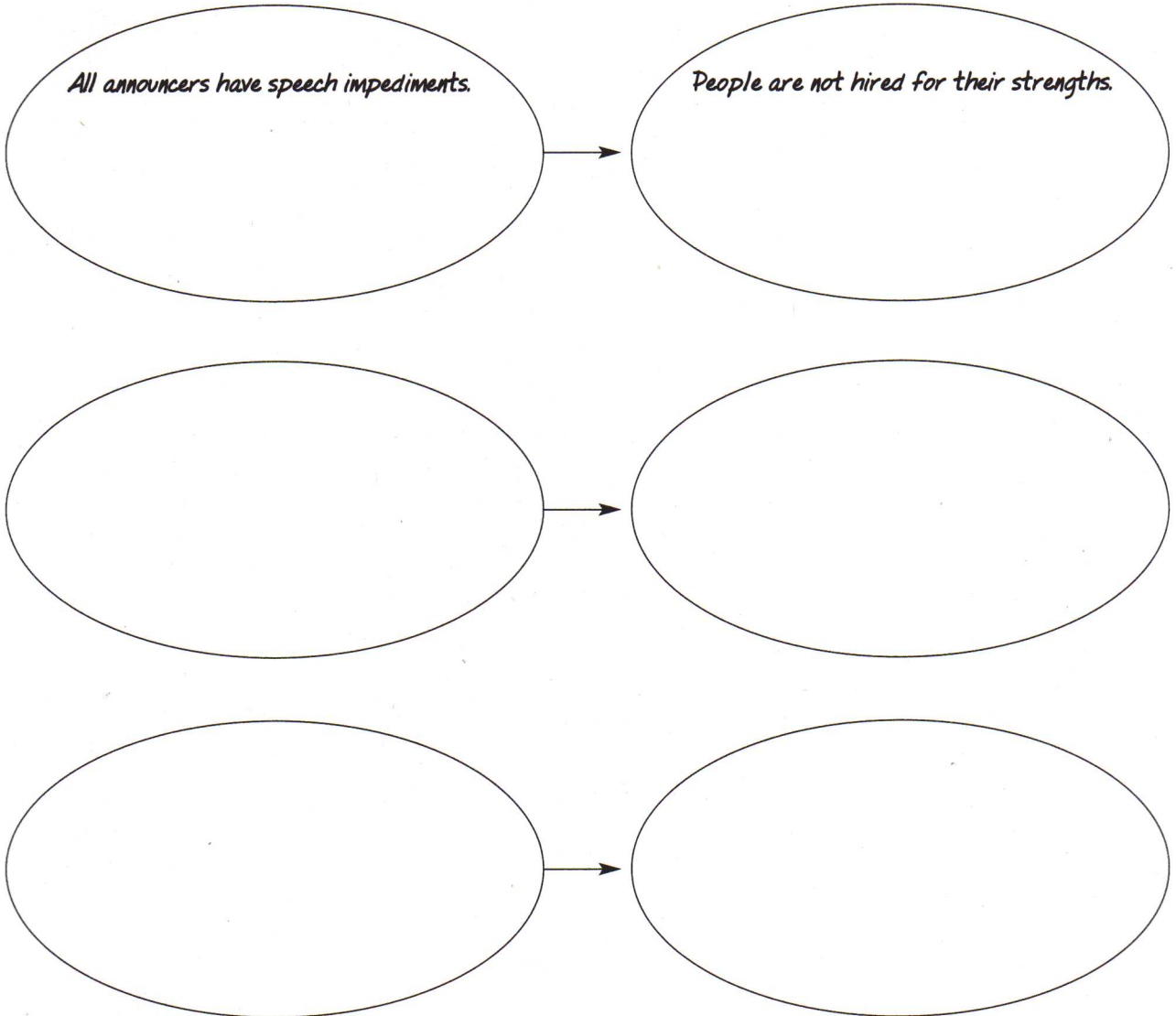


**Harrison Bergeron (page 20)****Active Reading SkillBuilder****Making Inferences**

**Inferences** are logical guesses based on clues in the text and on common sense. In this story, Vonnegut provides clues that lead the reader into making many inferences about the characters and the society portrayed in "Harrison Bergeron." For example, in the sentence "April, for instance, still drove people crazy by not being springtime," the reader might infer that people in that society had trouble accepting that all of the seasons, like the people, would not be the same. Read the story and use the diagram below to identify inferences you can make about the main characters and the society in which they live.

**Clue****Inference**

**Harrison Bergeron (page 20)****Literary Analysis SkillBuilder****Theme**

The **theme** of a story is its central message. The theme expresses an attitude or insight into life or human nature. Readers must infer the theme from clues in the story. One way to uncover the theme is to consider what happens to the main characters. For example, Harrison's death and the subsequent responses of his parents suggest that Vonnegut is criticizing both society and the parents. Uncover the theme of this story by looking back through it to find phrases, sentences, and events that provide clues to the theme. List each clue in one of the spaces of the diagram shown below. Use the clues to infer the theme of the story. Then write a sentence stating that theme.

<b>Clue</b>	+	<b>Clue</b>	+	<b>Clue</b>
<b>Clue</b>	+	<b>Clue</b>	+	<b>Clue</b>
<b>Theme:</b>				

**Harrison Bergeron (page 20)****Words to Know SkillBuilder****Words to Know**calibrated  
consternationcower  
hindranceluminous  
symmetrysynchronizing  
vaguevigilance  
wince**A.** Circle the word in each group that is a synonym for the boldfaced word.

- |                         |              |              |            |
|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|------------|
| 1. <b>vigilance</b>     | carelessness | watchfulness | chaos      |
| 2. <b>wince</b>         | flinch       | rejoice      | enlarge    |
| 3. <b>consternation</b> | consolation  | delight      | fear       |
| 4. <b>luminous</b>      | indistinct   | brilliant    | complex    |
| 5. <b>synchronizing</b> | varying      | protesting   | matching   |
| 6. <b>cower</b>         | frighten     | cringe       | determine  |
| 7. <b>calibrated</b>    | measured     | withstood    | insisted   |
| 8. <b>symmetry</b>      | balance      | instability  | confidence |
| 9. <b>vague</b>         | specific     | common       | unclear    |
| 10. <b>hindrance</b>    | comfort      | obstacle     | privilege  |

**B.** Think about the meaning of each phrase in the first column. Then find the phrase in the second column that is closest in meaning. Write the letter of that phrase on the blank line.

- |                                      |                           |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| _____ 1. blurry picture              | A. unceasing vigilance    |
| _____ 2. unending alertness          | B. cower and hide         |
| _____ 3. yelps of confused amazement | C. apparent hindrance     |
| _____ 4. obvious obstacle            | D. cries of consternation |
| _____ 5. cringe and conceal          | E. vague image            |

**C.** Harrison Bergeron rebelled against the laws of his society that regulated equality. Write a letter that Harrison might have written to his parents explaining his reasons. Use at least **three** Words to Know in your letter.

**Harrison Bergeron (page 20)****Selection Quiz**

Recall the events described in the selection. Then answer each question in sentences or phrases.

1. How does the United States government in 2081 ensure that all people are the same?

---

---

---

2. What does George wear in his ear and for what purpose does he wear it?

---

---

---

3. What handicaps does Harrison wear?

---

---

---

4. What is the first thing Harrison does after he throws off his handicap hardware?

---

---

---

5. How does Hazel react after seeing her son on television?

---

---

---

**Harrison Bergeron (page 20)****Selection Test**

**A.** Think about the characteristics of science fiction listed below. In the boxes on the right, write notes describing how each characteristic of science fiction applies to "Harrison Bergeron." (8 points each)

Characteristic of Science Fiction	How It Applies to "Harrison Bergeron"
1. Presents strange or unusual characters or events	
2. Has an element of science that makes the events credible	
3. Comments on or reflects human nature or society	

**B.** Write the letter of the best answer. This exercise is continued on the next page. (5 points each)

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. In this story, people of above-average intelligence are required to
- wear weights on their arms.
  - report to the government every two weeks.
  - wear mental-handicap transmitters.
  - watch the ballet every evening.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. In this story, Harrison Bergeron represents the spirit of
- conformity.
  - family values.
  - dependence.
  - rebellion.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Why is Hazel crying at the end of the story?
- Harrison is coming home.
  - Her son has just been shot.
  - She wishes she still loved George.
  - She feels sorry for George.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The theme of this story is **mainly** concerned with the
- dangers of trying to make everyone equal.
  - hope that we can someday achieve real equality.
  - importance of enforcing laws.
  - importance of a close family.

**C. Words to Know.** Write the letter of the best answer. (4 points each)

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. If you wince at a sudden noise, you
- smile.
  - groan.
  - flinch.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. When someone looks at you with a luminous smile, you feel
- cheerful.
  - frightened.
  - upset.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. A yardstick is calibrated to show
- millimeters.
  - inches and feet.
  - pounds.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Which would likely be a hindrance to doing your homework?
- a sturdy desk
  - reference books
  - loud noise
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. A look of consternation communicates a feeling of
- deep sympathy.
  - anger.
  - confused fear.

**D. Answer one** of the following questions based on your understanding of "Harrison Bergeron." Write your answer on a separate sheet of paper. (20 points)

- George's intelligence is far above normal, so he is required to wear a mental-handicap transmitter. Describe at least **two** instances in which George attempts to think. What might happen if George were allowed to think? Could George be destructive to society? Explain.
- What can you infer about Harrison from his handicaps? How was he able to overcome the mental handicap imposed by the government?

**E. Linking Literature to Life.** Answer the following question based on your own experience and knowledge. Write your answer on a separate sheet of paper. (16 points)

Science fiction and fantasy writers often use present-day trends as a basis for their stories. What do you think was the inspiration for Vonnegut's story? In what ways does Vonnegut's society of 2081 resemble today's society?