

Basketball Inference Answer Key

1. Inference about feelings:

Marcus feels anxious and self-conscious. Evidence: "He dribbled the ball nervously" and "his hands trembling."

2. Nervous about whispers:

He may think the other players are making fun of him, which increases his insecurity.

3. Reaction to coach's correction:

It suggests his confidence is low, since "his chest tightened" after being corrected in front of everyone.

4. Untied shoes detail:

This symbolizes his discouragement and sense of not fitting in—he's too upset to even finish simple tasks.

5. Prediction about quitting or trying:

Answers may vary. Strong reasoning: He might keep trying because he still *wants to belong*, even though doubts trouble him.

Teacher Guide

- **Skill Development:** This worksheet strengthens **inference-making** by requiring students to go beyond the text and interpret body language, symbolic details, and character reactions.
- **Teaching Tip:** Encourage students to highlight evidence in the passage before writing inferences. Remind them that inferences combine **clues + background knowledge**.
- **Extension Activity:** Students can write a short continuation of the story where Marcus decides whether to stay or quit, making sure to show his feelings through actions rather than direct statements.