

Making Inferences and Drawing Conclusions

By: Reading Rockets (2011)

Observations occur when we can see something happening. In contrast, inferences are what we figure out based on an experience. Helping students understand when information is implied, or not directly stated, will improve the skills of drawing conclusions and making inferences. These skills will be needed for all sorts of school assignments, including reading, science and social studies. Inferential thinking is a complex skill that children will develop over time and with experience.

Families can create opportunities to practice inferential thinking. Below are a few ways to help familiarize children of any age with this way of thinking and learning:

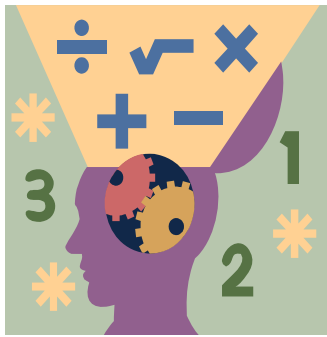
- Explain to your child that we make conclusions about things and draw inferences all the time. Draw a conclusion together and then talk about what clues were used to come to that conclusion. For example, Erin played outside today. How can we tell? Muddy shoes, jump rope on the front porch, water bottle out. Dad seems tired tonight. How can we tell? He's rubbing his eyes, he's on the couch, he was yawning at the dinner table.
- Paper bag mystery person: Put a few items into a brown paper bag. Tell your children the bag belongs to a certain type of person. Their job is to tell you something about the person. Then, take out each item one by one and talk about it.
Example #1: goggles, a swim cap, a swim ribbon, a stop watch
Example #2: a bookmark, a library card, a stuffed animal, a book
- Wordless picture books provide your child with practice using clues to create meaning. There are no wrong stories with wordless picture books, only variations based on what

the "reader" sees and puts together. *Rosie's Walk* (Hutchins), *Good Dog, Carl* (Day), and *Beaver Is Lost* (Cooper) are all interesting and fun wordless picture books to explore.

- Play twenty questions! This familiar word game helps build inference skills. As your child develops skill with the game, encourage him to avoid asking direct questions like, "Is it a dog?" Rather, encourage him to ask broader questions, "Does it walk on four legs?" Then, when your child figures it out, ask him to tell you the clues that led to the right answer.
- Create scenarios in which your children must use what they already know to predict an outcome. For example, growing seeds. Present your children with various scenarios (a seed will be given water and sunlight, a seed will get no water, a seed will be in a dark room). Ask your children to predict whether the seed will grow. Help your children become aware that they used information they knew about growing seeds, combined with new information, to fill in information about the seeds.

Learning to draw conclusions and inferences is a skill that develops over time. The skill requires children to put together various pieces of information, and relies on good word knowledge. Help your children develop skill by providing experience with inferential information, making implied information more clear, and helping draw conclusions based on the evidence.

Adapted from
<http://www.idonline.org/article/43410>



11 Tips for Better Grades in Math

Here are some great tips to help high school and middle school students succeed in math:

1. Aim high and shoot for **100%**.
2. The key to doing math well is doing math **neatly**. Line up the numbers. Take the time to do it right.
3. Remember to “**do the math.**” It's not **just** the answer that counts. Math grades are often based on the steps in getting to the answer. So **show all the work**.
4. It is important to read over the material in the math text book. Don't just focus on the homework problems.
5. Take notes in class. When studying them, highlight points you need to review.
6. If you don't understand something, ask the teacher as soon as possible.
7. Watch for summaries within and at the end of assigned chapters.
8. Look for **bold face** and *italic* text. This signifies important points to remember.
9. If the homework assignments skip questions, review those questions when studying for a test.
10. Keep up with the class on a daily basis. If your child is absent, contact the school right away to get missed work. Do not get behind.
11. Have a positive attitude about math—even if it's not your strong point. Don't take the attitude that you aren't good in math. Think, "I can do my math, and I **can** get a good grade in math."

Excerpted from: http://www.babies-kids-teens.com/Tips_for_Better_Math_Grades_Ma.html

The Home and School Connection

“When parents are involved in their children's education at home, they do better in school. And when parents are involved in school, children go farther in school—and the schools they go to are better.”

Education is a partnership. Our children benefit from a home and school connection. That's why many parents join local parent-teacher organizations and attend back-to-school open houses. They also volunteer for field trips or special projects that bring them to school for celebrations, career days, or teacher conferences.

We encourage you to become directly involved with your child's education. Your input does make a difference. Here are some helpful tips:

- ✓ Seek advice from your child's teacher on helping your child study for tests.
- ✓ Check your child's homework every night.
- ✓ Limit TV viewing on school nights.
- ✓ Stay informed about what is going on at your child's school.
- ✓ Respond to communication from the classroom teacher to build the link..