

1.4 Inference and the writer’s attitude

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ **Total: 11 marks**

KEY WORDS attitude 态度 • implies 暗示 • inference 推断 • word choice 用词 • paragraph 段落

Objective

Build the skills to answer exam questions on **inference and the writer’s attitude** 推断与作者的态度 — working out what a writer thinks when they never say it directly.

You must be able to:

- infer meaning that the text implies but does not state
- identify a writer’s attitude from their word choices
- support an inference by quoting the exact words that led to it

1 Worked examples

■ Inference is evidence plus reasoning

An inference is not a guess. It is a conclusion the text forces, even though the text does not say it.

She checked the timetable for the fourth time and looked down the empty road.

We can infer she is **anxious** and that the bus is **late**. The text says neither. The evidence is *the fourth time* and *empty road*.

■ Attitude lives in word choice

Two writers can report the same fact and reveal opposite attitudes.

- *The council has finally agreed to repair the road.* — *finally* implies the writer thinks it took too long.
- *The council has already agreed to repair the road.* — *already* implies the writer thinks it was quick.

Watch for: adverbs (*merely, only, finally, supposedly*), adjectives with a judgement in them (*cramped* rather than *small*), and verbs of doubt (*claims, insists, admits*).

■ How to write the answer

Always quote. A statement of attitude with no quotation earns half of what it could:

The writer is impatient with the delay. He writes that the work “should have been finished two winters ago”, which shows he thinks the delay is unreasonable, not merely unfortunate.

2 Practice

Read the text, then answer the questions.

The new sports centre opened in March, four years after it was promised and roughly twice over its original budget. The mayor described the building as “a facility this town has long deserved”. Standing outside on opening day, I counted three cycle racks and a car park for two hundred vehicles.

Inside, the equipment is genuinely good. The pool is the length the swimming club asked for, and the coaches I spoke to were delighted. But the membership fee is forty dollars a month, and the town’s two secondary schools have been told there is no free session available for their pupils until the autumn.

I asked the manager about the fee. He explained that the centre must cover its costs, which is true, and that a discount scheme is “under consideration”, which he has said before.

2.1 What can you infer about the writer’s opinion of the car park and cycle racks? Support your answer with evidence. [2]

2.2 Explain what the writer suggests by putting “under consideration” in quotation marks and adding “which he has said before”. [2]

2.3 Is the writer’s view of the centre entirely negative? Support your answer. [2]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 Which word in the first paragraph most clearly signals the writer’s disapproval?

- A opened
- B promised
- C roughly
- D deserved

3.2 Explain the effect of the phrase “four years after it was promised and roughly twice over its original budget” being placed in the very first sentence. [2]

3.3 Choose **one** phrase from the text and explain what it reveals about the writer’s attitude. [3]

Solutions

2.1 The writer thinks the centre has been designed for drivers rather than for people arriving on foot or by bike. The evidence is the contrast between “three cycle racks” and “a car park for two hundred vehicles”, and the fact that the writer counted them at all.

2.2 The quotation marks distance the writer from the manager’s phrase, suggesting he does not believe it; “which he has said before” implies the promise is repeated and never acted on.

2.3 No. He praises the equipment directly — “the equipment is genuinely good”, the pool is what the club asked for, and the coaches were delighted.

3.1 D. The mayor’s word “deserved” is quoted, and the writer immediately undercuts it by counting the cycle racks — the quotation is used to expose the claim rather than to support it. *Accept C with a strong justification about “roughly” implying carelessness with money.*

3.2 It places the delay and the overspend before any of the centre’s merits, so the reader judges everything that follows against that failure — a positive opening would have produced a different impression of the same facts.

3.3 One mark for a correctly chosen phrase, one for an accurate statement of the attitude, one for explaining how the words create it. For example: “a discount scheme is ‘under consideration’” shows scepticism, because reporting an official phrase in the manager’s own words, rather than as a fact, invites the reader to doubt it.