



Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Basketball Inference

**Directions:** Read the story carefully. Some of the character's feelings and challenges are not directly stated. Use clues from the text to make inferences. Answer the questions that follow, supporting your answers with text evidence.

### Joining the Team

Marcus had always loved basketball, but joining the middle school team wasn't as easy as he had hoped. On the first day of practice, he dribbled the ball nervously, watching the other players sink shot after shot. When the coach called for a scrimmage, Marcus ran hard but missed two easy layups. He quickly glanced toward the bench, where a few players whispered and laughed.

Later, as the team gathered for drills, Marcus noticed his hands trembling. He tried to shake it off and focused on copying the captain's moves. Still, he felt his chest tighten when the coach corrected him in front of everyone. By the end of practice, Marcus sat quietly in the locker room, staring at his untied shoes. He wanted to belong, but doubts kept bouncing in his mind like the basketballs echoing across the gym.

1. What can you infer about Marcus's feelings during the first practice? Use evidence from the text.
2. Why might Marcus feel nervous when other players whisper and laugh?
3. What does Marcus's reaction to the coach correcting him suggest about his confidence level?
4. How does the description of Marcus staring at his untied shoes add to the reader's understanding of his struggle?
5. Do you think Marcus will quit or keep trying to join the team? Explain your reasoning with evidence from the story.