

Play: *The Great Debaters* • Issue: March 3, 2008

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Reading Between the Lines

To infer something is to draw a conclusion by evaluating the facts presented to you. To draw educated conclusions, the key is to consider all the information carefully. In this activity, you will make inferences from the dialogue in the play *The Great Debaters*.

Directions: Read the play *The Great Debaters*. Then, read the lines of dialogue below, and answer the questions that follow.

1. **JAMES:** Why do you want to be on the debate team?

SAMANTHA: I want to be a lawyer, and it would be good training. Do you know how many black women practice law in Texas?

JAMES: Two. One of them is my aunt.

What does this tell you about Samantha? What does she think of herself?

2. **HAMILTON:** Mr. Tolson, I hear rumors about what you are doing with the sharecroppers.

TOLSON: That is my business.

HAMILTON: I came here to be educated, not investigated. There is a sheriff parked outside of your house!

What does this tell you about Mr. Tolson? How does this dialogue foreshadow problems to come?

3. **HENRY:** You're debating, not me.

JAMES: What?

HENRY: It's your turn, James.

JAMES: You're crazy.

HENRY: You're as good as I am, and you're only 14! The judges will love you. Speak the truth, and you'll be just fine.

What does this tell you about Henry as a leader? What does this tell you about the relationship between Henry and James?
