

Inquiry Mini-Lessons

Inferring and Drawing Conclusions

Readers need to use information from the text along with their background knowledge to link ideas and discover the author's intended meaning. This strategy is necessary whether reading fiction or non-fiction texts. This lesson will help students to make inferences and draw conclusions in order to determine what the author is not directly saying in the text.

Time: 25 minutes

Materials:

- chart paper and markers, or interactive whiteboard
- Inferring chart

Grouping: whole class or small groups

Procedure:

1. On chart paper or an interactive whiteboard, set up a three-column chart with the following headings: "What I Already Know," "What the Author Tells and Shows Me," and "My Inference."
2. Ask students if they ever have to stop reading to figure out what the author is saying because the author didn't tell them everything in the text. Tell students they will be learning how to figure out what the author might have left out.
3. Model for students by thinking aloud how to put what you already know together with what the author tells you in order to figure out what the author wants you to understand. As you do so, complete the Inferring Chart. For example, for the *Animals in Our Lives* unit you might say, "I found out in my research that meat comes from animals. I already know that some people are vegetarians and don't eat meat. I know they are healthy and survive without meat, so I guess that means that we could survive without animals for food. The author didn't say that, so I had to draw my own conclusions."

Sometimes a text tells us the facts, but we have to add that information to what we already know to figure out what it means. This is called inferring.

Inferring Chart

What I Know	What the Author Tells and Shows Me	My Inference
Some people do not eat meat and are healthy. They are called vegetarians.	Meat comes from animals.	We don't have to depend on animals for food.

4. Ask students to share some of the findings from their research and discuss as a whole group if they need to infer beyond what is in the text. Encourage them to use what they already know along with the author's information.

Teaching Tip: Since not all students have the same background knowledge, they will not all arrive at the same inference or conclusion. Provide support to help students understand the author's most likely intention.

5. Continue filling in the chart for each example provided by students. The chart can be left on display as a reminder of how to make inferences and draw conclusions.

Teaching Tip: If students are researching in small groups, pairs, or individually, ask them to go back to their own research data and draw some conclusions of their own.