# Table of Contents

# Important Information for Using This Book

In simple, understandable terms, critical thinking is the identification and evaluation of evidence to guide decision making. *Critical Thinking for Reading Comprehension* teaches the identification and evaluation of text and image-based information using short, fun activities. To help students not familiar with the concept of evidence, there is a short lesson on evidence at the beginning of the book.

The activities in this book are different from many reading comprehension activities in that they are "low read", and instead require careful reading and critical thinking to identify the evidence that will support or identify the answer. After just a few activities, most students will come to understand the importance of reading for understanding and evidence-based decision making. This is not just an academic skill; this is a life skill. These activities are ideal for both independent work and class discussion problems.

To maximize the critical thinking and reading comprehension potential in these activities, students should be asked to verbally describe their evidence/rationale for each answer—even incorrect answers. Finding the best evidence for the correct answer is really what these activities are all about, but attempting to justify a wrong answer is often part of the learning process. When a student answers a question incorrectly and provides his or her rationale, the student should be informed if the answer is incorrect and given an opportunity to find the correct answer and evidence. If an answer is correct but lacks the correct evidence, the student should be informed of that, and given another opportunity to identify the evidence for the answer.

Some of the questions are challenging to the degree that even adults—on occasion—miss the correct answer. For this reason, I recommended the teacher review the problems and answers before distributing the activity to students. Knowing the answer and evidence for a question will make it easier for you to smoothly lead the student towards the correct evidence, without giving the student the answer.

These activities are challenging, but they are also fun once a student has the confidence and determination to seek out the evidence that leads to the correct answer. I strongly suggest teachers tell students in advance that these questions are challenging, so they know that they should take their time answering each question. It is also helpful to lead students through the first few activities until you believe students have grasped the need for the careful reading that will identify the evidence. Nearly all students enjoy the activities once they know what is required from them to succeed.

If you have any suggestions or disagreements with any of the answers, please let The Critical Thinking Co. know. I am always interested in getting feedback and suggestions that will improve the book. Enjoy!

# Evidence Lesson

> Evidence is information that leads you to believe or know something.

**Read the sentences below and look at the picture.  Explain the evidence that helps you answer each question.**

[1]Blas and his son Alex left these tracks on the beach right after Alex got out of the water.  [2]Blas wanted to eat lunch after Alex was dry and dressed.

1.  Which tracks belong to Alex?

    The first sentence tells us that tracks were made right after Alex got out of the water.  The second sentence tells us Blass is waiting for Alex to get dry and dressed.  This evidence tells us the bare footprints belong to Alex.

2.  Were these tracks made in the early morning?

    The second sentence tells us Blass is waiting for Alex to get dry and dressed so they can go to lunch.  This evidence tells us the tracks were made after the morning, around lunch time.

# 1. Fishing

Observation and Reading for Evidence – Deduction

[1]Tom, his son, and his brother are fishing.  [2]Each of them caught one fish. [3]Tom's brother caught the largest fish.



## Answer each question and then explain the evidence for your answer.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | The picture is Tom and his son. | True | False | Unknown |
| 2. | Tom's son did not catch a fish. | True | False | Unknown |
| 3. | Tom's son is in the picture. | True | False | Unknown |
| 4. | Tom's son's fish is smaller than his brother's. | True | False | Unknown |
| 5. | Tom and his son both caught small fish. | True | False | Unknown |

# 9. Mind Benders®
Reading for Evidence – Deduction

**DIRECTIONS: Fill in the chart using + for yes or – for no as you solve the puzzle. Be sure to mark all the – (no) answers from each clue to help find all the + (yes) answers.**



|         | girl | man | boy | girl |
|---------|------|-----|-----|------|
| slow    |      |     |     |      |
| fast    |      |     |     |      |
| faster  |      |     |     |      |
| fastest |      |     |     |      |

Four bikers have a race. Find out how fast each person rode.

1. The man with the beard rode faster than the girl without the helmet, but finished right behind the boy.

2. The girl with the helmet always rides faster than both males.

# 11. Three Shapes

### Observing and Reading for Evidence – Deduction

## Read each description and then mark the picture it describes.

1. A square that is in front of a black shape and a green shape.

2. A red shape above and to the left and a black shape in the right bottom corner.

3. A green circle hiding part of a triangle that is to the right of a black triangle.

4. A triangle that is to the right of a square which is in the upper left corner.

5. A green shape that is to the right of a black shape and to the left of a red shape.

6. A green shape that is partly covered by a square which is below and to the left of a three-sided shape.
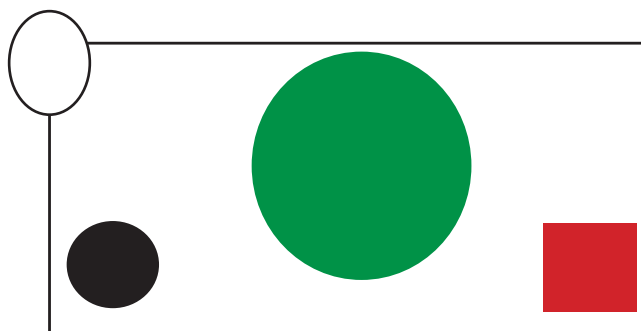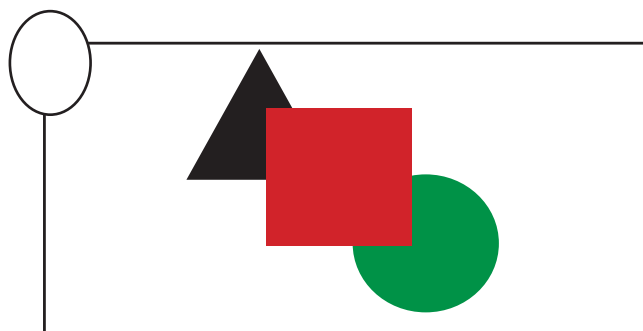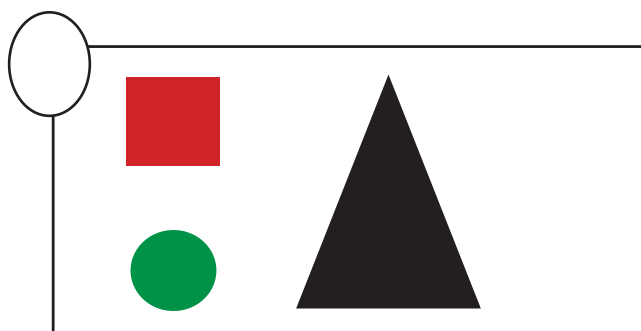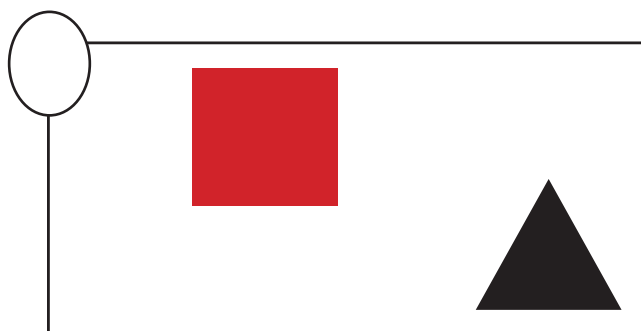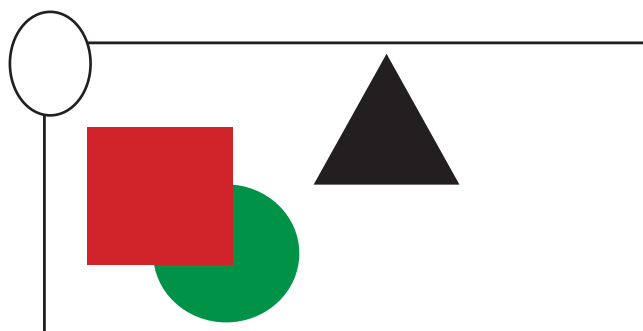
# 12.  Pets
### Observing and Reading for Evidence – Deduction

[1]The Randle family has three pets.  [2]Two of their pets are dogs.  [3]Both dogs are larger than the other pet who is the youngest.  [4]The Randle's pets' names are Whiskers, Happy, and Bob.  [5]The largest dog is Whiskers.  [6]Two of the Randle's pets are pictured below.



**Answer each question and then explain the evidence for your answer.**

1.  The dog in the picture is the youngest pet.              True        False        Unknown

2.  The largest pet is in the picture.                       True        False        Unknown

3.  The cat's name is Happy or Bob.                          True        False        Unknown

4.  Whiskers is larger than the cat and the other dog.
                                                             True        False        Unknown

5.  The dog in the picture is older than one or two of the other pets.
                                                             True        False        Unknown

# 36. Alligator Gar

Observing and Reading for Evidence – Inference

[1]Alligator gar are freshwater fish with long, slender, bodies, and long snouts. [2]The alligator gar can grow up to 8 feet long and weigh more than 300 pounds. [3]Adults have two rows of large teeth on either side of the upper jaw.  [4]When young, they feed on small fish and insects.  [5]Adults mostly eat fish, but will also eat frogs, snakes, turtles, birds, and small animals.

[6]Alligator gar can live up to 100 years.  [7]They grow very fast when young, but growth slows with age.  [8]A 3-foot alligator gar is typically about 2.5 years old, but a 7-footer is around 40 years old.  [9]The largest alligator gar ever caught weighed 327 pounds and was probably at least 95 years old.

**Read each question and look for evidence in the story to choose the correct answer.**

1.  An alligator gar that is more than 7 feet long, is probably more than 40 years old.

        Probably True        Probably False        Unknown

2.  Alligator gars are the largest freshwater fish in the world.

        Probably True        Probably False        Unknown

3.  A large alligator gar might try to eat a muskrat.

        Probably True        Probably False        Unknown

4.  A 35 year old alligator gar is usually shorter than a 35 year old man.

        Probably True        Probably False        Unknown