

Lesson Skill: Making inferences

Strand Reading—fiction/nonfiction

SOL 4.5, 4.6
5.5, 5.6
6.5, 6.6
7.6, 7.6
8.5, 8.6

Materials

- Two works of art for display (Internet search)
- Copies of the attached I See and I Infer worksheet
- Copies of the attached I Read and I Infer worksheet
- Book being currently read by each student (either individual choice, literature selection, or class reading)

Lesson

Before doing this lesson, select two works of art full of detail and emotion. Works depicting people are more effective.

1. Begin the lesson by asking students to define the word inference. Tell students that in this lesson, they will practice making inferences.
2. Show students the first art work, and ask them what they see. Students may jump ahead to making inferences (e.g., “He looks frightened.”), and if they do, simply probe for the detail that sparked the comment by asking questions such as, “What do you see that makes you say that?”
3. Ask students to distinguish what they infer from what they actually see. After discussing the painting, point out that people make inferences all the time—they notice (see) things in the world around them, add this data to what they already know, and make an inference.
4. Tell students they will practice making inferences. Guide them in completing the I See and I Infer worksheet. In column one, students should identify a detail from the painting, and in column two, they should write a logical inference based on that detail. (For example: I see... “The mother is wearing an old-fashioned dress.” and I infer... “This event is taking place in the past.”).
5. Show students the second art work. Have students complete the I See and I Infer worksheet for it. Circulate to assist as necessary.
6. When students are finished, have volunteers share some of their inferences.
7. Remind students that they do the same thing when they are reading—i.e., they notice something and then make an inference based on what they read and what they already know.

8. Tell students they will now do a similar activity using quotes or details from a book they are reading instead of paintings. Tell students to go back to a section they have already read (the beginning frequently works well), write down on the I Read and I Infer worksheet three to six sentences or short groups of sentences, and write corresponding inferences they made from these sentences. Tell them also to explain why they made each inference.
9. Close the lesson by reminding students that their job as readers is to make inferences based on what the text says and what they already know—i.e., their background knowledge.

Strategies for Differentiation

- When the students are independently making inferences using text, the teacher may provide selected students with a short story or selected picture book.
- Students work in groups or individually.
- Teacher may preselect appropriate sentences from a short story or picture book for the students to practice making inferences.
- Limit the number of required inferences to three.

I See and I Infer



Fill out the graphic organizer below:

1. In column 1, write a detail you notice in the painting.
2. In column 2, write a logical inference based on that detail.

I see ...	I infer ...
Painting 1	Painting 1
Painting 2	Painting 2



I Read and I Infer

Fill out the graphic organizer below:

1. In column 1, write a sentence or group of sentences from which you can infer something.
2. In column 2, write a logical inference based on that sentence, and explain *why* you infer this.

I read ...	I infer ...