ENGLISH, LITERACY, AND COMMUNICATION

Making inferences

Difficulty level: Intermediate

English, Literacy, and Communication

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Overview of the concept

This is how you work out what a writer means without being told directly, like knowing a character is nervous from their shaky hands, not from the word nervous. Writers rarely spell everything out, they show it through clues, and reading means putting those clues together. You use it to understand a character in a novel, to read between the lines of a news story, or to work out what someone really means in a message when they do not say it outright.



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Worked examples

EXAMPLE 1

Q **Infer: Sara grabbed an umbrella and a coat as she left the house. What can you infer about the weather?**

SOLUTION

Find the clues: umbrella and coat.

Add what you know: people take umbrellas when it rains and coats when it is cold or wet.

So you can infer: it was probably rainy or cold outside.

EXAMPLE 2

Q **Infer: Tom's stomach rumbled, and he looked at the clock. It was noon. What can you infer?**

SOLUTION

Find the clues: rumbling stomach, noon.

Add what you know: stomachs rumble when you are hungry, and noon is lunchtime.

So you can infer: Tom was hungry and it was time for lunch.

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Practice questions

1 Infer: Mia wore a swimsuit and carried a towel to the pool. What was she going to do?

- A Swim
- B Play tennis
- C Read a book
- D Go shopping

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2 Infer: The ground was wet and there were puddles, but the sky was now clear. What had happened?

- A It had snowed
- B It had rained
- C It was windy
- D It was sunny

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3 **Infer: Ben yawned and rubbed his eyes during class. How did he feel?**

- **A** Tired
- **B** Excited
- **C** Hungry
- **D** Angry

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4 **Infer: The room was dark except for the glow of a big screen, and empty popcorn bowls sat on the floor. Where were they?**

- **A** In a cinema
- **B** In a classroom
- **C** In a kitchen
- **D** In a park

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5 **Infer: Leaves were on the ground and the air was cold. What season was it likely to be?**

- **A** Spring
- **B** Summer
- **C** Fall
- **D** Winter

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6 **Infer: Ana studied all night, and her eyes were red in the morning. What can you infer?**

- **A** She had been crying
- **B** She was tired from little sleep
- **C** She was sick
- **D** She was excited

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7 **Infer: The woman wore a white coat and carried a stethoscope around her neck. What was her job likely to be?**

- A Doctor
- B Teacher
- C Chef
- D Farmer

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8 **Infer: Jake put on boots and a thick jacket. What was the weather like?**

- A Cold
- B Hot
- C Sunny
- D Rainy

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9 **Infer: Every time the new student sat alone at lunch, Jonah moved his tray to sit with him. What does that tell you about Jonah?**

- **A** He is kind
- **B** He is angry
- **C** He is shy
- **D** He is in a hurry

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10 **Infer: Sara smiled and hugged her friend after hearing the news. What was the news likely to be?**

- **A** Good news
- **B** Bad news
- **C** Boring news
- **D** Scary news

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ANSWER KEY

1. Swim

2. It had rained

3. Tired

4. In a cinema

5. Fall

6. She was tired from little sleep

7. Doctor

8. Cold

9. He is kind

10. Good news

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