

## Unit 10: During Reading

### Lesson 23A: Making Inferences

#### Introduction

Making inferences is an important skill in reading. Sometimes referred to as “reading between the lines,” inferring is a skill that students use frequently when talking to others, watching TV and movies, and making choices. Many students need to be taught to use inferential thinking to facilitate comprehension of what they read. The activities in this lesson provide students with practice in making inferences.

#### Materials Needed

- Drawing paper
- Pencils
- Sentences with examples of inferences from books used in the classroom

#### Preparation

Before presenting inferential thinking activities to students, gather examples of the types of inferences that are made during everyday activities. If people outside are wearing jackets, for example, we infer that it must be cold. If we read the sentence, “Although it was late in the evening, it was still warm,” we are likely to infer that it must be summer.

Ask students to think of inferences they make at school. Also, find examples of inferences that can be made from classroom reading material.

#### Procedure

1. As a group, brainstorm situations in which people typically make inferences. We, for example, make inferences about what is cooking based on what we smell.
2. Hand out drawing paper and say that you will be describing an imaginary animal for the students to draw. Here is the description of this animal:
  - Its head is round and it has four large eyes.
  - Its mouth is very tiny with no teeth, and its lips are long and shaped like a straw.
  - Its body is covered with scales.
  - Its hands and feet look like paddles with just small thumbs.
  - It is green.
3. Now ask questions about the animal they have drawn, such as, “Where do you think this animal lives? Why?”, “What do you think this animal eats? Why?”, “How well do you think this animal sees? Why?” In each case be sure to get an explanation based on the content of the drawing, not just an idea that the student might have. However, evidence from the drawing may be combined with experience when inferences are made. For instance, a student might say the animal lives in water because most animals with scales live in water.
4. Explain that while reading, students should make the same kinds of inferences using word clues that they make when picture clues are available.
5. Practice with some sentences similar to these:
  - Mary dribbled the ball quickly down the floor and then turned to pass. What is Mary doing?
  - As the car turned west, suddenly the driver was almost blinded by the light from the sun. What time of the day is it?
  - He could almost feel his ankle swelling as he sat and looked hopelessly down the long path to the bottom. What is his problem?
6. Discuss some examples of inferences that can be made based on information contained within classroom reading material.

#### Follow-Up

Review this skill again and again as students read together in class. Ask them to find examples of inferences in their reading and to write them in a list or mark them with removable sticky notes. Put up a poster listing inferences students make or share during class.

**Unit 10: During Reading**  
**Lesson 23B: Making Inferences**

Directions: Match the inferences in the box with the sentences below. Write the letters on the lines.

**Inferences**

- A. making cookies
- B. driving a car
- C. washing a dog
- D. doing homework
- E. finding a lost pet
- F. working on the computer

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Jamal picked up his pencil, opened the book, and wrote something on the paper.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Anna handed her mom the flour and went to check to see if the oven light had turned off yet.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. After Peter moved the mouse around, he clicked the button carefully. Then he looked at the screen.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Jan stared straight ahead and held the wheel tightly in both hands.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Tony poured the warm water from the cup and then squirted on some shampoo.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Felicia shone the flashlight far into the bushes and called, "Duffy, come here. Duffy!"



**Unit 10: During Reading**  
**Lesson 23C: Making Inferences**

Directions: Make an inference to explain what the author didn't tell you in these sentences. Write your inference on the line. Then underline the words that helped you make the inference.

1. When Pedro finished, he put the book in his backpack and turned on the TV.

What had Pedro done? \_\_\_\_\_

2. As the seat began to swing back and forth, Tom gripped the safety bar tightly and told himself not to look down.

Where is Tom? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Peggy slammed the door shut behind her and stomped down the stairs.

How does Peggy feel? \_\_\_\_\_

4. When we got up in the morning, branches and leaves were all over the yard and the garbage can was in the street.

What had happened during the night?  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Just as LaTonya shivered and picked up her towel to dry off, the bee landed on her back.

What will happen next?  
\_\_\_\_\_

