

WHAT'S GOING ON?

Sometimes a writer doesn't tell you outright what is going on in a story. But usually, you can make some pretty good guesses based on what the writer does tell you. When you figure out what is going on by using clues in the story, you are making an inference, an educated guess or reasonable conclusion based on all available evidence. Read the following passage.

The past week had been one of the worst in Sam's memory. It began on Monday when he first heard about it--from kids he hardly knew. From then until now seemed like a long nightmare.

Alone in his room, Sam stared at the collection of memorabilia on his bulletin board. There was a picture of his mother, whom he hadn't seen in three months, and several other family photographs. There was a picture of Greg, too, standing next to their tent in the Rockies on the camping trip they had taken together over two years ago.

Sam got up from his bed and walked over to his desk. Maybe he would write Greg a letter since he couldn't bring himself to talk to him. But what good would that do? He banged his fist on the desktop.

"Why?" He said angrily to himself. "Why did he say anything!"

Then Sam thoughts switched to the past. He had made a big mistake. But it happened right after the family broke up, when his mother and sisters moved to Highland leaving him and his dad in Wheat Ridge. Besides, he had certainly paid for what he did. In fact, back in Wheat Ridge, he had almost forgotten about all those months he spent at The Rehab Center--until now.

"Thanks, Greg," Sam said bitterly to himself. "Thanks a lot."

Test your ability to draw inferences by underling the one answer that best completes each statement.

1. Greg's friendship probably meant _____.
 - a. nothing to Sam
 - b. a lot to Sam
 - c. nothing more than someone to talk to
2. Sam and Greg probably have known each other _____.
 - a. a few weeks
 - b. exactly two years
 - c. more than two years

3. Sam's family probably broke up when _____.
 - a. they decided to move
 - b. his parents divorced
 - c. Same went to the Rehab Center

4. Right now Sam is probably living _____.
 - a. with his father
 - b. with his mother
 - c. by himself

5. Sam's "big mistake" was doing something _____.
 - a. for Greg
 - b. he couldn't remember
 - c. that was against the law

6. Sam was hurt and angry at Greg because Greg had _____.
 - a. not spoken to him
 - b. betrayed his confidence
 - c. not enjoyed the camping trip