

How can you develop a strong analysis of a selection?

Analysis means to break down into parts. The parts might be individuals in a story or specific ideas in an argument or other components. One way to analyze a text is to use the following two strategies. You will see them in action here one by one.

Strategy 1: Identify what the text says explicitly and cite textual evidence to support your view.

Strategy 2: Identify what the text says implicitly and cite textual evidence to support your view.

Strategy 1: Identify what the text says explicitly and cite textual evidence to support your view.

Explicit information includes statements that the writer states clearly and that most readers would agree on. Some examples are

- facts about events
- statements by individuals
- comments by a narrator or the writer

Directions: Analyze the excerpt on the following slide by breaking it down into important ideas and identifying what is explicitly said. Use the chart on the slide after the excerpt to help you organize your analysis.

The boys from the country and the very small towns seemed to have made better soldiers than the boys from the cities. In the North, for instance, the boys from the rural areas, and especially from the Middle West . . . were a little tougher than the boys from the big cities. They could stand more; they were more self-reliant; perhaps they were more used to handling weapons. In any case, they made very good soldiers.

continued

Analyzing Selections

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On the Southern side, the same was true—even more so. A larger percentage of the men came from rural areas because there were fewer cities in the South. A number of them didn't even bother with shoes, but they were very, very bad boys to get into a fight with.

from “Reflections on the Civil War” (pages 29–30)

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Statement	Explicit Meaning
The boys from the country and the very small towns seemed to have made better soldiers than the boys from the cities.	
In the North . . . the boys from the rural areas, and especially from the Middle West . . . were a little tougher than the boys from the big cities.	

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Statement	Explicit Meaning
The boys from the country and the very small towns seemed to have made better soldiers than the boys from the cities.	City boys were not as good at soldiering as country boys.
In the North . . . the boys from the rural areas, and especially from the Middle West . . . were a little tougher than the boys from the big cities.	Boys from the Middle West were tougher than boys from cities.

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Statement	Explicit Meaning
On the Southern side, the same was true—even more so. A larger percentage of the men came from rural areas because there were fewer cities in the South.	
A number of them didn't even bother with shoes, but they were very, very bad boys to get into a fight with.	

Statement	Explicit Meaning
On the Southern side, the same was true—even more so. A larger percentage of the men came from rural areas because there were fewer cities in the South.	Most Southern soldiers were from rural areas. Just like Northern soldiers, rural boys were better soldiers.
A number of them didn't even bother with shoes, but they were very, very bad boys to get into a fight with.	Rural boys didn't care about shoes, but they were very tough in a fight.

Strategy 2: Identify what the text says implicitly and cite textual evidence to support your view.

Implicit information includes everything that a reader infers from a text. This often includes

- the motivation for an individual's actions
- the significance of a plot development
- the theme of a piece of writing

Since implicit information is not stated clearly, various readers are more likely to disagree about it than they are about explicit information.

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Directions: Analyze the selection from “Reflections on the Civil War” stating what you learn implicitly.

Statement	Implicit Meaning
The boys from the country and the very small towns seemed to have made better soldiers than the boys from the cities.	
. . . the boys from the rural areas, and especially from the Middle West . . . were a little tougher than the boys from the big cities.	

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Statement	Implicit Meaning
The boys from the country and the very small towns seemed to have made better soldiers than the boys from the cities.	Boys from the country were used to rougher conditions of living. Since all soldiers must endure difficult living conditions, country boys were better soldiers.
. . . the boys from the rural areas, and especially from the Middle West . . . were a little tougher than the boys from the big cities.	Boys from the frontier (the Middle West) were tough because life on the frontier was harder than in cities.

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Statement	Implicit Meaning
On the Southern side, the same was true—even more so. A larger percentage of the men came from rural areas because there were fewer cities in the South.	
A number of them didn't even bother with shoes, but they were very, very bad boys to get into a fight with.	

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Statement	Implicit Meaning
On the Southern side, the same was true—even more so. A larger percentage of the men came from rural areas because there were fewer cities in the South.	In general, Southern soldiers were tougher than Northern soldiers because more of them were from rural areas.
A number of them didn't even bother with shoes, but they were very, very bad boys to get into a fight with.	Some of the Southern soldiers were from such poor backgrounds that they weren't used to wearing shoes. However, that didn't stop them from being tough and brave.

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Directions: On the next screen is an excerpt from “The Pickets.” It describes how two soldiers, Alden from the North and Craig from the South, exchange supplies across a river during a cease-fire. After reading the excerpt, explain what it says about the characters both explicitly and implicitly.

Alden laid out two biscuits. As he was about to hack a quarter from the third, he happened to glance over the creek at his enemy. There was no mistaking the expression in his face. Starvation was stamped on every feature.

When Craig caught Alden's eye, he spat with elaborate care, whistled a bar of the "Bonny Blue Flag," and pretended to yawn.

Alden hesitated, glanced at Connor, then placed three whole biscuits in the corn-husk, added a pinch of coffee, and tossed the parcel over to Craig.

Analyzing Selections

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Directions: From each phrase from the passage, state what you learn explicitly.

Statement	Explicit Meaning
Alden laid out two biscuits. . . .There was no mistaking the expression in [Craig's] face. Starvation was stamped on every feature.	
When Craig caught Alden's eye, he spat with elaborate care, whistled a bar of the "Bonny Blue Flag," and pretended to yawn.	

Analyzing Selections

Cluster 1 page 23

Directions: From each phrase from the passage, state what you learn explicitly.

Statement	Explicit Meaning
Alden laid out two biscuits. . . .There was no mistaking the expression in [Craig's] face. Starvation was stamped on every feature.	Alden begins to lay out two biscuits. Then he observes that Craig is hungry.
When Craig caught Alden's eye, he spat with elaborate care, whistled a bar of the "Bonny Blue Flag," and pretended to yawn.	Alden catches Craig watching him prepare the food, but Craig pretends he is not interested.

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Statement	Explicit Meaning
Alden hesitated, glanced at Connor, then placed three whole biscuits in the corn-husk, added a pinch of coffee, and tossed the parcel over to Craig.	

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Statement	Explicit Meaning
Alden hesitated, glanced at Connor, then placed three whole biscuits in the corn-husk, added a pinch of coffee, and tossed the parcel over to Craig.	Alden gives Craig three biscuits and some coffee.

Analyzing Selections

Cluster 1 page 23

Directions: From each phrase from the passage, state what you learn implicitly.

Statement	Implicit Meaning
Alden laid out two biscuits. . . .There was no mistaking the expression in his face. Starvation was stamped on every feature.	
When Craig caught Alden's eye, he spat with elaborate care, whistled a bar of the "Bonny Blue Flag," and pretended to yawn.	

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Statement	Implicit Meaning
Alden laid out two biscuits. . . .There was no mistaking the expression in his face. Starvation was stamped on every feature.	Because Alden notices that his enemy is starving, we learn that he is observant and thoughtful.
When Craig caught Alden's eye, he spat with elaborate care, whistled a bar of the "Bonny Blue Flag," and pretended to yawn.	Alden doesn't want Craig to know that he is very hungry.

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Statement	Implicit Meaning
Alden hesitated, glanced at Connor, then placed three whole biscuits in the corn-husk, added a pinch of coffee, and tossed the parcel over to Craig.	

Analyzing Selections

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Statement	Implicit Meaning
Alden hesitated, glanced at Connor, then placed three whole biscuits in the corn-husk, added a pinch of coffee, and tossed the parcel over to Craig.	Alden feels sorry for his enemy and gives him more food than he originally intended. He feels self-conscious about Connor seeing his act of kindness.