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Citing Evidence to Support Inferences



Introduction

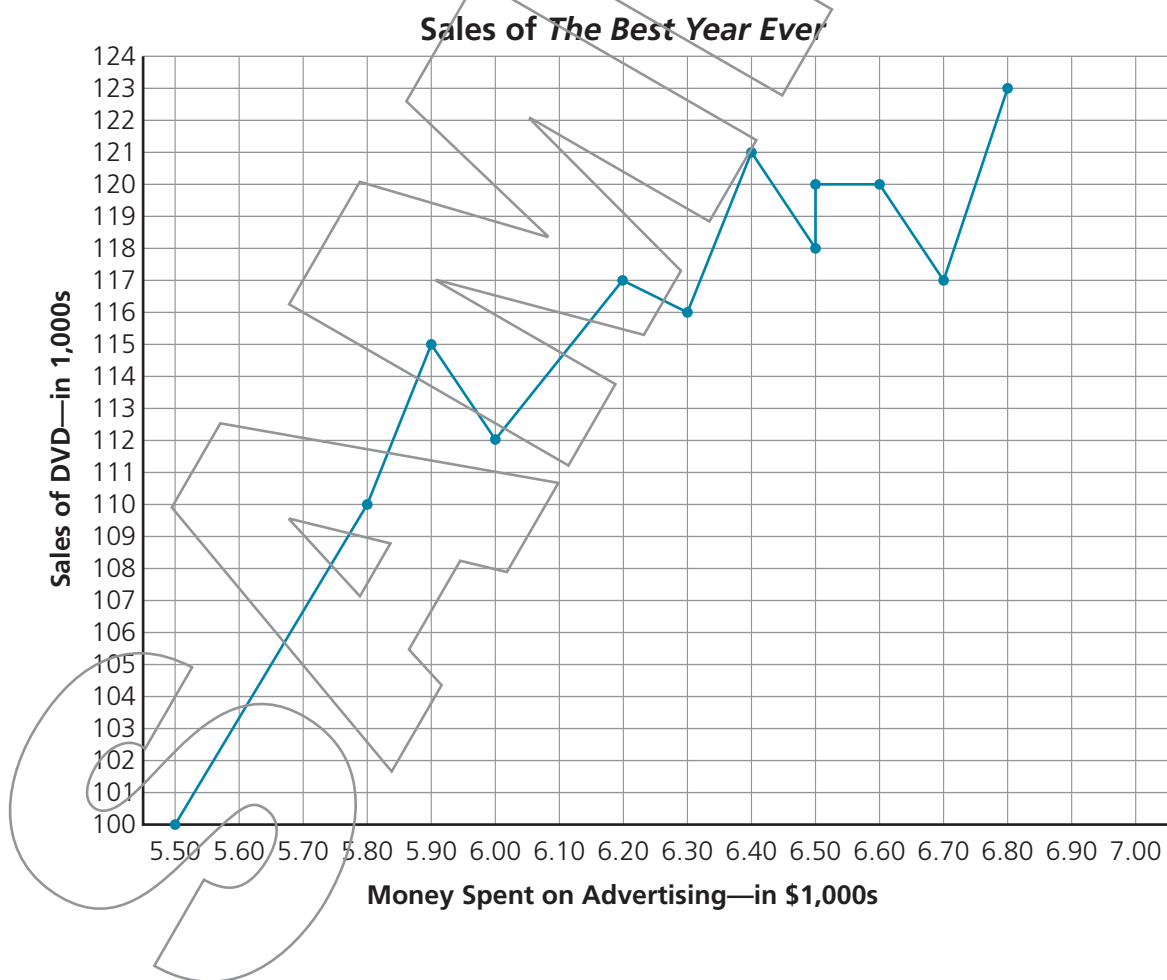
THEME: >>> Explorers and Creators

When reading informational text, you gain information that is stated **explicitly**, or directly. Additionally, some texts require you to make **inferences**, or informed guesses, in order to understand information that is either stated indirectly or missing. To make an inference, combine the **textual evidence** you have read with what you already know to understand information that is not explicitly stated:

$$\text{Details from the Text} + \text{What You Already Know} = \text{Inference}$$

For example, if the description of a setting in a text uses the words *runners*, *competing*, and *track*, what inference could you make about where the text takes place? Based on your personal knowledge and experience, you could infer that the text takes place at a running race or track meet.

Look at the graph below. Be sure to read the information closely.

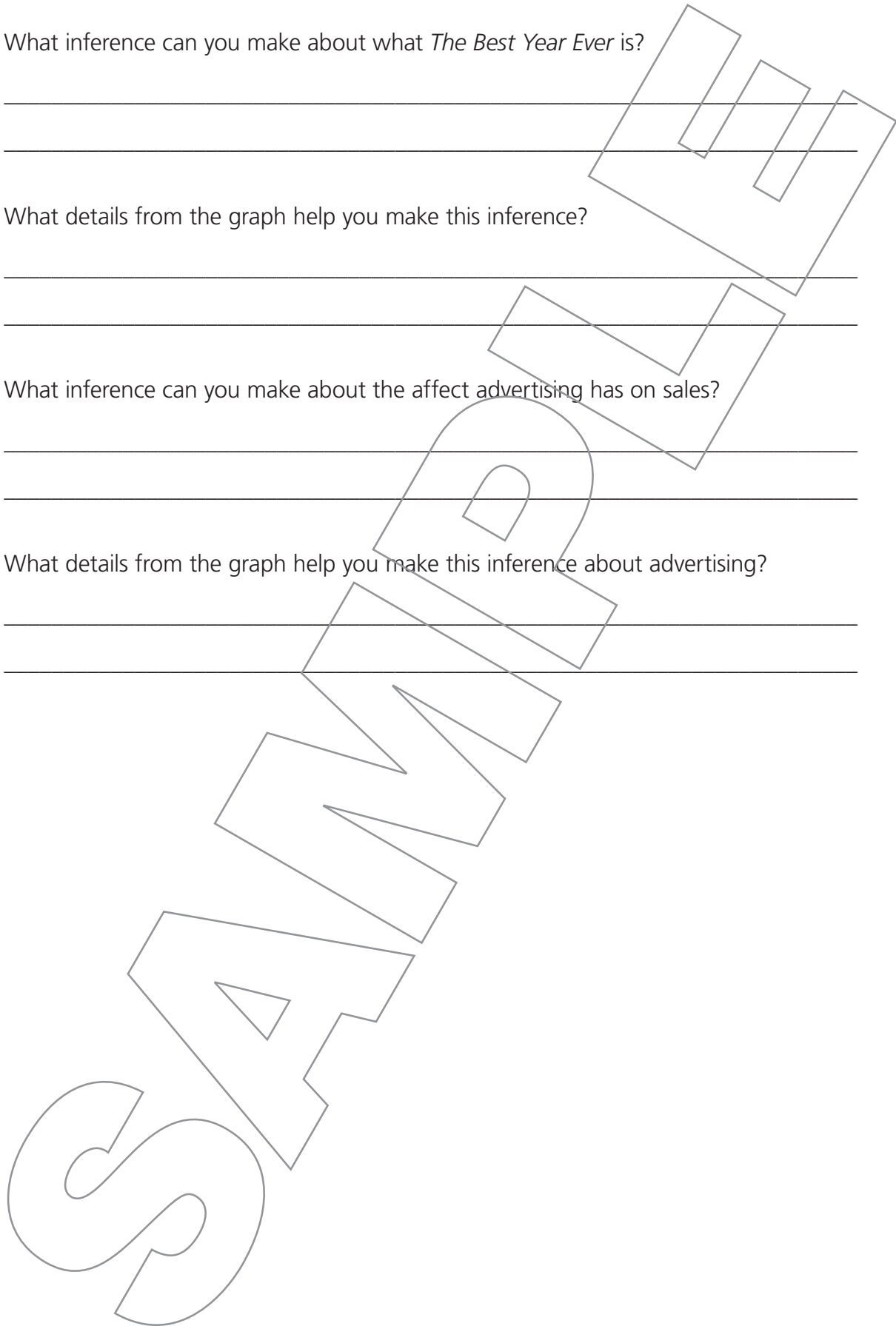


What inference can you make about what *The Best Year Ever* is?

What details from the graph help you make this inference?

What inference can you make about the affect advertising has on sales?

What details from the graph help you make this inference about advertising?



Read the first part of the passage. Then answer the questions.

Robert Hooke (1635–1703)

by Anne Perkins

1 If they had awarded Nobel prizes in the 17th century, Robert Hooke would have merited half a dozen of them. His accomplishments in physics include the invention of the universal joint, still used today in cars. Medicine? He invented an early prototype of the respirator. Chemistry? He was the first to work out the role of air in combustion. He invented or improved meteorological instruments, collaborated with most of the leading scientists of his day, and demonstrated new experiments to the Royal Society of London, the first organization dedicated to increasing scientific knowledge.

Think About It



What can you infer about Robert Hooke? Use details from the text and what you already know to make informed guesses about Robert Hooke.

In the table, first write details from the text that describe Hooke. Then write what you know based on personal knowledge about those details. Finally, make an inference that combines the information in the first two columns.

Details from the Text	What I Know	My Inference
•	•	•
•		
•	•	
•		
•	•	
•		
•	•	

A CLOSER LOOK

Circle the central idea and key details in paragraph 2.

Continue reading the passage. Then answer the question.

2 Hooke made his most important contributions in biology. He built one of the first compound microscopes. It was easier to use than the simple microscopes other scientists were using. Looking at plant tissue with this new instrument, Hooke discovered cells, which he named. He published his detailed, beautiful drawings of his microscopic discoveries in a book called *Micrographia*. The book became a bestseller of its time. Hooke also looked at fossils under the microscope and was the first to understand what they were. He realized they meant that species have appeared and gone extinct as long as life has existed on Earth. Other scientists had called fossils “sports of nature,” stones and minerals that only looked like living things. Hooke concluded that the shell-like fossils he examined were “the shells of certain shell-fishes, which, either by some deluge, inundation, earthquake, or some such other means, came to be thrown to that place, and there to be filled by some kind of mud or clay.” Because fossil shells were often found inland or high on mountains, Hooke proposed that these places “have been heretofore under the water,” and were forced upwards by “the effects of some very great earthquake.”

3 No likeness exists of Hooke. His famous colleague and rival, Isaac Newton, was jealous of his achievements and worked to discredit him after his death. Perhaps these two facts explain why few people today know about the work of this great scientist.

Inferences must be based on textual evidence. Be careful not to make assumptions that are not supported by information in the text.

Which of the following inferences can be made based on the information in the passage?

- A Hooke understood biology in a way that no other scientist before him had.
- B Hooke made a lot of money as a result of the inventions he created.
- C Hooke believed fossils were the shells of specific shell-fishes.
- D Hooke published *Micrographia* in order to increase his fame.

DISCUSS IT

What information in the passage led you to determine the correct answer to the question? Turn to another student and discuss what you learned about Robert Hooke that would support your answer choice.

A CLOSER LOOK

Underline three sentences in the passage that support the description of Cousteau as “a legendary ocean explorer.”

Read the selection. Then answer the questions.

The Legendary Jacques Cousteau

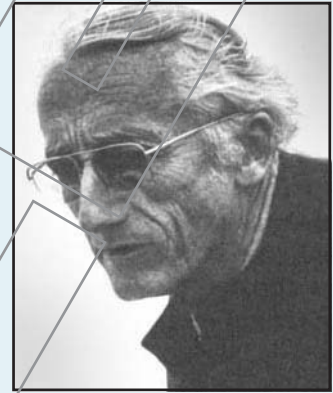
1 Jacques Cousteau is a legendary ocean explorer who was born in France on June 11, 1910. Cousteau was also an inventor, filmmaker, and conservationist who sailed around the world during the 20th century. He used his experiences and knowledge about the ocean to educate countless people and motivate them to seek its protection.

2 One of his greatest contributions was the invention of the Aqua-Lung. It is a breathing device that allowed Cousteau and his crew to explore and film parts of the ocean that had never been seen. The documentary films that resulted from his explorations captivated the general public, as they were more like stories than nonfiction.

3 Cousteau and his coworkers also created shelters that allowed individuals to work underwater for weeks at a time. *Conshelf I* was the first such structure to be created and was followed by *Conshelf II* and *Conshelf III*. The invention allowed people to live and operate under water in a way that even the United States Navy had not been able to achieve. The Navy has since adopted the technology—given it is a great cost-saving measure.

4 In 1960, Cousteau organized a campaign against the French government’s plan to deposit nuclear waste into the Mediterranean Sea, which involved confronting then President General de Gaulle. The debate came to an end when women and children staged a sit-in on the tracks of the train that was carrying the waste. Clark Lee Merriam is a spokesperson for the Cousteau Society who worked with the legend for about 20 years. According to Merriam, Cousteau knew nuclear power was a clean energy source, but because there was too little knowledge about how to handle the waste it created, he thought it should not be used.

5 One cause that was of particular importance to Cousteau was stopping commercial whaling. In 1986, he worked with leaders around the world in order to convince the International Whaling Commission to stop whaling. The agreement is still in effect today.



6 Cousteau's films and books were so vivid they made the ocean look like an endlessly thriving place that could sustain itself forever. Cousteau, however, knew different. He believed it was a great mistake to treat the underwater world as eternally bountiful. He believed we should not take for granted the life it nourished.

7 Cousteau passed away in Paris, France, on June 25, 1997. His son, John-Michel, followed in his father's footsteps and believes he would be very saddened by the present state of the seas. Pollution and overfishing would be of great concern to him. But those who had worked with Cousteau think he would not be discouraged were he alive today. Rather, he would be more determined than ever to urge governments, companies, and individuals to protect the environment.

What does fiction have that nonfiction does not? What does that difference suggest about Cousteau?

1 Part A

In paragraph 2 the author states, "The documentary films that resulted from his explorations captivated the general public, as they were more like stories than nonfiction." What inference can you draw from the quotation about Cousteau?

- A He was a talented showman who knew how to win over an audience.
- B He was well read and used the novels he read as models for his filmmaking adventures.
- C He was committed to improving the quality of documentary films.
- D He was a courageous man who stopped at nothing to show undersea life to the public.

Part B

What prior knowledge would help you to make an inference and answer Part A?

- A undersea filmmaking
- B undersea biology
- C adventure stories
- D ecological issues

Reread the details in paragraph 3. What made the *Conshelf* such a breakthrough invention?

Reread the details in paragraph 6. What did Cousteau want people to understand?

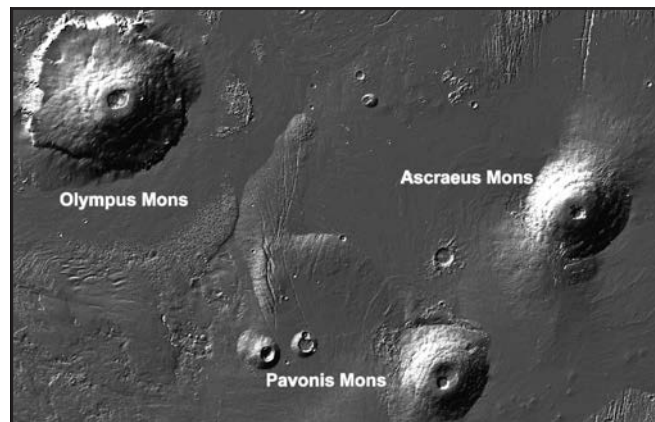
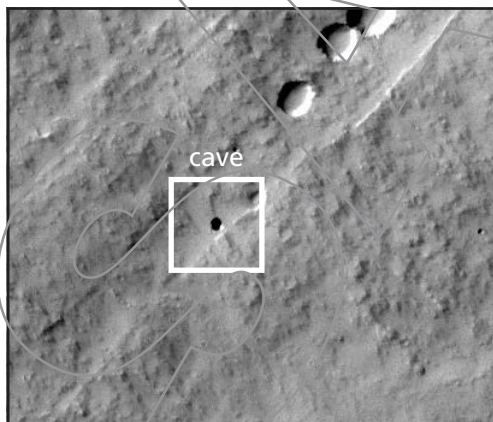
- 2 Which of the following can be inferred from the sentence in paragraph 3, “The Navy has since adopted the technology—given it is a great cost-saving measure?”
- A The United States Navy is not as technologically advanced as the French Navy.
 - B Staying under water for long periods of time is less expensive than staying under water for short periods of time.
 - C The United States Navy never acknowledged that they adopted Cousteau’s invention.
 - D Financial concerns were largely what motivated Cousteau to invent *Conshelf I, II, and III*.
- 3 Which of the following is an inference that can be made from paragraph 6?
- A Cousteau believed strongly that people need to protect the oceans.
 - B People found Cousteau’s films to be more beautiful than his books.
 - C Cousteau believed it was a great mistake to treat the underwater world as eternally bountiful.
 - D The oceans and the life in them will always go on forever.

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

Middle-Schoolers Make Discovery on Mars

by Ruth Stock

- 1 Students in a seventh-grade science class discovered a cave on Mars in 2010 without leaving their classroom in Cottonwood, California. The 16 students in Mr. Dennis Mitchell's science class at Evergreen Middle School found the cave by spotting a hole in the roof, like a skylight, in a photo taken by a NASA spacecraft orbiting Mars.
- 2 The students were participating in a research project called the Mars Student Imaging Program (MSIP), run by the Mars Space Flight Facility at Arizona State University. The program allows students to propose questions for scientific study of the red planet. The students can commission photographs from the facility to aid them in answering their questions. The photos are taken by a camera on board the *Mars Odyssey*, a spacecraft that orbits Mars every two hours. Student teams network with the facility's scientists from their classrooms by videoconferencing, giving them the chance to get advice from experts, but they have to do the research themselves. For some projects, students get to spend three days at the facility in Arizona working with the professional staff. For all MSIP projects, the students are the first to see the images of Mars that they have commissioned.
- 3 The Evergreen seventh graders had designed a project to find lava tubes, which occur in conjunction with volcanoes on both Earth and Mars. Lava flows from erupting volcanoes carve out underground channels in rock. When the eruption is over, the channels remain as tunnels covered by a solid ceiling of cooling rock. The question the students wanted to investigate was whether these tubes most often occur near the summit of a volcano, on its slopes, or on the plains around it. They commissioned a main photo and a backup of a Martian volcano called Pavonis Mons, focusing on an area that had not previously been photographed up close. Both pictures showed lava tubes. But the backup photo also showed a small, round black spot: a hole leading into a cave.



4 The Evergreen students shared their discovery with Glen Cushing, a scientist with the US Geological Survey, who in 2007 discovered seven similar features associated with caves on different parts of Mars. His hypothesis is that they are places where part of the roof of a lava tube collapsed. Cushing assured the students that their cave had previously been unknown to science and was only the second discovered near Pavonis Mons. He estimated the cave to be at least 380 feet deep and about 620 by 520 feet wide.

5 Scientists don't know what type of minerals might be found in these caves, but they may soon have some ideas. The Evergreen students have submitted their finding to be imaged in greater detail by another NASA camera orbiting Mars.

6 "The Mars Student Imaging Program is certainly one of the greatest educational programs ever developed," teacher Dennis Mitchell commented. "It gives the students a good understanding of the way research is conducted and how that research can be important for the scientific community. This has been a wonderful experience."

- 1 Which statement *best* supports the inference that the Evergreen Middle School students contributed information to the scientists studying Mars?
- A "Cushing assured the students that their cave had previously been unknown to science and was only the second discovered near Pavonis Mons."
- B "The Evergreen seventh graders had designed a project to find lava tubes, which occur in conjunction with volcanoes on both Earth and Mars."
- C "'The Mars Student Imaging Program is certainly one of the greatest educational programs ever developed,' teacher Dennis Mitchell commented."
- D "Scientists don't know what type of minerals might be found in these caves, but they may soon have some ideas."
- 2 In the final paragraph, teacher Dennis Mitchell explains the program "gives the students a good understanding of the way research is conducted and how that research can be important for the scientific community." Why else might the Mars Student Imaging Program be beneficial to students?

3 Part A

Which sentence explains how paragraph 2 is important to the development of ideas in “Middle-Schoolers Make Discovery on Mars”?

- A** It describes what the students found while participating in the Mars Student Imaging Program.
- B** It provides details about how the Mars Student Imaging Program works.
- C** It illustrates how difficult it is to make a discovery while participating in the Mars Student Imaging Program.
- D** It explains why some students get to spend time with professional staff at the Mars Space Flight Facility.

Part B

Which quotation from paragraph 2 *best* supports the answer in Part A?

- A** “For some projects, students get to spend three days at the facility in Arizona working with the professional staff.”
 - B** “The students can commission photographs from the facility to aid them in answering their questions.”
 - C** “The program allows students to propose questions for scientific study of the red planet.”
 - D** “The photos are taken by a camera on board the *Mars Odyssey*, a spacecraft that orbits Mars every two hours.”
- 4** What inference can be made from these statements in paragraph 5: “Scientists don’t know what type of minerals might be found in these caves, but they may soon have some ideas. The Evergreen students have submitted their finding to be imaged in greater detail by another NASA camera orbiting Mars.”
