

My First Baseball Game

I remember everything about my first Cubs game, although it was two years ago. My uncle came to take my sister and me to it on a Saturday in spring, a bright sunny day. He drove a great distance from Indiana to Chicago, but we did not travel in his car to Wrigley Field. We traveled by train to the ballpark because he said traffic would be challenging.

He was right about how crowded it would be; in fact when we arrived it was so crowded that it was difficult to walk from the train. I was only 10, not very tall at all, so it was hard to see over all the people who crowded the sidewalk. Finally we got to the entrance, and then we went to our seats after we handed in our tickets. We had tickets that were for seats far back, and it seemed like I climbed about 300 steps to get to them. When we got there I realized that even though we were at the upper level, I could see everything clearly, the entire field, this expansive view was much better than watching it on TV.

Then the game started, and everyone cheered when the Cubs took the field. This really was going to be a great experience, so much better than watching it on TV. The man next to me said, "This is going to be the year. They are playing really well."

My uncle said to him, "Let's hope this is the one." But then he whispered to me, "I think he is over-confident, we'll have to wait and see. I am optimistic but remember last year? They started the season winning and then they had a long losing streak."

"Hey, Hey, Hey!" The Cub batter hit a ball that sizzled all the way to the wall.

Just then I heard "Hot dogs!" "Peanuts!" I looked and saw a vendor with a big tray hanging from his shoulders full of hot dogs in plastic wrap and bags of peanuts.

"Three hot dogs," my uncle shouted, and he gave the man next to us \$6 to pass along down to the man with the hot dogs. He sent back three steaming hot dogs with condiments.

"This is great," I said to my uncle as I started to munch on my hot dog.

"Not so great, Jerome," he said. "We just struck out, this inning is not a winning one."

While I had been watching the hot dogs, the batter had misjudged the pitches and swung at them. "Baseball is a game of predicting," my uncle said. "The batter has to predict what the trajectory of the ball will be and determine if it will be a good one to swing at or if it's going to be a mistake. There's no certainty, it's a guess; the batter has seconds to make that decision."

It continued that way for the rest of the game, with us enjoying the food, and my uncle saying "maybe next time" each time a player misjudged the pitch and returned to the bench. We purchased peanuts, we even got another hot dog, and I believe I had never eaten such delicious hot dogs. We'd hope every time a batter started out, and then were disappointed as one by one they struck out and retired back to the bench. Still, it was a remarkably pleasant day with great food, fine weather, and special time with my uncle. The final score was 7 to 0, so in conclusion it was nine innings of hoping and then losing, so we were disappointed about the result but delighted in the food and fascinated with the way each batter attempted to get a hit. "Those batters really are determined. They never give up," my sister said. "And they all help each other. When they missed, they went back to their team and everyone told them it would be ok next time."

"Tomorrow, they'll win, I'm certain!" one person exclaimed. "Definitely," another replied. "The pitcher tomorrow is outstanding, they'll reverse course then."

When we were returning, I asked my uncle, "Why was everyone so optimistic when the score was 0 today—how can they predict a winning performance tomorrow?"

"That's what it means to be a Cubs fan: we believe in tomorrow. When they win, it's the best, and if they lose we expect it will get better, even though experience may tell us it won't. Every year, we hope; every game we hope, and we don't abandon hope, that's loyalty. It's about supporting your team no matter what; Cubs fans are loyal."

Felicia said, "I see what you mean. Even when they struck out, they stuck together. They're like a big family. Thanks for taking us, and thanks for being loyal to our family."

Comprehensive Fiction Assessment

This assessment can be used with any story. It emphasizes CCSSR1—Read Closely, then make logical inferences with evidence, and CCSSR2—clarify the main/central idea of a passage; support important ideas with examples.

1. Identify Sequence:

What happened at the end? _____

2. Infer Character Traits:

What does trait mean? _____

Name one person the story. _____

What is one trait you infer that person has? _____

Evidence: Explain why you think that.

3. Identify Action: What is something that person does?

Infer Motive: Why do you think that person does that?

4. Summarize the passage in 3 sentences. Tell what is most important.

5. Infer the message or theme: What does the writer want you understand because you read the story?

Why do you think that is the message or theme?

Comprehensive Fiction Assessment answer key grades 7-8

This assessment can be used with any story. It emphasizes CCSSR1—Read Closely, then make logical inferences with evidence, and CCSSR2—clarify the main/central idea of a passage; support important ideas with examples.

1. Identify Sequence:

What happened at the end?

Students should answer: Felicia thanks her uncle or Felicia promises her uncle that she will be loyal.

2. Infer Character Traits:

What does trait mean?

Response should explain that a trait is a way a person is

Name one person the story.

What is one trait you infer that person has?

Possible responses:

The uncle: caring; hopeful

Evidence: he takes them to the game; he explains things to them; he tells them that it doesn't matter when the team loses.

Jerome: fun-loving

Evidence: He enjoys everything.

Felicia: thoughtful

She learns from her uncle's ideas

6. Identify Action: What is something that person does?

Student should identify an action by any of the characters.

Infer Motive: Why do you think that person does that?

Students should give logical response such as the uncle takes them to the game because he wants them to have fun.

7. Summarize the passage in 3 sentences. Tell what is most important.

Summary should include statements that lead up to the main idea.

The uncle takes two children to a baseball game, where they have a good time.

They learn that it doesn't matter if you win or lose the game.

He explains that loyalty is very important.

8. Infer the message or theme: What does the writer want you understand because you read the story?

Being loyal is important.

Why do you think that is the message or theme?

Students should explain that the uncle says that and that Felicia also says it.

Students may explain that the things the uncle does show it.

Students may explain that the Cubs themselves show loyalty during the game.