Lesson 3

Make Inferences and Use Evidence to Understand Text

5.6(F) Make inferences and use evidence to support understanding.
5.4(A) Use appropriate fluency (rate, accuracy, and prosody) when reading grade-level text.
5.7(C) Use text evidence to support an appropriate response.

Introduction

Real-World Connection

Nicole sees her friend Mari drinking from a plastic water bottle. Nicole tells Mari that she should not use plastic bottles because they are bad for the environment. “Why are plastic bottles bad for the environment?” Mari asks. Nicole remembers a recent story she read online about pollution. However, she cannot remember all of the details of the story. What kind of information will help Nicole make her point? We will practice these skills in Guided Instruction and Independent Practice. Then, at the end of the lesson, we will come back to Nicole, Mari, and the problem of plastic bottle pollution.

What I Am Going to Learn

• Make inferences and use evidence to support understanding.

What I May Already Know 4.6(F), 4.4(A), 4.7(C)

• I know how to use evidence to support many inferences.
• I know how to read many grade-level texts with appropriate rate and expression.
• I know how to find evidence in the text for many answers to questions about what I have read.

Words to Know

- inference
- evidence
- prediction
- conclusion
Lesson 3  Make Inferences and Use Evidence to Understand Text

Understand the TEKS

These vocabulary words will help you understand the TEKS.

An **inference** is an educated guess you make to figure things out. To make an inference, you put together what you already know with what you read.

When you read, an author sometimes tells you information directly.

Denisha showed true bravery when she climbed that tree and rescued the cat.

Often, though, the author does not tell you absolutely everything but leaves some information unstated. You have to “read between the lines” in order to make an inference. For example, read the passage below.

“Meow, me...ow...ow!” The pitiful cry seemed to be coming from high above her. Denisha looked up, and there on the highest limb of the tree sat a scrawny old cat.

“Me...ow!” it cried, this time staring into Denisha’s eyes.

Denisha looked around for someone to help, but there was no one. It was up to her to rescue this cat, but that meant...

Oh, no, I can’t, thought Denisha. There has to be someone who can climb that tree. Feeling the panic build in her, she looked again for help, but again she was without luck.

“Me...ow!”

“Oh, be quiet,” she shouted, her nerves getting the best of her. But she instantly regretted her harsh words, as the cat mewed and mewed.

*I can do this. I can do this*, she thought. But when she looked up to the high branch, her positive words were immediately replaced by No, I can’t.

“Yes, I can,” she said firmly aloud. “I’ll be right there. Don’t worry, Kitty, I’m coming.”

Then she went into the barn and grabbed the tall ladder her father had taught her to climb. She carried it out and placed it by the tree. Fighting her fear, she began to climb, gaining a little more confidence with each step.

Finally, she reached the top and grabbed the cat. “It’s okay now,” she said. “Nothing to fear.” And with those words, she started her descent.
Look at the details.

- Denisha is afraid of climbing the tree.
- She feels panic.
- She has to help the cat.
- She fights down her fear to climb up and save it.

Based on what you know about fighting down fear to help others and these details from the story, make an inference. What inference can you make about Denisha?

When making an inference, you use **evidence**, which includes facts and information to support your belief. The more evidence you have the more likely your inference is correct. When a question asks “Why or why not?” it is asking you what evidence you used to make your inference.

Making an inference looks like this.

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

A **prediction** is a special type of inference. It is an educated guess about something that will happen. For example, after observing your friend practicing soccer every day after school, you might predict that she is going to try out for the team.

A **conclusion** is also a type of inference. For example, suppose you read that a boy bends down to pick up a dog. He has a hard time lifting it. Then you read that he struggles to carry the dog through the tunnel to the top of the cave. By adding up the evidence (hard time lifting, struggle to carry), you conclude that the dog is quite big.

Suppose you read a biography about George Washington. You learn that during the American Revolution, General Washington often received secret messages. Then, you read that many spies on both sides used invisible ink to send messages. Later, you learn that the British captured a message sent by a spy to Washington. They read it and thought it contained only unimportant information.

Add the details together. You probably conclude that the important part of the message was written in invisible ink. The author did not have to tell you this directly. You thought it through.
Lesson 3  Make Inferences and Use Evidence to Understand Text

Guided Instruction

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

How the Chickadee Weathers the Winter

by Debbie Zappitelli

1. The temperature has fallen below zero. The car won’t start, water pipes are frozen, and schools are closed. If you went outside without winter clothes, you’d freeze before long. Yet the chickadee, a tiny bird that weighs less than a chocolate bar, flies about busily. It doesn’t have a scarf or boots. How does it endure cold weather?

2. The chickadee has to eat constantly during the winter to survive. Just as people use wood to keep a fire burning, the chickadee uses food to keep its body warm. Some of the food it eats during the day is chemically changed into energy reserves. The chickadee’s body stores this energy for use at night. That’s why birds eat so much early in the morning. When their reserves are used up, they get cold and have to eat again.

3. During cold spells, chickadees nest together at night to keep warm. Sometimes as many as twenty will huddle together in a hole in a tree. When the weather is extremely cold, they often won’t leave their roosts at all. They would burn more energy looking for food than they would sitting still.

4. The chickadee’s feathers are a great layer of insulation that helps this little bird keep warm. The outer feathers have tiny hooks, called barbs, that connect much the way Velcro does. This makes a windproof barrier. Underneath are soft fluffy feathers called down. Down does the same job as the stuffing in a winter jacket. It keeps body heat in and cold air out.

Guided Questions

Read paragraph 1. What inference can you make about the chickadee from this paragraph?

Read paragraph 3. If you see chickadees nesting together in the winter, what conclusion could you draw?

Read paragraph 4. What do you think would happen if the chickadee lost its feathers?
5 During the winter, the chickadee’s body produces more feathers for warmth. On a very cold day, you may see a chickadee fluffing up its feathers. This creates more space between the feathers to trap air that insulates the body.

6 But the chickadee’s feet don’t have feathers. How can the chickadee keep its body warm with those bare feet out in the cold? Its body has a slick trick. It cuts down the blood flow to its feet just enough so they don’t freeze. To keep from wasting energy, the chickadee learns to live with cold feet.

7 The chickadee, like other birds in northern regions, has many ways of dealing with the cold. The next time you’re stuck indoors on a cold day, admire the chickadees from a window. You can help by filling a bird feeder so they’ll have plenty to eat.

**Critical Thinking**

1. What can you infer about the ability of chickadees to keep themselves warm?

2. Read the paragraph below.

   *But the chickadee’s feet don’t have feathers. How can the chickadee keep its body warm with those bare feet out in the cold? Its body has a slick trick. It cuts down the blood flow to its feet just enough so they don’t freeze. To keep from wasting energy, the chickadee learns to live with cold feet.*

   What inference can you make about the chickadee’s feet? Underline the evidence in the text that supports this.

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**Guided Questions**

Read paragraph 5. Why are some quilts stuffed with down?

Read paragraph 7. What inference can you make about the author’s purpose in this paragraph?

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Lesson 3  Make Inferences and Use Evidence to Understand Text

3. The purpose of the first paragraph is to get you interested so that you want to read on to find out how chickadees endure cold weather. Practice reading this paragraph aloud to a partner. Use your voice to stir up interest. Then listen to your partner read aloud. Critique each other’s reading.

4. Work with a group of three or four students. Find out more about how animals keep warm. Each student should choose a different animal. After you have gathered your information, take turns presenting it to your group. Listen carefully and ask questions after each presentation. Then, after all the students have given their presentations, discuss what conclusions you can draw about how animals keep warm.

How Am I Doing?

★ What questions do you have?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

★ Explain the difference between what a text says directly and what inference you draw from the reading.
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

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

**Her Majesty, Aunt Essie**

*by Amy Schwartz*

1. My Aunt Essie used to be a Queen. I knew it the day she moved in. The first thing Aunt Essie unpacked was a big picture of a man with a mustache and a sash across his chest. A King if I ever saw one. And when I helped Aunt Essie put away her jewelry, she let me try on a pair of those long dangling earrings. Only a Queen has earrings like that.

2. I didn’t want to give the earrings back.

3. Aunt Essie said, “When I was a girl, I was a little princess, Ruthie, not like some children I know.” So there. She told me herself.

4. At dinner Aunt Essie held her little finger out when she drank her tea, just like a Queen. And you should have seen the way she talked to Daddy when we washed the dishes. I could tell she was used to giving orders.

5. After we’d cleaned up, Aunt Essie phoned her friend Mrs. Katz and talked for a long time. She kept looking around our apartment and clutching her heart and sighing and saying things in French. Well, no one else I know acts like that.

6. Before I went to bed, I drew a family tree. There I was, right next to Kings and Queens.

7. In the morning, I showed the family tree to Maisie next-door. Maisie laughed so hard I thought she’d split. I grabbed my drawing back. “I can prove it!” I said. “I’ll prove it by midnight tonight . . . or . . . or you can have my dog, Joe!”


9. All morning I stayed close to Aunt Essie, keeping my eyes open. She talked to the vegetable man just the way a Queen would, but Maisie wasn’t with me. I saw a little gold crown on the hem of Aunt Essie’s slip, but how could I show Maisie that?

10. I asked Maisie over for the afternoon, hoping proof would turn up. Maisie and I played cards for a while. Then Aunt Essie called from the bath. “Oh, Ruthie, won’t you help me scrub my back?”
“Aunt Essie used to have ten ladies-in-waiting to help her wash,” I said to Maisie as we went into the bath. “Ten ladies-in-waiting and one butler to turn on the hot water and another one to turn it off.”

When Aunt Essie was out of the bath, Mrs. Katz came over for a visit. They sat on the balcony and waved to their friends in the street. “Just like at her coronation,” I said to Maisie.

Aunt Essie’s boyfriend, Walter, drove by and honked the horn in his new convertible. Mrs. Katz clucked her tongue. “Like a royal carriage,” she said. I poked Maisie in the ribs.

“Not good enough,” Maisie said.

I put Joe in the backyard where Maisie couldn’t keep looking at him.

Well dinnertime came and Maisie still didn’t believe me. After supper, I went out and sat on the stoop. Maisie came out, too. “You only have four hours left,” Maisie said.

I felt so low that when Walter showed up for his date with Aunt Essie and tickled me on the toes, I didn’t even laugh. I was just about to tell Maisie I gave up and I hoped she’d let me visit Joe when there was a hustle and bustle at the front door. We heard Walter say, “Essie! You look more magnificent than ever!”

Then Aunt Essie sailed out the door. She was wearing a long satin gown. She had a fur stole over her shoulders. She was wearing those long dangling earrings, and—you can have everything I own if I’m lying—there was a gold crown on her head.

I jumped up. “Your Majesty,” I said. I bowed low. I stayed there. Maisie sucked in her breath. Then there was silence. I could feel Aunt Essie’s eyes on me. More silence. Then I felt a hand on my head.

“Princess Ruth,” Aunt Essie said. “You may arise.”

Then Walter ran ahead and opened the convertible door. Aunt Essie floated into the car and they were gone.

Well, I didn’t punch Maisie or say “I told you so” or anything. Those of us with royal blood don’t do that sort of thing.
Lesson 3

1 What is the most likely reason Ruthie first concludes that her aunt used to be a queen?

A Aunt Essie moved into her house.
B Aunt Essie has a pair of long, dangling earrings.
C Aunt Essie has a friend named Mrs. Katz.
D Aunt Essie’s boyfriend, Walter, has a convertible.

2 Read the sentence below.

At dinner Aunt Essie held her little finger out when she drank her tea, just like a Queen. And you should have seen the way she talked to Daddy when we washed the dishes. I could tell she was used to giving orders.

What does Ruthie think her aunt means?

F Aunt Essie was an actual princess.
G Aunt Essie knows some princesses.
H Aunt Essie is calling her a princess.
J Aunt Essie does not like her.

3 Why does Ruthie conclude she is absolutely right about Aunt Essie?

A Walter picks up Aunt Essie for a date.
B Aunt Essie tells Maisie that she used to be a queen.
C Aunt Essie is now living with Ruthie’s family.
D Aunt Essie wears a crown.

4 Read the sentences below.

At dinner Aunt Essie held her little finger out when she drank her tea, just like a Queen. And you should have seen the way she talked to Daddy when we washed the dishes. I could tell she was used to giving orders.

These sentences suggest that Aunt Essie —

F is not used to being around other people
G does not really understand English
H used to be quite wealthy and important
J does not enjoy talking to her friend Mrs. Katz

5 Which sentence best reveals that Ruthie thinks she needs to act like a queen too?

A “Your Majesty,” I said.
B I bowed low.
C “Princess Ruth,” Aunt Essie said.
D Well, I didn’t punch Maisie or say “I told you so” or anything.
Lesson 3  Make Inferences and Use Evidence to Understand Text

★ Assessment

Choose the best answer to each question.

1 Which sentence best reveals that Aunt Essie was well behaved as a little girl?
   A Aunt Essie said, “When I was a girl, I was a little princess, Ruthie, not like some children I know.”
   B I could tell she was used to giving orders.
   C She kept looking around our apartment and clutching her heart and sighing and saying things in French.
   D They sat on the balcony and waved to their friends in the street.

2 Which sentence best reveals the relationship between Ruthie and Maisie?
   F In the morning, I showed the family tree to Maisie next-door.
   G I asked Maisie over for the afternoon, hoping proof would turn up.
   H Maisie and I played cards for awhile.
   J “You only have four hours left,” Maisie said.

3 What is the most likely reason Ruthie reached these conclusions about her aunt?
   A All children want to believe they come from royalty.
   B People look for evidence to support things they want to believe.
   C Her aunt was a stranger, and this must mean that she was royal.
   D When someone has manners and nice things, it means she is royalty.

4 Which sentence best reveals that Ruthie is running out of time to win the bet with Maisie?
   F I saw a little gold crown on the hem of Aunt Essie’s slip, but how could I show Maisie that?
   G I asked Maisie over for the afternoon, hoping proof would turn up.
   H I put Joe in the backyard where Maisie couldn’t keep looking at him.
   J I was just about to tell Maisie I gave up and I hoped she’d let me visit Joe when there was a hustle and bustle at the front door.
Exit Ticket

Now you know how authors support their points with reasoning and evidence. Let’s revisit the Real-World Connection.

Imagine you are helping Nicole find information about plastic bottle pollution. Read the article “Plastic in Our Oceans” that Nicole found online, and then fill out the table below to help Nicole find and remember the important details.

**Plastic in Our Oceans**

Plastic may end up in the ocean if it is not recycled. Over time, plastic breaks down into smaller pieces. These smaller pieces can easily travel and pollute our oceans. They can harm the creatures that live there.

Storms send plastic from the land into our oceans. During a rainstorm, rain and wind send plastic litter into nearby waterways. The waterways carry the plastic into the ocean. Some plastics sink. Others float. The kind of plastic used to make water bottles sinks to the bottom of the ocean, unless it is filled with air. The kind of plastic used to make milk jugs floats on the ocean’s surface.

It is difficult to track the amount of sinking plastic, but the existence of floating trash is well documented. The largest floating collection of trash is called the “Pacific Garbage Patch.” This is a huge collection of floating plastic and other trash in the Pacific Ocean, which some say is twice the size of the state of Texas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author’s Point</th>
<th>Reasons and Evidence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paragraph 1: “If plastic is not recycled, it may end up in the ocean.”</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Paragraph 2:</td>
<td>The author’s reason is that “rain and wind send plastic litter into nearby waterways” and these waterways “carry the plastic into the ocean.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paragraph 3:</td>
<td>The author provides two examples as evidence that different types of plastic will float or sink: (1) the kind of plastic for water bottles and (2) the kind of plastic for milk jugs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paragraph 4: “It is difficult to track the amount of sinking plastic, but floating trash is well documented.”</td>
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</tbody>
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