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Cover design by Maria Lilja  
Interior design by Holly Grundon  
Interior art by Mike Gordon

ISBN 0-439-55424-1  
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Printed in the U.S.A.

# Introduction

**R**eading comprehension involves numerous thinking skills. Making inferences is one of them. A reader who is adept at making inferences makes better sense of a text and increases his or her understanding of what is being communicated. Most primary school students don't know what an inference is. However, many of them are probably already making inferences—both in their reading and in their daily lives—without being aware of it. This book will help you help students learn to make inferences and to use them in their reading. Use the pages that follow to teach this skill to students and to give them practice in employing it.

## Using This Book

### **Pages 5–7**

After introducing inferences to students (see page 4), duplicate and pass out pages 5–7. Use page 5 to help students review and practice what they have just learned about making inferences. By explaining their thinking, students are using metacognition to analyze how they made their inferences. Pages 6–7 give students a model of the practice pages to come. They also provide a model of the thinking students might use in choosing the best sentence for making an inference from the paragraph.

### **Page 8**

Use this page as a pre-assessment to find out how students think when they make an inference. Although answers are given on page 48, you'll want to acknowledge any responses that make sense. For example, in the first item, most students will say that Sami didn't want to be alone because he had watched a scary movie; however, some students might say that Sami watched a sad movie. When going over these pages with students, discuss why some inferences are better than others and why some are incorrect or do not make sense.

### **Pages 9–43**

These pages offer practice in making inferences. The first paragraph on each page is a nonfiction passage similar to one students might encounter in a social studies or science text. The second paragraph is a fictionalized passage similar to one they might find in a reading book. After reading each paragraph, students should fill in the bubble in front of the correct answer for each question.

### **Pages 44–46**

After they have completed the practice pages, use these pages to assess the way students think when they make inferences. Explain that students should use the illustration as well as the text and their own knowledge to answer the questions.

### **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 toward improving their skills might include:

- reads carelessly
- misunderstands text
- doesn't apply own knowledge
- lacks background to make correct inference

### **Teacher Tip**

For students who need extra help, you might suggest that they keep pages 5–7 with them to use as examples when they complete the practice pages.

# Mini-Lesson: Teaching Inference Skills

**1. Introduce the concept:** Write these words on the chalkboard:

**Miranda is sick today.**

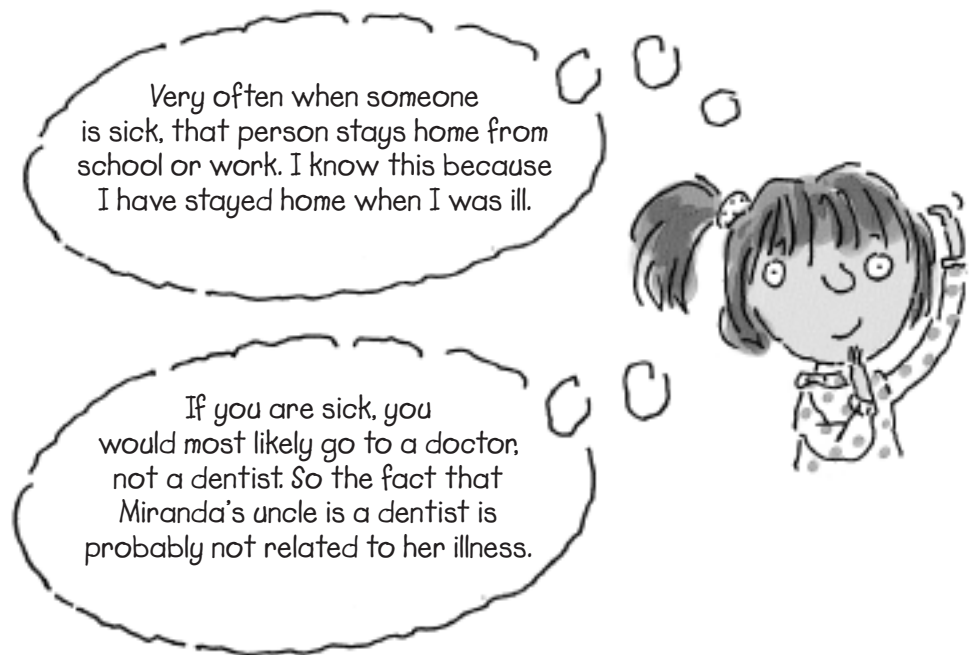
Ask students which of the following sentences best goes with the statement.

- A. Miranda will stay home from school today.
- B. Miranda's uncle is a dentist.

## Teacher Tip

Students can learn a lot if you review the finished practice pages with them on a regular basis. Encourage students to explain their thinking for each correct answer. Ask them to point out the words that help them identify an inference. Discuss why the other sentences are not correct choices.

**2. Model thinking:** After students have correctly identified **A** as the sentence that best goes with the statement, explore why they chose this answer by modeling how they might think aloud.



**3. Define the skill:** Explain to students that a text doesn't always include every fact or detail about something. Often the reader has to add more information. When a reader adds information that he or she already knows to what is stated, the reader is making an **inference**.

*Information in the Text*

*What the Reader Knows*

Miranda is sick.

People stay home when they are sick.

**4. Practice the skill:** Use Practice Pages 9–43 to give students practice in making inferences.

## What Is an Inference?

You read a story. You get some information. But often a story does not tell every detail about a subject. What does a reader do then? A good reader thinks about the information. A reader might think:



By filling in missing information, a reader makes an **inference**.  
An inference is a kind of guess.

Read the paragraph below, and then answer the questions.

### Time for Breakfast

**D**ad called Connie. There was no answer. Then Mom went to the door of Connie's room. She called too. "Breakfast is ready," said Mom. There was still no answer.

#### What facts are given in this story?

1. Dad called Connie but

\_\_\_\_\_ there was no answer.

2. Breakfast was ready but

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

#### Make an inference.

3. What time of day is it?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. How do you know?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. What is Connie probably doing?

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Why do you think so?

\_\_\_\_\_

**When you make an inference, use the facts that are given. Use what you know. Put the information together. Ask yourself whether your inference makes sense.**



## Making Inferences

Study these two pages. They show how a student made inferences.

Read the paragraph. Then fill in the bubble that best answers the question.

### Cave Explorers

**D**o you know what a potholer is? A potholer is someone who explores caves. To be safe from falling rocks, a potholer wears a hard hat. Down into the cave he or she goes. Sometimes a potholer has to crawl. Sometimes he or she must climb. It is often wet in a cave.

Which sentence is most likely true?

A. A potholer never walks in a cave.

C. A potholer's work is very safe.

It doesn't say that a potholer never walks. I think that people sometimes walk in caves.

It says there are falling rocks. That's not so safe. I don't think it is safe if you have to crawl and climb either.

B. A potholer gets dirty on the job.

You **could** get dirty crawling and climbing. I usually do. Also, it says the cave is wet.

I am going to fill in **B**. This sentence makes the most sense. I think you can guess that being a potholer could be a dirty job.





## Making Inferences

Read the paragraph. Then fill in the bubble that best answers the question.

### Sally's Snack

**S**ally dashed from the elevator. She gave her grandmother a quick hug at the door. She dropped her book bag on the table. Then Sally headed for the kitchen. Out came the bread. Out came the jam. In no time Sally made a snack.

Which sentence is most likely true?

A. Sally does not have any homework.

C. Sally is hungry after school.

It doesn't say anything about homework. But kids usually have some in their book bags. Also I think Sally just came home from school.

Sally rushed in the door with a book bag. She most likely came from school. She only gave her grandmother a quick hug. Then she went to the kitchen and got a snack. Most kids do the same thing.

B. Sally likes peanut butter on bread.

It doesn't mention peanut butter although that often goes with jam.

I am going to fill in **C**. This sentence makes the best sense. Sally is in a hurry to eat something. The book bag makes me think she has come from school.

Pre-Assessment

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Thinking About Information

Read each set of sentences. Then answer the questions.

1. Sami watched a movie. He did not want to be alone after it was over.

Why does Sami feel this way?

---

---

Why do you think so?

---

---

2. Max read the newspaper. He cheered when he found last night's score.

What part of the paper is Max reading?

---

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Why do you think so?

---

---

3. The men slid down a pole. In no time they drove away in their truck.

Who are the men?

---

---

Why do you think so?

---

---

4. Betty wore a cast on one leg. She used crutches when she walked.

What happened to Betty?

---

---

Why do you think so?

---

---

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Read each paragraph. Then fill in the bubble that best answers each question.

## The Factory

**T**he factory was humming. On one floor a metal press stamped a large square of blue nylon. Fifty white stars appeared on the cloth. A worker stitched the stars more firmly in place. Then the blue square was attached to 13 stripes of red and white nylon. Finally, the worker folded the whole thing into a box.

1. Which sentence is most likely true?

- A. The workers in this factory make nylon.
- B. This paragraph is about making music.
- C. This paragraph is about a flag factory.

## Max Makes a Call

**M**ax picked up the telephone and began to dial. Frowning, he put down the receiver. He opened a drawer in the desk and pulled out a large book. Max turned the pages. Soon he found what he was looking for. Then Max picked up the phone and dialed once more.



2. Which sentence is most likely true?

- A. Max was making a long distance call.
- B. Max forgot the number he was calling.
- C. Max forgot what he wanted to say.