

Analyzing a Soldier's Experience

Cluster 2 page 50

Analyzing is breaking down a topic or subject into parts so that it is easier to understand.

You use analysis when you

- study the moves of an outstanding athlete
- pick out a new hairstyle or go shopping for new clothes
- learn the rules for a new game or learn how to use new software

In what other situations might you use the skill of analysis?

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Cluster 2 page 50

Essential Question: What was the war experience?

Directions: Notice how one reader analyzed **Passage A** and highlighted sections that reveal what life is like for a soldier. Notice also how the reader explained the highlighted text. Analyze **Passage B** by underlining details that provide insight into the war experience. Then write a short explanation of each detail.

Analyzing a Soldier's Experience

Cluster 2 page 50

Passage A

I signed up for the Special Forces because I had a romantic notion about the army and war and that sort of thing. I wanted to have an adventure for a few years. Through various twists and turns, and the military bureaucracy, I ended up in the infantry.

continued

Details

← Many people joined the army for lack of anything better to do and for adventure.

Analyzing a Soldier's Experience

Cluster 2 page 50

Passage A

We spent most of our time cleaning our rifles, going on war maneuvers, war games, getting into trouble, very boring barracks duty. Then all of a sudden, one day we were told that all the short-timers were going to be let out of the army. People who had longer time to serve would be merged with an experimental unit called the 11th Air Assault. . . .

continued

Details

← Army life could be boring and tedious.

Analyzing a Soldier's Experience

Cluster 2 page 50

Passage A

Then one day in July we listened to Lyndon Johnson give a speech when he announced that he was sending us, the 1st Cavalry Division over to Vietnam and that he was, in effect, declaring war on North Vietnam without really declaring war on North Vietnam. That's when it hit us that we were going into combat.

from "Jack Smith," pages 23–24

Details

A soldier's life can be unpredictable.



Analyzing a Soldier's Experience

Cluster 2 page 50

Passage B (Your Analysis)

Details

The next day we walked to Landing Zone Albany for what we thought was extraction, being lifted out by helicopter. We were out for a Sunday stroll in the woods. We were strolling along, and we were a little apprehensive because we knew there had been this huge battle. We'd seen the bodies.

continued

Analyzing a Soldier's Experience

Cluster 2 page 50

Your analysis may look like this.

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continued

Details

← The soldiers were walking casually, but felt worried about the situation.

Analyzing a Soldier's Experience

Cluster 2 page 50

Passage B (Your Analysis)

Details

Leaving the landing zone, you walk on bodies a hundred feet outside the dry creek bed and the foxholes. We knew there were a lot of enemy units around and some of us were a little apprehensive about walking in such a casual fashion.

continued

Analyzing a Soldier's Experience

Cluster 2 page 50

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Leaving the landing zone, you walk on bodies a hundred feet outside the dry creek bed and the foxholes. We knew there were a lot of enemy units around and some of us were a little apprehensive about walking in such a casual fashion.

continued

Details

They felt
unprepared and
vulnerable.



Analyzing a Soldier's Experience

Cluster 2 page 50

Passage B (Your Analysis)

Details

But we did, and a number of us remarked on it. “Shouldn’t we have guards out?” And, “There are probably bad guys around here. I hope we don’t get ambushed. I hope they (meaning our commanding officers) know what they are doing.”

from “Jack Smith,” pages 23–24

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Cluster 2 page 50

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Details

Soldiers look to their commanding officers for guidance, but sometimes wonder if they can trust the officers’ judgment.

