

**MAKE INFERENCES****39****Stage 3: Comprehension**

**Directions:** Read the passage. Then answer the questions on the next page.

## A Hard Life

One hot summer day in 1834 when Frederick Douglass was 16, he fought back against a white man. This man, Steven Covey, had beaten Douglass savagely after Douglass fell down sick while working. It was the master's usual way of treating slaves, but Douglass had had enough.

"This battle with Covey was the turning point in my career as a slave," Douglass later wrote. It woke up his sense of himself as a man. From then on, Douglass never took another beating. If a white man hit him, he hit back, often with all his might.

What puzzled Douglass was that Covey did not take him into town to be punished publicly. After all, it was against the law for a slave to raise his hand to a white man. Maybe it was because Covey was proud to be known as a mean master. He wouldn't want everyone to know that a 16-year-old boy had beaten him.

After the day he fought back, young Douglass started secretly teaching other slaves to read. They wanted to read, he said, "not because it was popular but because they wished to learn." Their minds had been starved of knowledge. Teaching slaves to read was against the law. Masters wanted slaves to know very little. A slave who knew letters and numbers could read a map and plan an escape. The punishment for teaching a slave to read was severe.

Born into slavery in 1818, Frederick Douglass gained his freedom in 1838. This brilliant young man soon became the country's most important speaker against slavery. He was able to make people understand what it was like to be a slave. He also wrote his own autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*. It is still in print today.

# MAKE INFERENCES

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## Stage 3: Comprehension (continued)

**Directions:** Choose or write the answer to each question.

1. From this passage, what can you infer about Frederick Douglass?

- Ⓐ He was too young to be a slave.
- Ⓑ He had a strong will.
- Ⓒ He was often sick.
- Ⓓ He didn't like to work.

2. Write a detail from the passage that supports this inference.

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3. How do you know from this passage that Frederick Douglass knew how to read?

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4. What can you infer from this passage about relations between masters and slaves?

- Ⓐ Masters encouraged slaves to develop their muscles and their minds.
- Ⓑ Slaves helped their masters be successful in any way they could.
- Ⓒ Masters tried hard to keep their slaves under control.
- Ⓓ Slaves and their masters treated one another like family members.

5. Write two details from the passage that support this inference.

Detail 1: \_\_\_\_\_

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Detail 2: \_\_\_\_\_

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**MAKE INFERENCES****53****Stage 4: Comprehension**

**Directions:** Read the passage. Then answer the questions on the next page.

## Just a Bad Day

I watched the kid at the plate. She'd grown maybe six inches since last season, and suddenly her arms and legs seemed too long for her body. Last year she'd been one of the best hitters on my Little League team, but she hadn't been able to connect at all lately. I thought I knew why, too.

As the pitcher wound up, I thought about my own Little League experience. In those days, I was strong and had a good eye and a great arm. I'd never been much of a hitter, but I could play second base pretty well. Then something strange happened. I had a terrible season. My arms felt too long, and my balance was off. I kept overthrowing first base, and I made twice as many errors. To top it all off, my hitting got even worse!

"I'm going to quit the team," I told my coach. "I'm no good anymore."

"You can quit if you want," Coach said, "but I guarantee you'll regret it. Right now, your body's just growing too fast. That's why you feel so awkward. But your skills are still there. Just remember there are boys twice your age who would give anything to have natural talent like yours."

Well, my coach was right. My timing and balance came back. I played high school ball and got a college scholarship. I played two years in the minor leagues and eventually made it to the majors. It was more than I'd ever dreamed on that Little League field. A sore shoulder that wouldn't seem to heal ended my professional career, but I still love the game.

Now I watched as the kid at the plate lunged at the pitch and missed it by a foot. She threw down her bat in disgust and looked at me.

"I'm just no good anymore, Coach," she said.

"Kid," I told her, "pick up that bat and step back up to the plate. There are other kids twice your age who'd give anything to have natural talent like yours."

**MAKE INFERENCES****53****Stage 4: Comprehension (continued)**

**Directions:** Choose or write the answer to each question.

1. What can you infer about the setting of this story?

- Ⓐ It takes place in the future.
- Ⓑ It takes place on a baseball field.
- Ⓒ It takes place a long time ago.
- Ⓓ It takes place on a basketball court.

2. Write a detail from the passage that supports this inference.

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3. What can you infer about the person who is telling this story?

- Ⓐ He is making a movie about baseball.
- Ⓑ He is the father of the kid at the plate.
- Ⓒ He never actually finished college.
- Ⓓ He is the coach of a kids' baseball team.

4. Write a detail from the passage that supports this inference.

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5. What can you infer about the girl at the plate?

- Ⓐ She is growing so fast that it makes her awkward.
- Ⓑ Her arms are too long for her body.
- Ⓒ She does not have a good attitude about baseball.
- Ⓓ Her shoulder is injured and sore.

6. Write a detail from the passage that supports this inference.

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