

Name _____

Literal and Inferred Meanings



Directions: Read each passage carefully. For each question, determine the **literal** meaning of the bolded word, and then choose the answer that best reflects the **inferred** meaning based on context.

1. When the final bell rang, Caleb **dragged** his feet as he walked to the front office. He knew exactly why he'd been called there, and his stomach felt like it was filled with rocks.

Literal meaning of "dragged":

- A. To pull something across the ground
- B. To walk very slowly and reluctantly
- C. To pick something up and carry it
- D. To move something using a rope

Inferred meaning based on context:

- A. Caleb was tired after school
- B. Caleb was nervous and dreading the situation
- C. Caleb forgot why he was being called
- D. Caleb was pretending to be injured

2. The teacher's explanation **shed light on** the confusing math problem. Suddenly, what had seemed impossible now made sense to most of the class.

Literal meaning of "shed light on":

- A. To shine a flashlight
- B. To open a curtain
- C. To explain or clarify something
- D. To turn on a lamp

Inferred meaning based on context: *What did the teacher's explanation accomplish? Use 1-2 sentences to explain.*

3. When Gina saw the broken vase on the floor and her little brother standing nearby looking guilty, she **put two and two together**.

Literal meaning of "put two and two together":

- A. To do a math problem
- B. To pick up two items
- C. To make a logical conclusion
- D. To set things side by side

Inferred meaning based on context:

- A. Gina was blaming someone else
- B. Gina guessed what had happened
- C. Gina cleaned up the mess
- D. Gina ignored the situation