

It's time to make an educated guess! In this lesson, your students will practice using their background knowledge and evidence from the text to make inferences in nonfiction pieces about Martin Luther King, Jr., and Cesar Chavez.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to make inferences from nonfiction texts using their background knowledge and evidence from the text.

Materials and preparation

- One copy of [Making Inferences](#)
- One copy of [Making Inferences: Courageous Leaders Part 1](#)
- Class set of [Making Inferences: Courageous Leaders Part 2](#)
- Document projector
- Dictionaries
- Several prepared sentence strips with sentences that describe where someone is and/or what they are doing (without disclosing where and what) for students to use in an inference guessing game
- Class set of [Can You Make an Inference?](#) (optional)
- Class set of [Steph Curry: Superstar](#) (optional)

Key terms

- inference

Attachments

- Practice Making Inferences (PDF)
- Making Inferences: Courageous Leaders Part 1 (PDF)
- Making Inferences: Courageous Leaders Part 2 (PDF)
- Can You Make an Inference? (PDF)
- Steph Curry: Superstar (PDF)

Introduction (5 minutes)

- Project the Making Inferences worksheet onto the board and cover everything except the first passage about the sun.
- Read the passage aloud.
- Uncover the first question and ask for a volunteer to answer it.
- Ask the volunteer to explain how they came up with their answer.
- Continue this process until all four questions have been answered.
- Tell students that they just practiced making inferences.

EL

Beginning

- Allow students to make inferences with a partner using their home language (L1).
- Provide students with access to the text in students' home language (L1).
- Provide pictures instead of a passage to practice making inferences from.

Intermediate

- Allow students to respond to the questions with a partner before sharing with the whole class.

Explicit Instruction/Teacher modeling (10 minutes)

- Tell students that an **inference** is an educated guess. It is a conclusion you come to based on your background knowledge, reasoning, and evidence from a text.
- Project the second passage in the Making Inferences worksheet and read the passage aloud.
- Model how to complete the first question by using clues from the text and reasoning to make an inference.
- Call on volunteers to answer the remaining questions on the worksheet. Remind students to explain how they came up with their answers and made their inferences.

EL

Beginning

- Allow students to make inferences with a partner using their home language (L1).
- Provide students with access to the text in students' home language (L1).
- Model how to complete the entire worksheet so students have a clear understanding of how to complete this activity.

Intermediate

- Allow students to work in small groups to answer the questions and explain their answers.

Guided Practice (15 minutes)

- Tell students that they will now practice making inferences using nonfiction texts. Emphasize that they will reference the specific details and examples (i.e., the evidence) in the text they used to make their inferences.
- Project the Making Inferences: Courageous Leaders Part 1 worksheet on the board.
- Call on student volunteers to define the bolded vocabulary words prior to reading the passage. (Tip: encourage students to define the vocabulary words using their background knowledge, and model how to look up words in a dictionary if necessary).
- Read the passage aloud.
- Turn to the second page of the worksheet and read the instructions aloud.
- Complete this activity as a class by calling on student volunteers.

EL

Beginning

- Define the bolded words for the students using student-friendly definitions and images.

Intermediate

- Provide students with bilingual dictionaries to look up any unfamiliar words.
- Have students discuss their answers in effective partnerships before calling on student volunteers.

Independent working time (15 minutes)

- Tell students that they will now practice this skill independently.
- Preview and distribute the Making Inferences: Courageous Leaders Part 2 worksheet.
- Provide students with dictionaries if necessary.
- Circulate and offer support as needed.

EL

Beginning

- Define the bolded words for the students using student-friendly definitions and images.
- Gather students into a teacher-led small group to complete this activity orally instead of writing their answers down independently.

Intermediate

- Provide students with extra time to complete this activity.
- Give students bilingual dictionaries to look up any unfamiliar words.

Differentiation

Support:

- Pre-teach a lesson that models making inferences from pictures.
- Allow students to practice making inferences using less challenging texts during Independent Work Time by using the Can You Make an Inference? worksheet (see optional materials).
- Provide tailored assistance in a small group.

Enrichment:

- Encourage students to practice making inferences using a more challenging text during Independent Work Time by using the Steph Curry: Superstar worksheet (see optional materials).
- Challenge students to create inferences through a writing activity. For example:
 - Write about a windy morning without saying that it is windy.
 - Write about a character who is very shy without saying that they are shy.
 - Write about a place that is very old without saying that it is old.

Assessment (5 minutes)

- Have students volunteer to pick a sentence strip and read the sentences aloud (e.g., "My palms are sweaty and my stomach feels funny," "I hear lots of screaming and my hair goes crazy when I go upside down," and "This is so scary but so fun!").
- Tell the volunteer to call on a classmate to infer what the person is doing and/or where they are based on the sentence strip description (e.g., riding a rollercoaster).
- Ask students to agree or disagree with their classmate's answer by showing a thumbs up or a thumbs down.
- Repeat this activity until all of the sentence strips have been read.
- Monitor students' responses to gauge understanding.

EL

Beginning

- Use inference picture cards instead of sentence strips with written text for students to use to demonstrate their understanding of making inferences.
- Provide sentences strips with sentences written in students' home language (L1).

Intermediate

- Provide students with sentence frames to use to make their inferences (e.g., "I think that they are ____").
- Assess students in a small group setting instead of a whole class setting.

Review and closing (5 minutes)

- Tell students that today they practiced making inferences using nonfiction texts.
- Explain to students that this is a valuable comprehension skill that they will use in other classes, such as math, science, and social studies.
- Tell students that they even make inferences in their everyday lives and in social situations.
- Call on students to share examples of inferences that they have made outside of reading class.

EL

Beginning

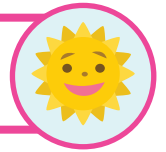
- Tell students specific examples of ways they might encounter inferences in other classes instead of asking students to brainstorm examples.

Intermediate

- Assign students into pairs or small groups to share examples of inferences that they have made outside of reading class.



Making Inferences



Name: _____

Date: _____

When you use clues and reasoning to figure out what is going on in a story, especially something that is not explicitly stated, you are making an inference.

Example:

Scene: The bats flew from the barn and across the dim field of corn.

Inference: Bats usually come out at night, so it is probably night time.

Directions: Read the scenes below and use the clues to answer the questions that follow.

The sun shone brightly, warming the cool earth. Tiny worms poked their heads from the dirt, and one tiny yellow crocus opened its petals. All around, dew sparkled, so that the grass resembled a vast field of diamonds. The budding trees rustled gently in the light breeze, and birds sang cheerfully high in their branches. A lone bee hummed lazily around the patch of lavender where Winston had carelessly left his shoes the day before.

1. What time of day is it? (a) morning (b) afternoon (c) night
2. What season is it? (a) winter (b) spring (c) summer (d) fall
3. What is a crocus? (a) a bicycle (b) a ball (c) a flower (d) a tree
4. Who is Winston? (a) a dog (b) a bee (c) a child

Jeff wiped tears from his eyes as he pulled himself up to his feet. He brushed off his bruised knees and checked his helmet for signs of damage. Seeing none, he pulled his bicycle from the patch of thorns, and frowned at the deep scratches that marred its once shiny paint. Taking a deep breath, he got back on the bicycle and cautiously rode in a circle to get his bearings. Finally, he straightened up and rode off, with his feet firmly on his pedals and his face set in determination.

1. What happened to Jeff? _____
2. What does the word marred mean? (a) removed (b) scarred (c) brightened

• Using context clues in the two stories above, determine the meaning of the homophones:

petal _____ **pedal** _____

• How do these two similar lines help set a different feeling for the two scenes described above?

patch of lavender _____

patch of thorns _____



Making Inferences

Courageous Leaders Part 1

An **inference** is a conclusion you come to based on reasoning and evidence within a text. Making an inference requires using both information from the text and your background knowledge.

clues in text

+

what you know

=

INFERENCE



Martin Luther King, Jr. - A Brave Leader

Martin Luther King was born in Atlanta, Georgia, on January 15, 1929. His father was a minister and his mother was a teacher. King was a **studious** individual and, as a result, graduated from high school at the young age of 15 years old. Continuing his education, he attended Morehouse College and Crozer Theological Seminary.

King worked as a pastor in Montgomery, Alabama, for five years, but he left this job in order to **dedicate** his time to the the **civil rights** cause. African Americans were treated unfairly, forced to attend separate and unequal schools, required to sit in the back of buses, and were **prohibited** from using the same drinking fountains as white people. In 1955, an African American woman by the name of Rosa Parks disobeyed a bus driver who ordered her to give her seat to a white passenger. She was arrested and taken to jail.

King spoke out against this particular **injustice** by organizing the Montgomery Bus Boycott. As a result, he was arrested and jailed, his home was bombed, and his life was threatened. None of this stopped him from continuing with his **nonviolent** protest. Ultimately, it was the Montgomery Bus Boycott that helped end **segregation** on public transportation.

Defining Key Vocabulary

Directions: Look up the definition for each key term listed below and write it on the answer line.

studious: _____

dedicate: _____

civil rights: _____

prohibited: _____

injustice: _____

nonviolent: _____

segregation: _____

Making Inferences

Courageous Leaders Part 1

Directions: Complete the chart by either writing a quote from the text or an inference you can make.

The text states . .	This most likely means . . .
<p>"In 1955, an African American woman by the _____</p> <p>name of Rosa Parks disobeyed a bus driver who _____</p> <p>ordered her to give her seat to a white passenger."</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>What can you infer about Parks's personality?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>"As a result, he was arrested and jailed, his home _____</p> <p>was bombed . . . None of this stopped him from _____</p> <p>continuing with his nonviolent protest."</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>What can you infer about King's personality?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>King wanted people of all races to be _____</p> <p>treated fairly and to be able to live _____</p> <p>together in peace.</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>King felt strongly about speaking out _____</p> <p>in a peaceful manner.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

Making Inferences

Courageous Leaders Part 2

An **inference** is a conclusion you come to based on reasoning and evidence within a text. Making an inference requires using both information from the text and your background knowledge.

clues in text

+

what you know

=

INFERENCE



César Chávez - A Brave Leader

César Chávez was born in Arizona in 1927. When his family lost their farm due to financial struggles, they had no other choice but to pack up their belongings and move from farm to farm, **seeking** any work they could find. By the eighth grade, César was forced to quit school and work full-time to support his family.

Working as a migrant worker made Chávez all too familiar with the **somber** conditions in the fields. **Migrant** workers, most of whom were Mexican American, were paid below minimum wage, often worked under unsafe conditions, and were forced to watch their young children work long hours as well.

When Chávez grew up, he decided to help other farm workers like himself. He and his wife taught Mexican immigrants to read, educated new U.S. citizens about voting procedures, and joined a **civil rights** organization, the Community Service Organization. He and other **activists** went on to form the National Farm Workers Association. Through this workers' rights group, Chávez staged strikes against grape growers in 1965 and led a 300-mile march across California. Despite he and other union members being jailed along the way, he continued to fight for his cause.

It wasn't until Chávez asked the American people to **boycott** grapes grown in California that the growers agreed to sign contracts for safer working conditions. Although the name of Chávez's union changed in 1970 to United Farm Workers of America, his organization's **vision** stayed the same. Until his death in 1993, he stayed committed to fighting for **social justice**.

Defining Key Vocabulary

Directions: Look up the definition for each key term listed below and write it on the answer line.

seeking: _____

somber: _____

migrant: _____

civil rights: _____

activist: _____

boycott: _____

vision: _____

social justice: _____

Making Inferences

Courageous Leaders Part 2

Directions: Complete the chart by either writing a quote from the text or an inference you can make.

The text states . . .	This most likely means . . .
<p>When Chávez grew up, he decided to help</p> <hr/> <p>other farm workers like himself.</p> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>What can you infer about Chávez's personality?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>It wasn't until Chávez asked the American people</p> <hr/> <p>to boycott grapes . . . that the growers agreed</p> <hr/> <p>to sign contracts for safer working conditions.</p> <hr/>	<p>What can you infer about the grape growers?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>Chávez was not afraid to show others</p> <hr/> <p>that he did not agree with their actions.</p> <hr/> <hr/>
<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>Migrant workers were very</p> <hr/> <p>grateful that Chávez worked hard to try</p> <hr/> <p>to protect their rights.</p> <hr/>

Can You Make an Inference?

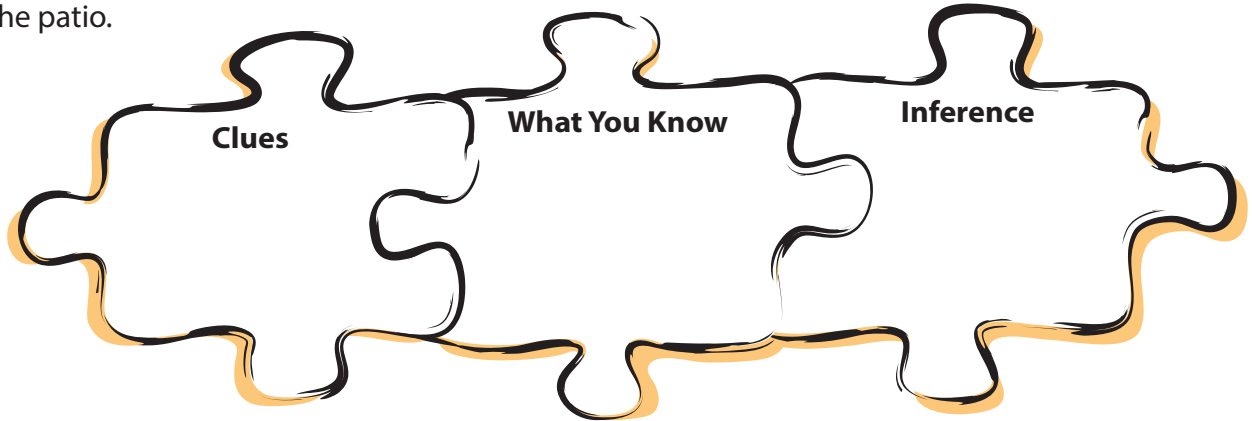
Good readers make **inferences** when the author does not tell everything about the characters, setting, and events. Making an inference is like putting the pieces of a puzzle together.

Example: Maria and Marty wore garden gloves as they walked out the door. They had already placed the potting soil outside near the benches. In their hands, they each carried a packet of seeds. "The students are going to love this. It will be so beautiful when everything blooms in the spring!" Maria said to Marty.

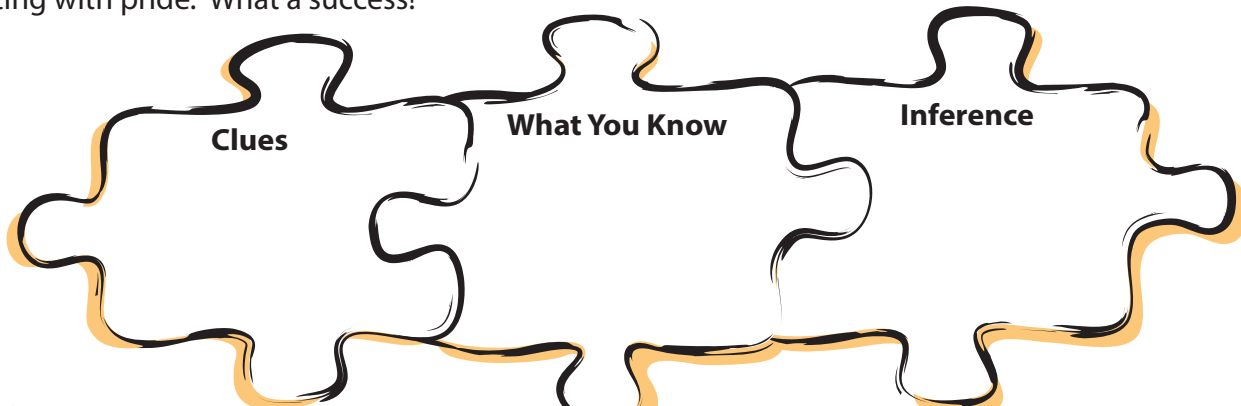


Directions: Read the passage and fill out the chart that follows.

a) As soon as the dog returned to the back patio, the owner said, "Oh, Champ! Not again. You can't come into the house like that. Sit." The owner walked to the side of the house, unraveled the hose, and dragged it to where Champ waited. He turned on the hose and sprayed the dog. The dirty water streamed off the patio.

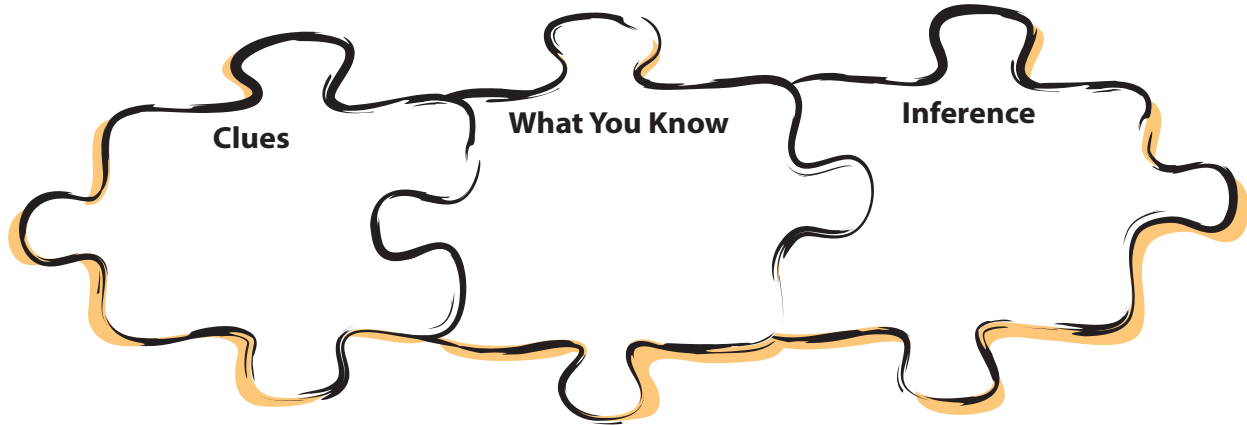


b) The crowd cheered loudly for Lisbeth as she took a bow. Her teacher motioned for her to come to the side of the stage so the next group could perform. She had been nervous before, but now Lisbeth was bursting with pride. What a success!

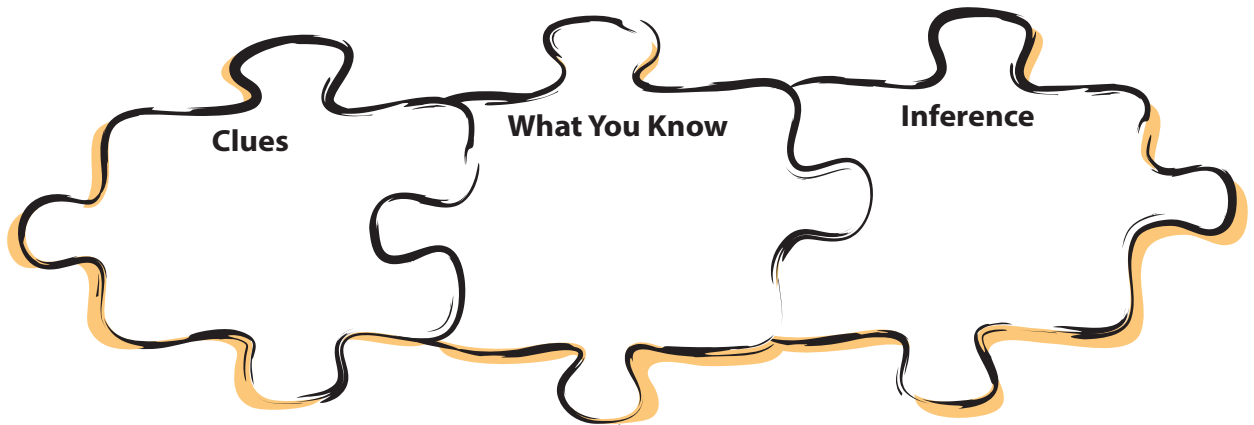


Can You Make an Inference?

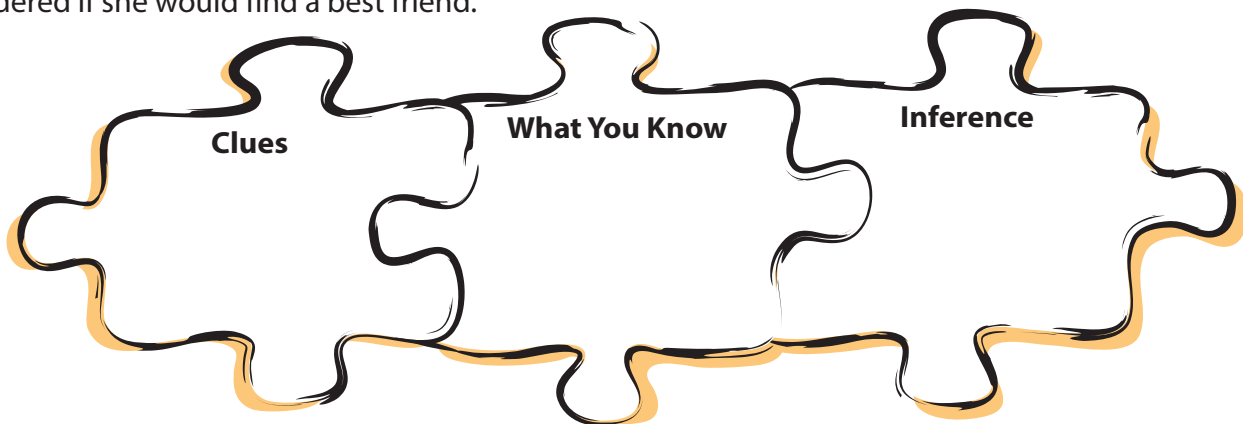
c) Jerome hurried down the street with his backpack and lunchbox. He saw a glimpse of yellow disappear as it turned down the street to the next stop. He stopped in his tracks and caught his breath. "What now?" he thought, as he noticed the sun rising higher in the sky.



d) The lifeguard blew his whistle and everyone turned toward him on the tower. He motioned for everyone to get out of the water. Lucy had noticed the sky was getting darker, the wind picked up speed, and the temperature had dropped. The day had been so pretty, and now it looked like it was time to go home.



e) Margorie walked into her classroom on the first day of 3rd grade. She spent most of the summer getting settled in her new house that she had not been outside very much in the neighborhood. Today, she felt shy and nervous as she found the desk with her name on it. She looked around at the unfamiliar faces and wondered if she would find a best friend.



Steph Curry: Superstar

Name: _____

Date: _____

An inference is a conclusion that you make based on evidence and reasoning. The biography below provides a lot of information about Steph Curry, the famous basketball player. Using the facts provided you will be able to infer some things about him that aren't in the piece. Read about Steph and then write three inferences on the next page. One is provided to get you started.



Steph Curry: Superstar, On and Off the Court

Steph Curry was born in Akron, Ohio but grew up in Charlotte, North Carolina. He grew up watching his dad, a pro NBA player, and practiced with him when he could. When his dad was traveling with his team he trained with his mom, a former college volleyball player. Despite his efforts, people didn't think Steph Curry would ever make the NBA because of his small frame. That didn't stop him. What he lacked in height he made up for in shooting ability and ball handling skills. As a sophomore in college, he led the nation with the highest average points per game. He went on to be the seventh pick in the NBA draft, selected by the California team, the Golden State Warriors. After receiving Most Valuable Player honors and helping the Warriors win the NBA championship in 2015, Curry led the team to a league-record 73 wins the following season. In May 2016, Curry became the first person to be named Most Valuable Player by unanimous vote in NBA history, and one of only 11 players to win the MVP award two years in a row.

In his MVP speech, Steph said:

"I never really set out to change the game. I never thought that would happen in my career. What I wanted to do was just be myself. ... I know it inspires a lot of the next generation, a lot of people who love the game of basketball to value the skill of it, value the fact that you can work every single day to get better. You've got to be able to put the time and the work. That's how I got here, that's how I continue to get better every single day."

In addition to his stellar basketball career, Steph is a loyal husband and father. One of his teammates, Shaun Livingston said this about Steph's character: "His faith, his beliefs, and his value system is unprecedented." Another teammate, Draymond Green spoke to Steph's authenticity when he said, "His persona, his character, fans take notice of that. He's probably one of, if not the most, beloved NBA players. And everything you see is not a façade — it's really him. That means a lot to fans."

Both on and off the court, Steph is a superstar. He is widely considered to be one of the top five players in the NBA and it's still early in his career.

Example: The other Warriors like him and are happy to have him as a teammate.

1.

2.

3.

