

Making Inferences/Drawing Conclusions

Inference: an idea that is suggested by the facts or details in a passage

Conclusion: a decision about what may happen or about the result an event may have

NOTE: Making an inference and drawing a conclusion are very similar skills. Each requires the reader to fill in blanks left out by the author. An author may not include information for several reasons: they may think you already know it, it may not seem important to them, or they may want you to find the result.

How to make an inference or draw a conclusion

- ✓ Observe all the facts, arguments, and information given by the author
- ✓ Consider what you already know from your own experiences
- ✓ When faced with multiple choice answers, determine whether each is true or false based on the information in the passage

The woman waited nervously in line. When the counter was empty, she carefully unloaded her items from her cart. Lines creased her forehead as if to show the calculations ringing up in her head. Finally, the cashier began ringing up the items as the woman clutched her purse.

Inference/conclusion: The woman may not have enough money to cover the cost of her groceries.

- ✓ Think about the facts of the passage and what may result from them
- ✓ Think about causes and effects

The writer may only provide a *list of effects*, so you have to figure out the cause.

The child stood on the sidewalk clenching her ice cream cone. Beads of sweat collected on her little nose as she furiously licked at the ice cream dripping down her hand.

Inference/conclusion: It must be a hot day because her ice cream is melting, and she is sweating.

- ✓ Try saying “If ...then”

If the girl is sweating, then it may be warm outside.

Remember

- Most writing *suggests* more than it says
- By making inferences, you get more from the story
- Conclusions may be missing from the things you read, so you have to draw your own

Practice Activities

Turner almost wished that he hadn't listened to the radio. He went to the closet and grabbed his umbrella. He would feel silly carrying it to the bus stop on such a sunny morning.

1. Which probably happened?
 - a. Turner realized that he had an unnatural fear of falling radio parts.
 - b. Turner had promised himself to do something silly that morning.
 - c. Turner had heard a weather forecast that predicted rain.
 - d. Turner planned to trade his umbrella for a bus ride.

"Larry, as your boss, I must say that it's been very interesting working with you," Miss Valdez said. "However, it seems that our company's needs and your performance style are not well matched. Therefore, it makes me very sad to have to ask you to resign your position effective today."

2. What was Miss Valdez telling Larry?
 - a. She would feel really bad if he decided to quit.
 - b. He was being fired.
 - c. He was getting a raise in pay.
 - d. She really enjoyed having him in the office.

Bill and Jessica were almost done taking turns choosing players for their teams. It was Jessica's turn to choose, and only Kurt was left. Jessica said, "Kurt."

3. We can infer that
 - a. Kurt is not a very good player.
 - b. Jessica was pleased to have Kurt on her team.
 - c. Kurt was the best player on either team.
 - d. Jessica was inconsiderate of Kurt's feelings.

Mending

A giant hand inside my chest
Stretches out and takes
My heart within its mighty grasp
And squeezes till it breaks.

A gentle hand inside my chest,
With mending tape and glue,
Patches up my heart until
It's almost good as new.

I ought to know by now that
Broken hearts will heal again.
But while I wait for glue and tape,
The pain!
The pain!
The pain!

by Judith Viorst

4. The poem is probably about
 - a. a woman.
 - b. a man.
 - c. a broken heart.
 - d. heart surgery.
5. It can be inferred that the subject of the poem
 - a. is in a lot of physical pain.
 - b. enjoys arts and crafts.
 - c. is a good friend.
 - d. has had a broken heart before.