Lesson 3

Make and Support Inferences

4.6(F) Make inferences and use evidence to support understanding.
4.6(I) Monitor comprehension and make adjustments such as re-reading, using background knowledge, asking questions, and annotating when understanding breaks down.
4.7(C) Use text evidence to support an appropriate response.
4.7(E) Interact with sources in meaningful ways such as notetaking, annotating, freewriting, or illustrating.

Introduction

Real-World Connection

Robbie is trying to solve a mystery. He cannot find one of his favorite shoes. He knows without a doubt that he left both shoes in his closet last night, and now one is missing. He looks around his closet and in the other rooms of the house. He wants to be a detective someday, so he takes out his magnifying glass and looks at the situation more closely. He finds bits of fur on the closet floor. As he walks around the house, he notices that someone left the laundry room door open. The family was told to keep that door shut because their new puppy, Snowball, is staying in the laundry room until he is house trained. Snowball has escaped!

What can Robbie do with the information he has gathered to help him solve the case of the missing shoe?

In Guided Instruction and Independent Practice, we will learn about making inferences. Then, at the end of the lesson, we will revisit Robbie and his mystery.

What I Am Going to Learn

• Make inferences based on the information in a text.
• Use background knowledge, ask questions, and annotate texts for better understanding.
• Use evidence from the text to support responses.
• Interact with sources by notetaking, freewriting, or illustrating.

What I May Already Know 3.6(F), 3.6(I), 3.7(C), 3.7(E)

• I know how to make inferences from evidence in the text.
• I know how to monitor my comprehension.
• I know how to use text evidence to support my responses.
• I know how to interact with a text.

Tips and Tricks

Authors leave clues in their writing to help readers make inferences. Pay close attention to what characters say and do. Many times those are the places authors leave their clues.
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Understand the TEKS

These vocabulary words will help you understand the TEKS.

Sometimes authors or poets suggest or imply an idea to the reader rather than stating it directly. When this happens, you must make an intelligent guess based on information from the text. When you make a guess, you infer what the author is saying. That is called making an inference. You make inferences all the time when you read, whether it is in fiction, poetry, biographies, informational articles, and even cartoons. The more evidence, the available facts and information in the text, you use to make your inference, the more likely your intelligent guess will be accurate.

Sometimes the author tells you information directly.

*The drought lasted for almost a month and caused severe damage.*

Sometimes the author shows you.

*The crops withered on the vine and the cows gave no milk.*

Even if you had not read the first sentence, you would have inferred from the details in the second sentence that the drought was severe. The details from the story serve as the evidence, or proof, of your inference. This evidence, plus your own background knowledge, what you already know, help you to make an accurate inference.

When you make an inference, you add together the details, or evidence, in the text with what you know. You “read between the lines” to fill in the gaps of what the author does not tell you.

You can annotate your text, or write down the details from the passage and what you already know. Writing out your thought process with annotations will help improve your comprehension, or understanding.

\[
\text{Detail} + \text{Detail} + \text{What I Know} = \text{Inference}
\]

- Crops withered.
- Cows gave no milk.
- Crops and cows need water.
- There is a drought.
Read the passage below.

Alonso set off early that morning on his horse. He wanted to get to Pedro’s house by lunchtime, but that meant crossing the desert. At some point, he lost the trail. Now, he was traveling in circles for what seemed hours. No matter how hard he scanned the ground, he could not find a hint of the trail.

He reached into his pack for his canteen and took a long drink of water, leaving it empty. “That was foolish,” he thought. “I should have saved some.”

He looked up at the sky. “In a few hours, the sun will set,” he said to himself.

His horse whinnied pitifully. Alonso pulled the reins to stop, dismounted, and wrapped his arms around the creature’s neck. “I know how you feel,” he said. “I know how you feel.”

Look at the details.
- lost in the desert
- traveling in circles
- late in the day
- out of water

Use your background knowledge to put yourself in Alonso’s shoes. Consider the evidence from the story. Add these details from the passage to what you know from your own life experience. If you need to, go back and reread the passage.
- How do you think Alonso feels? Why?

A conclusion is a type of inference. When you made this inference, you used evidence from the text to support your response, or your conclusion. The process looks like this.

Detail + Detail + Detail + Detail = Evidence = Conclusion

For example, suppose you read that a woman had spent many years trying to protect gray wolves. She had worked with many groups to do this. She won a prize for her efforts from a nature society.

Then you read that the gray wolf was on the endangered list until a few years ago. Now it is no longer considered endangered.
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- Draw a conclusion. Do you think there are more gray wolves today than in the recent past? Why or why not?

In addition to annotating a text, you can write down your thoughts by freewriting, the automatic writing of your thoughts about a text, or even by illustrating the text, or drawing pictures of what mental images are in your mind as you read. All of these things will help you to interact with the author to have a better and deeper understanding of the text.

Guided Instruction

Read the passage below. Then answer the questions in the margin and complete the activities.

Amiga

by Suzanne Wright

1. At the rooster’s first crow, Carlos tossed aside the covers and leaped from his bed. He raced down the hall and through the kitchen, where his mother stood slapping tortillas on a floured board.

2. “Morning, Mama,” he called as he sped out the door.

3. The sun had just begun to open over the horizon. Carlos squinted at the road that ran past the hacienda. His father was nowhere in sight.

4. Carlos’ father had promised him a special gift for his birthday. For weeks Carlos had hinted how great it would be to own a horse. If he had a horse, he could ride it to school, instead of taking the rickety old bus. If he had a horse, he reminded Mama and Papa, he could ride into the village on errands. But best of all—and this part Carlos didn’t tell his parents—if he had a horse, someday he could ride in the rodeo.

5. When Carlos went back inside, his mother shook her head, smiling. “Carlos,” she said, setting his breakfast in front of him, “you tore through here so fast, I didn’t even have a chance to wish you a happy birthday.”

Guided Questions

Read paragraphs 1–2. Highlight details that help you infer that Carlos is excited.

Read paragraph 4. Highlight the reasons Carlos wants a horse. Which of his reasons do you think means the most to Carlos? Why?
6 Carlos stared down at the plate of eggs and tortillas. Huevos rancheros was his favorite, but this morning he felt too excited to eat.

7 “Go ahead, eat while it’s hot. Your sisters and I will join you in a minute.” Carlos bowed his head and said a quick grace before digging into his eggs. “Delicious, Mama,” he murmured, barely tasting them.

8 A moment later, Teresa, Maria, and Conchita burst into the kitchen. Carlos smiled at the girls as they sat down at the table. But then he went back to daydreaming about what color his horse would be.

9 Suddenly Carlos heard an animal whinny. He jumped from the table and rushed outside. There in the yard stood his father, coaxing an animal toward the whitewashed farmhouse. But it was not a horse!

10 Carlos stared in disbelief at the animal’s short, slender legs and enormous, funny-looking ears.

Guided Questions

Read paragraph 9. How do you think Carlos feels when he sees the burro? Why?
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11  A burro? Why, a burro was nothing but a silly old donkey. A burro was not the sort of animal a boy dreamed of riding swiftly across the prairie. And a burro was certainly not the sort of animal a boy dreamed of riding in the rodeo.

12  Choking back tears, Carlos walked slowly over to his father, who smiled proudly at him.

13  “Happy birthday, son,” he said, handing Carlos the reins. “A burro, Papa!” exclaimed Carlos, trying his best to sound excited. He put out his hand to stroke the animal’s cheek.

14  “See, she has a nice disposition.”

15  “Yes, Papa; she’s nice,” said Carlos, avoiding his father’s eyes. Maria, Teresa, and Conchita came running out of the house. “Papa, what have you brought us?” they shouted.

16  “This burro is Carlos’s birthday present.”

17  “Oh, Papa, may we ride her?” the three girls begged, jumping up and down. “Ask Carlos. She’s his burro.”

18  Carlos nodded. Then he and his father lifted Conchita, the littlest, onto the burro’s back. He took the reins and led the burro around the yard as Conchita squealed with delight.

19  “Papa,” she cried, “may I have a burro, too? She’s so sweet.”

20  “Maybe someday, Conchita, when you’re older.”

21  Carlos led each of his sisters around on the burro, then tethered the animal to a post while he went inside to dress for school.

22  The next day, and the day after that, Carlos rode the bus to school. He did not want the other boys to see him riding the burro.

23  But on the third day, the school bus did not come. It had rained heavily throughout the night, and much of the dirt road was washed out. “You should ride the burro to school today,” said his father.
“Yes, Papa.” Carlos went out into the yard, where the burro stood patiently. He removed the serape from around his shoulders and threw it over the burro’s back before adjusting the reins and climbing on. His parents and sisters waved to him from the steps of the hacienda as he trotted away.

Carlos rode the burro past fields of beans and corn before leading her toward higher ground. He knew a way he could get to school that would take him up through the hills, where the ground would be less muddy.

Like most burros, his was surefooted. She seemed not to mind when Carlos coaxed her up a rocky hill whose loose stones would have discouraged most horses. He urged her forward by lightly flicking the reins.

They had almost reached the top of one hill, when suddenly a large, speckled snake slithered across the path. Carlos gasped. But to his amazement, the burro didn’t rear up in fear. Instead, she stepped to one side of the stony path and stood still, as if waiting for Carlos to tell her what to do next.

“All right, you can go ahead,” he said. Twitching her enormous ears, the burro continued up the hill, then down the other side to the edge of the plain.

It was fun to ride the burro across the cactus-studded plain. She trotted briskly, not seeming to mind the distance. Carlos had not realized a burro could go so fast.

When Carlos reached the schoolhouse, he saw that he was not the only one made late by the washed-out road. Most of the other children had walked. As soon as they caught sight of Carlos on his burro, they ran to him, shouting and laughing.

“How fast can she go?” asked Ramon. “As fast as a small horse,” boasted Carlos.

“Would you let me ride her sometime?” Ramon eyed the burro with envy.

“Sure. You can ride her at lunch.”

Guided Questions

Read paragraph 29. Highlight the details that help you infer that Carlos’ attitude toward the burro is changing.

Read paragraphs 31–37. Draw a picture of Carlos, his burro, and his friends.

What does the image tell about how Carlos feels about his burro now?
“Please let us ride her, too,” pleaded the girls, who’d gathered around the burro. “She’s so pretty.”

“Only one at a time,” laughed Carlos, rubbing his burro’s nose.

“What’s her name?”

Carlos thought for a minute. “Amiga,” he replied. The burro blinked at him several times. Then she threw back her head and brayed, as if to tell Carlos she was glad to be his friend.

Guided Questions

What detail in paragraph 37 supports your answer?

Critical Thinking

1. Why do you think Papa gives Carlos a burro instead of a horse? Use evidence from the story to support your answer.

2. How are the three girls’ reactions to the burro different from Carlos’ reaction?

How does Carlos’ treatment of his sisters show that he is kind?

3. Work with a partner. Use the school library or media center and/or the Internet to find out more about burros. Develop a fact sheet showing important details. Use photographs you find or pictures you draw to illustrate your fact sheet.
How Am I Doing?

★ What questions do you have?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

★ How is an inference similar to a conclusion?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

★ Color in the traffic signal that shows how you are doing with the skill.

I need help.  I almost have it.  I know the skill.
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Independent Practice

★ Practice

Read the selection and choose the best answer to each question.

House Made of Newspaper—Read All About It!

by Patricia Bridgman

1 From the street, this building in Pigeon Cove, Massachusetts, looks like a regular house or maybe a log cabin. The only hint that this house is different is the sign that says Paper House. Step onto the front porch, and things really start to look odd. Those shiny, brown shingles have words on them. And pictures.

2 “Elis Stenman started building the Paper House in 1922,” says the owner, Edna Beaudoin, who is Stenman’s grandniece. “He was an engineer. He also loved newspapers. He read five of them every day.”

3 Stenman thought it was wasteful to throw away old newspapers. (This was in the days before recycling centers.) Instead, he used them to build a vacation house in Pigeon Cove. To start the project, Stenman “hired a carpenter to build wooden rafters, beams, and floors,” Edna says. He also had electricity and running water installed in the house. But there was no heat and no bathroom. (The family used an outhouse. It was not made of paper, but the toilet paper, of course, was.) Edna says that after all this was completed, Stenman “sent the carpenter away and used paper for the rest.”
4 Each shingle is made of carefully cut pieces of newspaper glued together with flour-and-water paste. The shingles have been varnished many times to keep out the wind, snow, and rain. The newspaper pieces are so discolored that they’re hard to read at first. Stand close. Look hard. You’ll see ads for flapper dresses, 150-dollar fur coats (which would cost several thousand dollars today), and 50-cent shirts.

5 The door is one of the few things here made of wood. Step through it. You’ll see that the ceiling, walls, and furniture are made of newspaper. When the house was completed, in 1924, the Stenmans decided to fill it with paper furniture. This kept them busy for the next eighteen years.

6 “The furniture is made of little logs of rolled-up paper,” Edna says. “But it is full-sized and as strong as wood furniture.” The paper logs are ½ to ¾ of an inch thick and generally three to ten inches long. To make them, “Mr. Stenman took a piece of wire, like a coat hanger, and bent it at one end to form a handle,” Edna says. “He’d lay the wire across a strip of newspaper and turn the handle to roll the paper tight.” If you’ve ever seen someone roll back the lid of a can of sardines, you’ll understand how the log-maker worked.

7 Out of these paper logs, the Stenmans created paper chairs, a table, a bookcase, a cot, a settee, and covered a couple of working lamps. Even the fireplace is paper—on the outside. “The inside is brick,” Edna points out, “so it’s actually very safe.” She keeps a fire extinguisher on hand, just in case.

8 The real piano that Edna used to bang away on as a child is covered with newspaper stories about Admiral Byrd’s trips to the North and South Poles in 1926 and 1928. The grandfather clock is made of newspapers from the capitals of each of the forty-eight states. (This was in the 1930s—before Alaska and Hawaii became states.) The desk shows articles about Charles Lindbergh’s flight across the Atlantic Ocean in 1927. The cabinet that holds the old-time radio has stories about Herbert Hoover’s run for president in 1928.

9 When all of the furniture was made, Elis’s wife, Esther, made curtains from magazine covers as a finishing touch. She also rolled some strips of paper into colorful beads and folded others into German Christmas stars.

10 In all, over 100,000 newspapers went into the Paper House and its furniture. Still, millions of newspapers have been published since the Stenmans completed their project. Does Edna ever think about adding more newspapers to the house or papering her own house, which is just next door? Not really. She has enough work as it is, running the Paper House as a museum. And in her spare time, she has plenty to read.
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1. According to the passage, which of these is not made of paper?

   A. Lamp  
   B. Piano  
   C. Shingle  
   D. Bookcase

2. What question can readers ask themselves to check for understanding after reading paragraph 3?

   F. What kind of paper did the Stenmans use to build the rest of the house?
   G. Why did Stenman hire a carpenter to build parts of the house?
   H. What did the carpenter use to construct the rafters, beams, and floors?
   J. Why did the Stenmans choose Pigeon Cove for their vacation home?

3. Why does the author include details about ads and articles found throughout the house’s newspapers?

   A. To show the reader that a house can be built out of paper
   B. To convince the reader that every part of the newspaper was used
   C. To illustrate to the reader that the house was built in the 1920s
   D. To let the reader know about some of the big stories of the 1920s

4. Which sentence from the passage best reveals Mrs. Stenman’s creativity?

   F. She also rolled some strips of paper into colorful beads and folded others into German Christmas stars.
   G. Each shingle is made of carefully cut pieces of newspaper glued together with flour-and-water paste.
   H. Out of these paper logs, the Stenmans created paper chairs, a table, a bookcase, a cot, a settee, and covered a couple of working lamps.
   J. “The furniture is made of little logs of rolled-up paper,” Edna says. “But it is full-sized and as strong as wood furniture.”

5. Read this sentence from paragraph 2.

   He was an engineer. He also loved newspapers. He read five of them every day.

   The description in this sentence helps the reader understand that —

   A. Stenman was well suited to build a house of paper
   B. Stenman was well read
   C. Stenman needed to recycle his newspapers
   D. Stenman did the same things every day
**Assessment**

Choose the best answer to each question.

1. Which sentence from the passage best reveals that the Stenmans were determined to build a house of paper?
   - A  “The furniture is made of little logs of rolled-up paper,” Edna says.
   - B  This kept them busy for the next eighteen years.
   - C  The desk shows articles about Charles Lindbergh’s flight across the Atlantic Ocean in 1927.
   - D  Even the fireplace is paper—on the outside.

2. The author includes paragraph 4 to help the reader understand that —
   - F  the house is old but well-constructed
   - G  Stenman read a lot
   - H  the newspapers used to build the house are fading
   - J  making the shingles was hard work

3. Based on the information in paragraph 8, the reader can conclude that which of these objects was made the earliest?
   - A  Piano
   - B  Desk
   - C  Cabinet
   - D  Grandfather clock

4. The information in paragraphs 6 and 7 suggests that Stenman —
   - F  was an inventive and resourceful man
   - G  wanted to save money by making his own furniture
   - H  hired a carpenter to construct part of the house
   - J  constructed the house in the 1920s

5. Read this sentence from paragraph 10.

   *She has enough work as it is, running the Paper House as a museum.*

   What can the reader conclude after reading this sentence?
   - A  Edna has plans to add on to the Paper House in the future.
   - B  The Paper House is a very busy tourist attraction.
   - C  The Paper House will not stay in business much longer.
   - D  Edna does not have enough workers to help run the Paper House.
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Exit Ticket

Now you can make inferences. Let’s revisit Robbie and the Real-World Connection to see how he is doing with his mystery. When Robbie looked carefully, he saw a few things that may help him. What Robbie found were clues, or evidence, to help him solve his mystery. Look at the chart below and fill in the empty boxes. Then explain the process you used to solve the mystery. Use what you have learned in this lesson to write your responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence +</th>
<th>Evidence +</th>
<th>Evidence +</th>
<th>What I know</th>
<th>Inference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>He finds fur on the closet floor.</td>
<td>Snowball had escaped.</td>
<td>Puppies like to chew on shoes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>