



# Make Complex Inferences and Use Evidence to Support Understanding

**R/S Figure 19(D)** Make complex inferences about text and use textual evidence to support understanding.

## Understand the TEKS

When you read a text, how do you know what you know about it? Sometimes, the author will tell you everything you need to know, like the setting, the color of a character's eyes, or what a character was wearing. Other times, the author wants you to fill in the blanks, and make educated guesses about the text. These educated guesses are called **inferences**. Imagine that an author writes, "She stood alone, facing the brick wall, her fists curled into balls. She did not turn around even when they called her name." From this text, you can infer that the girl in the text is probably angry. Making inferences is one of several important reading skills.

Another important reading skill is making predictions. Making a **prediction** is similar to making an inference. While an inference is an educated guess about something presently happening in the story, a prediction is an educated guess about something that might happen in the future.

A **generalization** is a broad statement about a text or characters in a text. For example, a generalization could state, "All of the characters in this book have a secret."

A **conclusion** is a judgment, opinion, or decision about a text or its characters that is made after careful consideration of the evidence.

Inferences, predictions, generalizations, and conclusions all require that you carefully analyze the **evidence**. Evidence is the information that the author presents in the text. Strong inferences, predictions, generalization, and conclusions must be supported by evidence.

Evidence can include quotes from the text, facts, main ideas, and supporting details. Evidence helps you form your own ideas about what is happening in the text.



### Did You Know?

**Comprehension** Gather details from the text like pieces of a puzzle. When putting the pieces together, consider the bigger picture they create.

**★ Practice**

Read the selection below. Then answer the questions that follow it.

## An Ancient Disk's Secret Message

by Mary Morton Cowan

- 1 Have you ever decoded a secret message? On the Greek island of Crete, in the Mediterranean Sea, there is a message so puzzling that it has remained a secret since its discovery almost one hundred years ago.
- 2 The message is ancient. Almost four thousand years ago, it was stamped onto a disk that was pressed from a ball of clay. In order to be able to read the message, you need the right code. The problem is, no one knows that code.
- 3 This mysterious clay disk is on display at the Archaeological Museum in Iraklion, Crete, along with other Minoan treasures. (The term *Minoan* refers to Crete's ancient civilization.) The disk, slightly larger than a saucer, is thicker in the center than at the edge. Both sides are covered with hieroglyphics—writing in pictures and symbols.
- 4 In 1900, archaeologists uncovered an ancient palace on the north shore of Crete, older than any other European ruins. Crete quickly became a popular digging site. Soon, other palaces were discovered. One July day in 1908, a group of Italian archaeologists were digging among the ruins at the ancient Palace of Phaistos (FYS-toss) on the south shore of Crete. One of them, Dr. Luigi Pernier, uncovered a mud-brick box in a storage room. Inside he found a clay tablet etched with linear writing, pieces of a broken pottery jar, and the clay disk. Brushing dirt off the disk, Pernier saw the mysterious hieroglyphic message.
- 5 The Phaistos Disk, as it came to be called, became famous for the way the message was inscribed. Each figure was pressed onto the clay with a stamp or punch—an early form of the printing process. Whoever stamped the disk used a set of punches, probably made of wood or ivory. We can tell that a punch was used for each character because each character is exactly the same every time it appears.
- 6 Jon Chadwick, who was a professor of Greek at the University of Cambridge in England, was a world-famous expert on Cretan scripts. In one of his books, he calls the Phaistos Disk “the world’s first typewritten document.” Other scholars agree. Forty-five different characters are stamped onto this disk. If you were going to take the time and effort to make forty-five tiny, well-detailed stamps—each design is only about a centimeter high—you would plan to use them more than once. According to Chadwick, “Its maker must have intended to produce a large number of documents.”
- 7 This unique disk is more than an example of ancient printing, however. It is an unsolved puzzle. Nothing like it has been found anywhere else in the world. For years, scholars argued about the direction of the writing. “But,” said Chadwick, “it has now been



firmly established that in some places one sign very slightly overlaps that to its right." That proves the maker kept stamping toward the left, creating a spiral toward the center.

- 8 For almost a century, scholars and amateurs have been trying to interpret the Phaistos Disk to discover its secret. The most widely accepted opinion is that it has a sacred meaning. We know that Minoans and other ancient Mediterranean cultures worshipped gods and goddesses. The Palace of Phaistos faced north, toward a sacred mountain, and it included areas for sacred rituals. Moreover, other religious relics with spiral inscriptions have been found elsewhere on Crete. Similar signs were etched on a stone altar at another Cretan palace and on a bronze ax found in a sacred cave in the mountains.
- 9 When you look closely at the disk, you notice that the message is divided into sections, which may be words or phrases. Several sign groups repeat, suggesting a refrain. Each side of the disk could be a verse of a song or hymn. "But we do not even know if the text is complete," Chadwick admitted. He believed more disks must be still hidden in ruins somewhere. He always hoped so, for he knew scholars need more than one document in any script to be able to read it. "My own view," he wrote, "shared by all serious scholars, is that the Disk is undecipherable so long as it remains an isolated document."
- 10 It is hard to guess where additional disks might be because experts are not sure where the Phaistos Disk was made. For one thing, the reddish-brown clay is not like clay found on the island. Archaeologists have found so many styles of pottery among the ruins on Crete that they know Minoans traded with people from other Mediterranean cultures. Many of the characters stamped on the disk show distinct cultural features that are not Minoan. The pagoda-like structure resembles those from Asia Minor, and the man with a bristly plumed headdress is probably Philistine, from across the Mediterranean Sea.
- 11 For now, the Phaistos Disk remains unreadable. No one has found the key to unlock its secret message. Maybe someday, somewhere, archaeologists will uncover more disks. Then, perhaps an expert will work out the code and read the secret of this ancient disk. Maybe it will be you!

- 1** The author wrote this selection most likely to —
- A** describe ancient Minoan culture
  - B** explain how ancient Minoans created hieroglyphics
  - C** introduce the mystery of the Phaistos Disk
  - D** propose possible meanings of the Phaistos Disk

- 2** What statement can the reader infer from details in paragraph 7?
- F** Ancient Minoans read from right to left.
  - G** The disk was designed to be read from the center outward.
  - H** Scholars disagree on how to read ancient Minoan text.
  - J** Modern printing has no overlap between different characters.

- 3** Read this sentence from paragraph 8.

*The most widely accepted opinion is that it has a sacred meaning.*

What is one possible conclusion the reader can draw from this sentence?

- A** Every scholar agrees about the meaning of the disk.
- B** There may be scholars who have a different opinion on the meaning.
- C** The opinion of the scholars is correct.
- D** This is an opinion, not a fact, so it is likely not correct.

- 4** Which prediction does the text in paragraph 9 support?
- F** It is unlikely that the disk will ever be deciphered.
  - G** Other disks were likely traded to faraway places.
  - H** It is possible that people still sing the hymn that is written on the disk.
  - J** Scholars will continue to search for other documents to help them decode the disk.

- 5** Read this sentence from paragraph 9.

*When you look closely at the disk, you notice that the message is divided into sections, which may be words or phrases.*

Based on this sentence, the reader can infer that —

- A** the text is small
- B** the message is very long
- C** to the untrained eye, the text looks unreadable
- D** the disk is on display somewhere



- 6** What is one generalization the reader can make about this selection?
- F** Excavations in Crete stopped about 100 years ago.
  - G** Ancient texts look quite different from modern texts.
  - H** Scholars often disagree on how to interpret the past.
  - J** Ancient Minoans acquired most of their goods through trade.

- 7** Read these sentences from paragraph 10.

*For one thing, the reddish-brown clay is not like clay found on the island. Archaeologists have found so many styles of pottery among the ruins on Crete that they know Minoans traded with people from other Mediterranean cultures.*

What is the purpose of including these lines?

- A** It supports the generalization that the ancient Minoans were an isolated culture.
- B** It is evidence that supports the inference that the disk may have been produced by another culture.
- C** It is an idea that helps the reader draw the conclusion that the disk was similar to other artifacts found on the island.
- D** It provides a prediction for how the ancient Minoans created the disk.

- 8** In paragraph 6, Chadwick explains that there are 45 different stamps used on the disk. Which inference about the makers of the disk this statement best support?
- F** They had a simple alphabet.
  - G** They had not yet developed a print culture.
  - H** Scholars are on the brink of deciphering the alphabet they used.
  - J** They were producing other texts with the same stamps.

- 9** Which sentence from the selection best supports the idea that Crete has been inhabited longer than other places have?
- A** *Almost four thousand years ago, it was stamped onto a disk that was pressed from a ball of clay.*
  - B** *In 1900, archaeologists uncovered an ancient palace on the north shore of Crete, older than any other European ruins.*
  - C** *Crete quickly became a popular digging site.*
  - D** *Nothing like it has been found anywhere else in the world.*

- 10** In paragraph 4, the sentence, *Soon other palaces were discovered* can lead the reader to conclude that —
- F** some Minoans had great wealth
  - G** the Minoan civilization was quite large
  - H** many Minoan families lived under one roof
  - J** scholars still know very little about the Minoans