Contents

Introduction

Reading comprehension involves numerous thinking skills. Among these skills is a reader's facility at making inferences and drawing conclusions, at deriving meaning from language with layers of implied meaning. The reader who is adept at making inferences and the related skill of drawing conclusions gains a richer and deeper understanding of a text. In this book, you'll find that Exercises 1–17 help students practice the skill of making inferences. Exercises 18–35 focus on practice with drawing conclusions. Use pages 8 and 9 after you introduce the skills to give students help in understanding them.

Using This Book

Pages 8–9

After introducing the concepts of making inferences and drawing conclusions to students (see pages 6 and 7), duplicate and pass out pages 8 and 9. Use page 8 to help students review what they have learned about making inferences. By explaining their thinking, students are using metacognition to analyze how they recognized and utilized these clues. Page 9 helps students review what they have learned about drawing conclusions.

Pages 10–26

These pages provide practice in making inferences. To begin, students read a paragraph. The first question asks students to distinguish facts from inferences. The second question requires students to make an inference of their own regarding the passage they read. If students disagree with a given answer, encourage them to explain their thinking. Accept all reasonable responses.

Pages 27–44

These pages provide practice in drawing conclusions. To get started, students read a paragraph. The first question requires students to practice drawing a conclusion rooted in evidence from the text. The second question invites students to recognize that some information may not be presented in the text. For both of these multiple-choice questions, students must choose the answer that best completes the sentence.

Pages 45–46

After they have completed the practice pages, use these pages to assess students' progress.

Page 47

You may wish to keep a record of students' progress as they complete the practice pages. Sample comments that will help you guide students to improving skills might include:

- reads carelessly
- misunderstands text
- is unmindful of the author's point of view
- does not apply prior knowledge
- overlooks clues
- has difficulty visualizing

> **Teacher Tip**
>
> For students who need extra help, you might suggest that they keep pages 8 and 9 with them to refer to when they complete the exercises.

> **Teacher Tip**
>
> Students can learn a lot if you review the finished exercises with them on a regular basis. Encourage students to explain their thinking for each correct answer. Ask them to share the clues that helped them decide what conclusions to draw. Talk about why some conclusions would not make sense.

Teaching How to Make Inferences

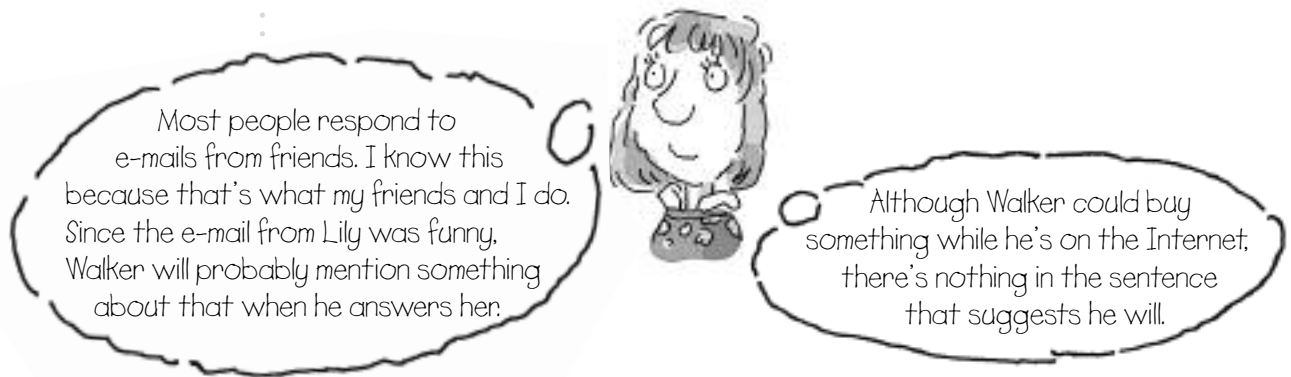**1. Introduce the concept:** Write this sentence on the board.

Walker received a funny e-mail from his friend Lily.

Ask students which of the following sentences goes best with the statement.

A. Walker will write back to Lily.

B. Walker will buy something on the Internet.

2. Model thinking: Think aloud as you guide students in identifying **A.** as the sentence that best goes with the statement.

Most people respond to e-mails from friends. I know this because that's what my friends and I do. Since the e-mail from Lily was funny, Walker will probably mention something about that when he answers her.

Although Walker could buy something while he's on the Internet, there's nothing in the sentence that suggests he will.

3. Define the skill: Tell students that a writer doesn't always explain every fact or detail about something. A writer expects that readers will fill in missing information from their own experience. Readers do this by putting together what they already know and what they have read to make the best guess they can. When readers add information from their own experience to what is stated in a text, they are making an inference. Point out that students make inferences all the time, not only in their reading but in other ways as well. For example, people make inferences when they look at a photograph or see someone walking by on the street.

Teaching How to Draw Conclusions

1. Introduce the concept: Write these sentences on the board.

> **Judd likes the color blue.**
>
> **He says it gives him a peaceful feeling.**
>
> **Judd bought paint for his living room.**

Ask students what color paint they think Judd might have bought.

2. Model thinking: Think aloud as you guide students in recognizing that these sentences, while sharing information about Judd, help the reader come to the conclusion that Judd might have bought blue paint.

> The first sentence states that Judd likes the color blue. The second sentence explains why Judd prefers blue. People generally like their living rooms to be peaceful colors. These are good clues about what color paint Judd might have bought for his living room.

3. Define the skill: Tell students that a conclusion is a decision that readers make after thinking about the information in a text. Since a writer doesn't always state all of his or her ideas, readers often have to look for clues to understand the whole passage, paragraph, or story. Readers must put together the clues that the writer provides and then draw the best conclusions they can to understand the text. Caution students that a conclusion should make sense.

What Is an Inference?

When you read a passage, you are not always given every fact or detail. How does a reader learn what this unstated information is? One way is by making inferences. A reader might think:

What else do I know about this subject? How does what I know fit with what I have read?

These questions help a reader make an **inference**. An inference is a kind of guess made after thinking about what you have read and what you already know.

Read this passage.

Mummies—the preserved bodies of the dead—were made at least 7,000 years ago in Chile by the Chinchorro people. The Inca of Peru also made mummies of their dead kings about 3,000 years ago. In ancient China, people tried to preserve emperors in suits made of jade. Of course, the best-known mummy makers were the early Egyptians, who spent up to 70 days preparing a body.

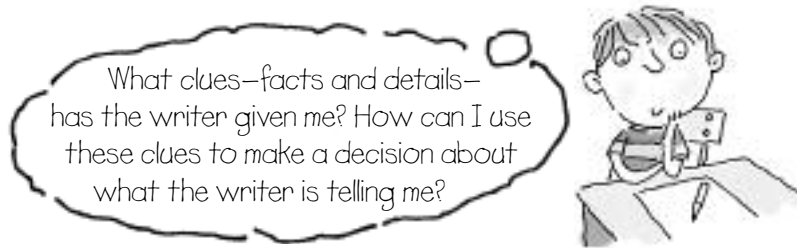Find the facts in the passage. Complete these sentences to write four facts from the passage.

1 The Chinchorro _____ .

2 The Inca _____ .

3 The Chinese _____ .

4 The Egyptians _____ .

Now think about how people today honor the dead. Then recall the facts in the passage. Make an inference. How might ancient people have felt about the dead?

My Inference: _____

_____

What Is a Conclusion?

When you read a passage, you often have to be a detective. You have to find ideas that the writer does not always state. How does a reader do this? One way is by looking for clues and putting them together to draw a conclusion. A reader might think:

What clues—facts and details—has the writer given me? How can I use these clues to make a decision about what the writer is telling me?

These questions help a reader draw a **conclusion**. A conclusion is a decision a reader makes after considering all the information given.

Read this passage.

Corn comes from the maize plant and is grown in many parts of the world. Some kinds of corn are grown as animal feed while other kinds are raised as food for people. In the summertime, many Americans enjoy corn on the cob. Corn is used in many other forms as well. Supermarkets sell cereals made from corn, frozen corn kernels, canned corn, corn oil, cornstarch, cornmeal, corn chips, and popcorn. Corn is also used to make foods such as tacos and muffins.

Answer these questions to identify clues in the passage.

1 Where is corn grown? _____

2 Who or what eats corn? _____

3 What are some corn products? _____

4 What are some foods that contain corn? _____

Now draw a conclusion. What can you conclude about corn?

My Conclusion: _____

_____

Making **I**nferences

Read the paragraph. Answer the questions.

In 1829, Daniel Webster started a page program in the United States Senate. The pages are young people who work for the senators. For example, pages run errands and deliver messages. Pages are chosen by the senators of their home states. They must be 16 years old, have good grades, and show leadership qualities. Pages live near the Capitol Building and attend school. They are excused from homework when the senators work overtime. Pages get paid, but the biggest reward is the experience of working in the Senate.

1 Fill in the correct circle to show whether each statement is a fact or an inference.

Fact   Inference

◯   ◯   Pages run errands for senators.

◯   ◯   Pages are interested in government.

◯   ◯   Pages go to school.

◯   ◯   It is an honor to be a Senate page.

2 Write **yes** or **no** under each heading on the chart to show if the word describes a Senate page.

Busy	**Responsible**	**Lazy**

Making Inferences

Read the paragraph. Answer the questions.

Have you ever heard of a walking school bus? Students in some parts of the United States travel by such buses every day. The "driver" of these buses is often a parent who leads a group to and from school—on foot. If the group is large, there is usually another adult who acts as the "conductor" and walks at the rear of the group to make sure that everyone stays together. Students are picked up and dropped off at their homes. Walking buses help students get fresh air, and they also help reduce pollution and traffic congestion.

1 Fill in the correct circle to show whether each statement is a fact or an inference.

Fact   Inference

◯   ◯   Walking school buses provide good exercise.

◯   ◯   Two adults usually accompany a large group.

◯   ◯   Slow walkers could cause problems for a group.

◯   ◯   Walking buses aren't much fun in bad weather.

2 Write **yes** or **no** under each heading on the chart to show if the word describes a walking school bus.

Healthy	Unsafe	Expensive