

Critical Thinking Skills Tutorial:

**Drawing Inferences
From Literature**

Writing Center

English 800 Center

**YOU DO NOT NEED TO PRINT THIS
TUTORIAL!**

**All notes and exercises should be done
on separate sheets of paper, which you
will bring to an Instructional Aide in the
Writing Center.**

**As you work through the tutorial, make
sure to see an instructor in the Writing
Center or English 800 Center if you
have any questions or difficulties.**

Drawing Inferences from Literature:

Introduction: Literature & Critical Thinking

Written ideas come to in many forms: as persuasive or logical arguments, as explanations, or as literary fiction. No matter how written ideas are presented, we need to think critically to understand and evaluate them.

NOTE: The skills involved in understanding and evaluating logical or persuasive arguments are covered in the *Understanding Argument: Logic* and *Understanding Argument: Rhetoric* tutorials.

This tutorial focuses on the critical thinking skills that permit us to understand and learn from literature — novels, plays, poems or short stories — by helping us draw inferences from literature — to "read between the lines" — and to distinguish between reasonable and unreasonable inferences.

- We must be able to read closely to understand and enjoy literature. This means we need to pick up ideas implied in the words, imagery, plot or dialogue to get the full impact of the work.
- We must also read carefully. Readers shouldn't make unfounded guesses, or read things into texts that just aren't there because we expect them to be.

Critical Thinking: A Definition

No single definition can adequately describe all aspects of critical thinking. But here are some important elements:

- **Critical thinking consists of asking ourselves what we mean.** Chances are that at some point, you've said to another person -- your best friend, your mom, your youngest son -- "I love you." What did you mean by that? It's not clear. You might mean that you admire the person's character more than anyone else, or that you have more fun with that person than anyone else, or that you feel most at home with that person, or that this person provided you with the life you wanted and you're grateful, or that you feel this person accepts you. In short, the statement "I love you" tells us almost nothing about what's in your heart. The critical thinker looks beneath the words "I love you" and tries to understand, and explain, what he or she really needs, expects and gets from the other person.
- **Critical thinking consists in never taking for granted that we know what other people mean.** Everyone summarizes complex needs and beliefs with broad-brush statements like "I love you," or "He's a total jerk!" So just as we need to keep asking ourselves what we mean by these generalizations, we need to be clear about what other people mean. When your friend tells you that he's "there for you," you may both understand this quite differently. To him, this might mean that he is generally on your side in life, and will listen sympathetically to your problems. To you, it might mean that he's going to come over next Tuesday to help

you work on your car. Often, our frustrations and disappointments with other people lie in our assuming that others use words in the same way that we do.

- **Critical thinking consists in not imposing our assumptions on what we read and hear.** We don't read or listen with an empty head: we have expectations and assumptions that we impose on what we're hearing or reading. So unless we listen carefully, we may misunderstand them. Imagine you are introduced to someone called Bark--because his name sounds like the much commoner name "Mark," you'll probably assume he's called Mark. We do the same thing with ideas. We bring many assumptions to our reading -- about morals, tastes, values, the way people live -- and we need to be careful not to read them into the text, simply because we expect them to be there. For one thing, the writer may not share these assumptions, if he or she is from a different culture or era. For another, the writer may indeed want to challenge these assumptions!

Literature And Critical Thinking

How can literature help us become better critical thinkers? Let us count the ways:

1. **Literature gives us the chance to experience life from another point of view.** Our individual experience is limited; but literature permits us to see the world through the eyes of others very different from ourselves. As we participate in these other lives, we expand our experience.
2. **Literature can challenge our values and perceptions.** The more we understand other points of view, the better we can understand and evaluate our own.
3. **Studying literature trains us to listen and read closely.** Too often, we miss a lot of what we see and hear because we don't have the time or the skill to process it. But studying literature trains us to look for details, subtleties and other complexities.
4. **Studying literature sharpens our ear for language.** Language can deceive and reveal, so critical readers pay close attention to language choices -- tell-tale slips of the tongue, interesting imagery, suggestive phrases. This greatly improves their ability to make sense of how people use language, and thus to evaluate and understand what people are saying.
5. **Literature gives us the means of self-knowledge.** We like basic summaries and big-picture generalizations; we often wave away the fiddly details. "The guy's basically a big jerk," we say of someone who has annoyed us. Studying literature teaches us that these statements mean nothing. What kind of "jerk?" What specifically annoys us about his behavior? Why does this annoy us in particular? Why does he act this way? How do we expect him to act, and why? How does he see himself? Does he think we're jerks, and might he be right? When we write about characters or values as presented in fiction, we must be detailed; and in searching out these details, we find ourselves challenging our own values and expectations.

Finally:

As you study literature, in this tutorial or in class, you may find yourself getting a bit resentful. Here are some common reactions we've heard in class:

"How can we infer all this into one little sentence?"

"C'mon -- how do we know the author meant all this stuff, anyway?"

"I just want to enjoy the story, not analyze it to death."

If you find yourself thinking these things, remember this:

Literature does not make simple things complicated. On the contrary: life really IS complicated -- good literature just trains us to see its complexities!

IN YOUR NOTES: Write down answers to the following questions (keep these to submit with exit quiz):

1. What are some important elements of critical thinking?
2. How can literature sharpen our critical thinking skills?

Drawing Inferences: Active Reading

A good story or poem contains lots of details, more than readers can usually take in all at once. So the more closely we read a rich piece of writing, the more details we find. The more details we find, the more colorful and vivid the story becomes, the more strongly we respond to it, and the more it tells us about our lives.

Here are three golden rules for discerning these details:

1. Read Carefully — Look at what's on the page.

- Pay attention to what characters actually say or do.
- Pay attention to the choice of imagery or words.

2. Read Inquisitively — Ask yourself questions!

- Ask what we can infer from the dialogue or plot.
- Ask what the imagery or choice of language suggests.

3. Read Reasonably — Don't project ideas onto the text.

- Don't force insights: let them emerge.
- Make sure you can tie your insights directly to the text.
- Make sure you are not projecting your own concerns onto the text.

To explore how to put those rules into practice, let's look at some very brief examples of making inferences from literature.

Five Examples of Active Reading

Here are five examples of how much you can reasonably infer from just a few lines. Each example offers an analysis of

- careful reading that closely recaps the content, looks for words or phrases that need to be looked up, and notes the phrasing;
- inquisitive reading, where the reader asks questions and draws inferences;
- reasonable reading, where the reader draws boundaries about what can and cannot be inferred.

Each example concludes with journal questions to help strengthen your understanding.

Example 1. *Long Day's Journey Into Night*, by Eugene O'Neill

This play describes a very unhappy family, whose love for each other is complicated by deeply held resentments and jealousies. In one scene, elder son Jamie--in a moment of drunken sentimentality--tells his younger brother:

"I love your guts, kid."

- **Reading carefully:** Look closely at the cliché Jamie has used to tell his brother he loves him. Is this turn of phrase quite right? There are clichés to express love -- "I love you to pieces," "I love you to death," etc. But this phrase is usually, "I *hate* your guts."
- **Reading inquisitively:** Why should Jamie use a cliché that usually expresses hate? Does he even realize what he's said? He's drunk -- being drunk often lowers our inhibitions, so we say or do things that we normally won't acknowledge. Maybe he resents his brother, but won't admit it.
- **Reading reasonably:** You might read this and say, "Oh, it doesn't matter that Jamie says "love your guts;" my brother makes slips of the tongue all the time, but that doesn't mean that he hates me." Fine! But you're discussing O'Neill's play, not your own life. You're trying to infer what O'Neill sees in human relationships. You may get along well with your family, but many people don't -- the world is full of tortured relationships where love and hate coexist in equal force, and this play offers an insight into them. (Discussing the play generates ideas, which will enrich your understanding of your own life, however remote it seems from the world of the play--and in the case of *Long Day's Journey*, we hope it is!)

IN YOUR NOTES: Write down answers to the following questions (keep these to submit with exit quiz):

3. Respond to the comment above on "Reading Reasonably." What do you think we can learn about life by reading about people and events that don't resemble what we already know?
4. Have you enjoyed or been moved by a film, book or story about someone in completely different circumstances from yours? Why or why not?

Example 2. *Pride and Prejudice*, by Jane Austen

This novel describes a much stabler family: Mr. and Mrs. Bennet and their five adult daughters, living in a small English town. But this family has its dynamics too, as we can see from a snippet of dialogue between the parents:

"Mr. Bennet... You take delight in vexing me. You have no compassion for my poor nerves."

"You mistake me, my dear. I have a high respect for your nerves. They are my old friends. I have heard you mention them with consideration these twenty years at least."

- **Reading carefully:** We learn that they've been married twenty years. Mrs. B thinks that Mr. B "takes delight in vexing her." Mr. B. replies sarcastically, or teasingly -- he doesn't say directly, "Stop whining!" but suggests that he's heard her complain for a long time.
- **Reading inquisitively:** Does Mr. B really take a delight in vexing her? Has he been provoking her for 20 years? Well, he's teasing her right now (saying her nerves are his "old friends"). Why should he tease her? Perhaps he is a naturally teasing person. Perhaps this is how he copes with having a whiney wife. But would she be whiney if her husband teased her less? Maybe he's using teasing as a way of not taking her seriously. (Note how he doesn't really answer her question here.)
- **Reading reasonably:** It seems odd for a wife to call her husband by his last name, and readers might infer that this indicates something is deeply wrong with their relationship. But in fact, this novel was written in the early nineteenth century, when it was quite common for middle-class married couples to address each other by their last names. The use of "Mr." and "Mrs." doesn't signify anything wrong with their relationship, so we shouldn't project that into the text. (But it is worth noting that in the early nineteenth century, this usage was already perceived as rather old-fashioned--this does add a detail to their characters.)

IN YOUR NOTES: Write down answers to the following questions (keep these to submit with exit quiz):

5. Summarize the inferences drawn from this dialogue between the Bennets.
6. Why is it unreasonable to infer much from the fact that Mrs. Bennet addresses her husband by his last name?

Example 3: from *The Rape of the Lock*, Alexander Pope

This poem, written in 1714, describes how a young man cuts a lock of hair from a girl he admires, without her permission. The poem begins with a description of the heroine, Belinda, waking up in her bedroom and getting ready for the day. These lines come from a description of her make-up table:

The tortoise and the elephant unite,
Transformed to combs, the speckled and the white.
Here files of pins extend their shining rows,
Puffs, powders, patches, Bibles, *billet-doux*.

- **Reading carefully:** First of all, make sure you understand the content. As you read, you will certainly come across words and phrases you don't know; we all do. You must look up or be ready to ask about references or words you don't understand. For instance, if you don't know what a *billet-doux* is, look it up! OK: A *billet-doux* is a love letter. It's not a very serious word for a love-letter -- it's a bit coy, like the term "sweet nothings" or "special friend." One wouldn't use this term for something serious and passionate; these would probably be notes from admirers. So her table is covered with make-up (puffs, powders etc.); *billet-doux*; Bibles. The pins are probably hairpins, not just regular straight pins, and very expensive and ornamental. She has a lot of them (they extend their shining rows -- it takes several pins to form one row, let alone several). There are two combs too. The white one is a transformed elephant, and the speckled one a transformed tortoise. So... the white one is ivory, and the other tortoiseshell.
- **Reading inquisitively:** What does this list tell us about her? She has a lot of make-up and hairpins. She's probably quite vain. What about other items on her table, like the Bible? Does this mean she is really religious? Hmmmm... Something about the way it's tucked into that list, as if it were just another bit of decoration, suggests that she probably ISN'T. It sounds more like Belinda is pretty superficial, and doesn't make much distinction between important and trivial things. What about the "elephant" and "tortoise?" The idea that the mighty elephant exists merely as an ivory comb somehow underlines her silliness. Do we think these *billet-doux* are from the great passionate love of her life? Somehow, it doesn't seem likely. Belinda seems to be all about surfaces (primarily, her own). Also, the line doesn't say "a *billet-doux*," but just "*billet-doux*" -- meaning there are more than one. So this isn't a love letter from her one true love, but a pile (or at least, a few) letters.
- **Reading reasonably:** Pope seems to suggest that Belinda is quite superficial, and perhaps vain. What about selfish? Uncaring? Stupid? That's going too far. We tend to assume that vain people are also selfish, but this may be one of those assumptions that we need to watch out for. Vanity and selfishness are, after all, quite distinct qualities. We also need to be careful not to impose on fictional Belinda any resemblance to someone we may know, or we'll miss Pope's point. Belinda may remind you of a friend who is vain, superficial, selfish and deceitful; or she may remind you of a friend who is vain and superficial, yet charming and decent at heart. Either way, don't let the resemblances tempt you to read things into the poem that aren't there.

IN YOUR NOTES: Write down answers to the following questions (keep these to submit with exit quiz):

7. In your own words, describe what you've learned about Belinda's personality from these four lines.
8. Single out the images or words that gave you your impressions.

Example 4: from *Moby Dick*, by Herman Melville

This nineteenth century novel describes the obsessive pursuit of a great white whale. It is narrated by one of the participants, who opens with the (very famous) line:

“Call me Ishmael.”

- **Reading carefully.** The narrator is speaking directly to the readers, telling us the story. He instructs us to call him "Ishmael."
- **Reading inquisitively:** Is Ishmael really his name? Probably not -- he doesn't say "I am Ishmael," but "Call me Ishmael." So: there's something mysterious about this narrator. Does this pseudonym have any significance? Who was "Ishmael?" After investigating, you'd find out that Ishmael is a Biblical character, the son of Abraham by his wife's maid Hagar. In Genesis 16:12, Ishmael is described as "a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him." So the narrator is using an Old Testament name which makes us think of a loner, a man who doesn't fit in with others. With only three words, then, we are thrown into the company of this mysterious person, a kind of loner or misfit, who has sat us down and is about to tell us the story of his life.
- **Reading reasonably:** We've read quite a lot into the name "Ishmael," mostly because the narrator deliberately adopts it. However, we shouldn't forget that we're only three words into the novel. Maybe we are supposed to feel the Old Testament associations of "Ishmael" and use them, as we have done here, to enrich our understanding of the character. But if Ishmael and the novel as a whole turn out to be quite different from what this suggests, we shouldn't force the issue.

IN YOUR NOTES: Write down answers to the following questions (keep these to submit with exit quiz):

9. What kind of character do you think Ishmael will turn out to be: lovable, villainous, or mysterious? Why?
10. If you had to guess, what kind of novel do you think *Moby Dick* will turn out to be: a comedy or a drama? Why?

Example 5: from "The Enormous Radio," by John Cheever

This short story describes how a new radio gives a respectable married couple an unwelcome insight into their neighbors' lives. The husband, Jim Westcott, is described thus:

He wore his graying hair cut very short, he was dressed in the kind of clothes his class had worn at Andover, and his manner was earnest, vehement, and intentionally naive.

- **Reading carefully:** What's Andover? Cheever includes this detail to give us background, so readers need to know what it is. In fact, Andover is an exclusive private high school on the East Coast. Jim's probably not a recent high school graduate, since his hair is graying. His manner is earnest, vehement and intentionally naive. (Make sure you know what all these terms mean!)
- **Reading inquisitively:** How can one be intentionally naive? It's impossible: naivety implies a kind of innocence, so being intentionally naive just means you're being childish or perhaps a bit phony. Of course, Cheever says that Jim's manner is intentionally naive. So Jim may or may not be naive, but he tries to come across that way. Perhaps he is "vehement" because he works hard to project these qualities. Interesting what qualities he chooses: not worldly, or street-wise, or funny or brainy. Sounds like he's trying to be a kind of Jimmy Stewart-type (Jimmy Stewart was a famous movie star who portrayed decent, straightforward, ordinary folk). We know that he went to a famously exclusive high school, so he's probably from a wealthy family. Given that his hair is graying, why is he still dressing like his high school classmates? Maybe he's stuck in the "good old days" and still thinks of himself as, above all, an Andover graduate. That suggests that he hasn't seen much of the world, nor that he's grown up much. Note too that he dresses in the kind of clothes that his whole class wore. Perhaps, he's not an original thinker. He's conservative; note the short haircut.
- **Reading reasonably:** Is Jim Westcott a particularly bad person? Deceitful? Disguised? We can't infer that much from these lines. We know he's making some kind of effort to present himself a certain way, but then again, perhaps we all do.

IN YOUR NOTES: Write down answers to the following questions (keep these to submit with exit quiz):

11. What do we learn about Jim Westcott in those lines?

Conclusion

Before moving to the exercises, here are some more questions for your notes:

IN YOUR NOTES: Write down answers to the following questions (keep these to submit with exit quiz):

12. What are the three golden rules for reading closely?
13. Based on the examples above, describe what it means to read carefully.
14. Based on the examples above, describe what it means to read inquisitively.
15. Based on the examples above, describe what it means to read reasonably.

Exercises 1-5

Instructions: Read the extracts and answer questions about the inferences you can draw from them (regarding plot, character and tone). Make notes on the questions for at least ten minutes, and then check the "Feedback" section.

NOTE: Your answers will not be "right" or "wrong," the way other quiz answers are "right" or "wrong." This is literary analysis, after all! However, the "Feedback" will include

- a range of reasonable inferences based on the passage;
- a few examples of fairly typical misreadings.

Misreadings often stem from readers projecting expectations onto the text based on their own experiences and culture, rather than what is actually in the text. Sometimes, too, readers just infer too much! The examples given are intended to help clarify where you might be following a dead end.

NOTE: Dates refer to the date of publication, not necessarily the time when the story takes place.

Exercise 1

From "The Yellow Wallpaper," by Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1892)

A husband and wife are spending the summer in a country house. The story is told from the point of view of the wife, and written like a diary.

.... There is something strange about the house -- I can feel it.

I even said so to John one moonlight evening, but he said what I felt was a draught, and shut the window.

I get unreasonably angry with John sometimes. I'm sure I never used to be so sensitive. I think it is due to this nervous condition.

But John says if I feel so I shall neglect proper self-control; so I take pains to control myself -- before him, at least, and that makes me very tired.

I don't like our room one bit. I wanted one downstairs that opened onto the piazza and had roses all over the window, and such pretty old-fashioned chintz hangings! But John would not hear of it.

He said there was only one window and not room for two beds, and no near room for him if he took another.

He is very careful and loving, and hardly lets me stir without special direction.

I have a schedule prescription for each hour in the day; he takes all care from me, and so I feel basely ungrateful not to value it more.

He said he came here solely on my account that I was to have perfect rest and all the air I could get. "Your exercise depends on your strength, my dear," said he, "and your food somewhat on your appetite; but air you can absorb all the time." So we took the nursery at the top of the house.

GLOSSARY:

- Her "nervous condition" is her illness
- piazza: the terrace
- chintz: a fabric

Questions for "The Yellow Wallpaper "

1. Why do you think the narrator and her husband have come to this house?
2. What can you infer about John's personality? Why?
3. Do you think they are happily married? Why or why not?

Exercise 2

From "Famine" by Xu Xi (2004)

These are the first paragraphs of the story.

I escape. I board Northwest 18 to New York, via Tokyo. The engine starts, there is no going back. Yesterday, I taught the last English class and left my job of thirty-two years. Five weeks earlier, A-Ma died of heartbreak, within days of my father's sudden death. He was ninety-five, she ninety. Unlike A-Ba, who saw the world by crewing on tankers, neither my mother nor I ever left Hong Kong.

Their deaths rid me of responsibility at last, and I could forfeit my pension and that dreary existence. I am fifty-one and an only child, unmarried.

I never expected my parents to take so long to die.

This meal is *luxurious*, better than anything I imagined.

My colleagues who fly every summer complain of the indignities of travel. Cardboard food, cramped seats, long lines, and these days, too much security nonsense, they say. They fly Cathay, our "national" carrier. This makes me laugh. We have never been a nation; "national" isn't our adjective. *Semantics*, they say, dismissive, just as they dismiss what I say of debt, that it is not an inevitable state, or that children exist to be taught, not spoiled. My colleagues live in overpriced, new, mortgaged flats and indulge I to 2.5 children. Most of my students are uneducable.

Back, though, to this in-flight meal. Smoked salmon and cold shrimp, endive salad, strawberries and melon to clean the palate. Then, steak with mushrooms, potatoes *au gratin*, a choice between a shiraz or cabernet sauvignon. Three cheeses, white chocolate mousse, coffee and port or a liqueur or brandy. Foods from the pages of a novel, perhaps.

My parents ate sparingly, long after we were no longer impoverished, and disdained "unhealthy" Western diets. A-Ba often said that the only thing he really discovered from travel was that the world was hungry, and that there would never be enough food for everyone. It was why, he said, he did not miss the travel when he retired.

I have no complaints of my travels so far.

My complaining colleagues do not fly business. This seat is an *island* of a bed, surrounded by air. I did not mean to fly in dignity, but having never traveled in summer, or at all, I didn't plan months ahead, long before flights filled up. I simply rang the airlines and booked Northwest, the first one that had a seat, only in business class.

Friends and former students, who do fly business when their companies foot the bill, were horrified. *You paid full fare? No one does!* I have money, I replied, why shouldn't I? *But you've given up your "rice bowl."* *Think of the future.*

I hate rice, always have, even though I never left a single grain, because under my father's watchful glare, A-Ma inspected my bowl. Every meal, even after her eyes dimmed.

Questions for Famine

1. The first statement in the story is "I escape." What do you infer the narrator is escaping from? What details from the story support your inference?
2. What are the specific examples of food do you notice in this story? What do these examples show about the speaker's attitude towards food?
3. What can you tell about the speaker's relationship with her parents?
4. Why do you think the author titled this story "Famine?"

Exercise 3

"My Papa's Waltz," by Theodore Roethke (1948)

The poet recollects an episode from his childhood.

The whisky on your breath
Could make a small boy dizzy;
But I hung on like death:
Such waltzing was not easy.

We romped until the pans
Slid from the kitchen shelf;
My mother's countenance
Could not unfrown itself.

The hand that held my wrist
Was battered on one knuckle;
At every step you missed
My right ear scraped a buckle.

You beat time on my head
With a palm caked hard by dirt,
Then waltzed me off to bed
Still clinging to your shirt.

Questions for "My Papa's Waltz "

1. What activity is Roethke describing?
2. Do you think Roethke enjoyed the "waltz"? Why or why not?
3. Describe the parents' personalities, based on what you read here.

Exercise 4

From "A Rose for Emily," by William Faulkner (1892)

The story tells this history of Miss Emily Grierson, elderly resident of a town, from the point of view of one of the townspeople. In this episode, representatives of the town alderman (city supervisors) arrive at her house to explain to her that she needs to pay taxes. She has not paid taxes for years, not since a former mayor decided that her family didn't need to pay taxes.

.... They [the aldermen] could see that the leather was cracked; and when they sat down, a faint dust rose sluggishly about their thighs, spinning with slow motes in the single sun-ray. On a tarnished gilt easel before the fireplace stood a crayon portrait of Miss Emily's father.

They rose when she entered - a small, fat woman in black, with a thin gold chain descending to her waist and vanishing into her belt, leaning on an ebony cane with a tarnished gold head. Her skeleton was small and spare; perhaps that was why what would have been merely plumpness in another was obesity in her. She looked bloated, like a body long submerged in motionless water, and of that pallid hue. Her eyes, lost in the fatty ridges of her face, looked like two small pieces of coal pressed into a lump of dough as they moved from one face to another while the visitors stated their errand.

She did not ask them to sit. She just stood in the door and listened quietly until the spokesman came to a stumbling halt. Then they could hear the invisible watch ticking at the end of the gold chain.

Her voice was dry and cold. "I have no taxes in Jefferson. Colonel Sartoris explained it to me. Perhaps one of you can gain access to the city records and satisfy yourselves."

"But we have. We are the city authorities, Miss Emily. Didn't you get a notice from the sheriff, signed by him?"

"I received a paper, yes," Miss Emily said. "Perhaps he considers himself the sheriff... I have no taxes in Jefferson."

"But there is nothing on the books to show that, you see. We must go by the--"

"See Colonel Sartoris. I have no taxes in Jefferson."

"But Miss Emily--"

"See Colonel Sartoris." (Colonel Sartoris had been dead almost ten years.) "I have no taxes in Jefferson."

GLOSSARY:

- motes: tiny pieces
- pallid: pale
- hue: color, complexion

Questions for "A Rose For Emily"

1. What adjectives, adverbs or other descriptive terms describe Miss Emily? What impression do these create?
2. What do you infer from her reaction to the visitors, and their treatment of her?

Exercise 5

From "A Good Man Is Hard to Find," by Flannery O'Connor (1955)

These paragraphs begin the story of a family's ill-fated trip to Florida.

The grandmother didn't want to go to Florida. She wanted to visit some of her connections in east Tennessee and she was seizing at every chance to change Bailey's mind. Bailey was the son she lived with, her only boy. He was sitting on the edge of his chair at the table, bent over the orange sports section of the Journal. "Now look here, Bailey," she said, "see here, read this," and she stood with one hand on her thin hip and the other rattling the newspaper at his bald head. "Here this fellow that calls himself The Misfit is a loose from the Federal Pen and headed toward Florida and you read here what it says he did to those people. Just you read it. I wouldn't take my children in any direction with a criminal like that a loose in it. I couldn't answer to my conscience if I did."

Bailey didn't look up from his reading, so she wheeled around then and faced the children's mother, a young woman in slacks, whose face was as broad and innocent as a cabbage and was tied around with a green head-kerchief that had two points on the top like rabbit's ears. She was sitting on the sofa, feeding the baby his apricots out of a jar. "The children have been to Florida before," the old lady said. "You all ought to take them somewhere else for a change so they would see different parts of the world and be broad. They never have been to Tennessee."

Questions for "A Good Man Is Hard To Find"

1. What specific reasons does the grandmother give to her son, to persuade him to go to east Tennessee instead of Florida? Why does she actually want to go to east Tennessee?
2. What can you infer from her, based on how she talks to her son and daughter-in-law?
3. How do her son and daughter-in-law feel about her? What can we infer about them?

ATTENTION!

STOP!

Now that you are at the end of this tutorial, please bring your tutorial notes and exercise answers to the Writing Center in 18-104 or the English 800 Center in 18-102 and ask the Instructional Aide for the Exit Quiz. This quiz must be completed **in** the Writing Center.

After you have taken the quiz, you will need to make an appointment with a lab instructor. During this appointment, you will go over your answers and ask any questions you may have about this tutorial. You will receive credit for the tutorial after this appointment.

Remember that you may go to the Writing Center or English 800 Center at any time in this process to ask questions and seek help.