

Name _____



Differentiating Meanings

Directions: Read each passage carefully. Identify both the **literal** meaning of the bolded expression and the **inferred** meaning based on context, tone, and subtext.

1. Everyone was buzzing about the big announcement, but Ella sat quietly, tapping her pencil and staring at the floor. When asked what she thought about the promotion, she said it was “**fine**,” but her voice was flat and her eyes didn’t meet anyone’s.

Literal meaning of “fine”:

- A. Good or acceptable B. Poor or bad
- C. Exceptional D. A punishment fee

Inferred meaning based on context: *What does Ella really seem to feel? Support your answer with clues from the passage.*

2. Jason **bit his tongue** when he heard the comment. He had plenty to say, but instead, he just smiled and nodded, clearly trying to keep the peace.

Literal meaning of “bit his tongue”:

- A. He accidentally injured his mouth B. He said something too quickly
- C. He stayed silent despite wanting to speak D. He yelled out in pain

Inferred meaning based on context:

- A. Jason was being polite to avoid an argument B. Jason was feeling sick
- C. Jason was confused by the comment D. Jason didn’t care what was said

3. Sofia received the trophy with a huge grin, but inside, she felt like a **fraud**. Her team had done most of the work, and though she was the captain, she knew they deserved the credit.

Literal meaning of “fraud”:

- A. A person who lies or deceives B. A financial criminal
- C. A team leader D. A champion

Inferred meaning based on context: *Why does Sofia feel this way, and what deeper theme is the author exploring?*
