** "He was an excellent one too."
- C** "Millard Fillmore was this country's thirteenth president."
- D** "He did not go to college."

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Fillmore is not easily remembered. Yet, he was just one of the many men and women who helped make this country the great place it is today.

**Which idea is a statement of fact?**

- A** "That was a wonderful thing to do."
- B** "Fillmore's wife, Abigail, started the White House library."
- C** "He was just one of the many men and women who helped make this country the great place it is today."
- D** "That must have been interesting."



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Fillmore's wife, Abigail, started the White House library. That was a wonderful thing to do.

Fillmore is not easily remembered. Yet, he was just one of the many men and women who helped make this country the great place it is today.

**Which of these sentences from the passage supports that idea that Millard Fillmore was not well-educated?**

- A "Fillmore's wife, Abigail, started the White House library."
- B "He did not go to college."
- C "In fact, he went only to a one-room schoolhouse."
- D "Before he became president, he was a farmer."

4. **The Spelling Bee**

I stand on stage with shaking hands  
 Pulse racing and heart pounding  
 Each word is called out carefully  
 In our heads we're sounding.  
 "May I hear it in a sentence, please?"  
 She asks with a shaking voice.  
 She reaches and then stumbles  
 She makes the incorrect choice.  
 Now all eyes turn toward me  
 Crossed fingers behind my back  
 I walk up to the microphone  
 And the announcer says, "abstract."  
 I take a breath, I close my eyes  
 I've seen this word before  
 "A-B-S-T-R-A-C-T," I say  
 Hoping there is no more.  
 The room is silent, so am I  
 I am quite wrong, I suspect  
 Then the announcer smiles and says  
 "Young man, you are correct!"

**Which phrase shows that the person in the poem is hoping for a little extra luck?**

- A "I take a breath, I close my eyes"
- B "Crossed fingers behind my back"
- C "I stand on stage with shaking hands"
- D "I am quite wrong, I suspect"

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 The room is silent, so am I  
 I am quite wrong, I suspect  
 Then the announcer smiles and says  
 "Young man, you are correct!"

**Which of these is an implicit detail in this passage?**

- A The room is silent.
- B The boy is nervous about the spelling bee.
- C The boy is a friend of the spelling bee's announcer.
- D The boy knows that he is going to win.

6. **The Spelling Bee**

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 Then the announcer smiles and says  
 "Young man, you are correct!"

**What is the main difference between the two students mentioned in this poem?**

- A The boy has studied more than the girl.
- B The boy spells the word correctly and the girl does not.
- C The boy is much more nervous than the girl.
- D The boy is older than the girl and has more experience.