



# Making Inferences

What does it mean to make inferences (or to infer) when reading?

When a reader makes an inference, he or she is taking clues from the text and combining them with his/her own experience or knowledge to draw a conclusion. Another way to think of it is that you are 'reading between the lines' when you infer. Predictions, conclusions and new ideas are all forms of inferences.

Why is it an important skill?

Being able to make inferences while reading is important for many reasons. First, as a reader is inferring, he/she is making connections to the text – either through personal experiences or prior knowledge. Either way, when readers make connections, they are more likely to remember and understand what they read. In addition, making inferences is one way that readers think critically about texts. They are constantly checking their own understanding as they read and picking up on details that are not explicitly stated.

How can I encourage my child to make inference?

The exact inferences your child makes will depend on the book he/she is reading. However, here are some ideas for questions to ask that will encourage your child to think more deeply about a text.

For fiction books:

What was the most important part of the story? Why do you think that?

What kind of person is (name of character)? How do you know?

What lesson did the character learn?

How did the character change in this story?

How is (name of character) similar to (another character)? How are they different?

For non-fiction books:

What can you learn from the picture that isn't in the words?

What is the author's opinion on this topic?

What questions do you still have about this topic?

Read the heading. What do you think you will read about in this section?

What is the main idea of this section? What is it mostly about?

