Text Detectives: Prove It With Details

Teacher		**Class**	Grade 4
Subject	ELA	**Topic**	Reading comprehension: details and inferences
Date		**Room**	
Lesson length	60 minutes	**Country**	United States

Students learn to tell what the text says straight out from a smart guess. They hunt for proof words and explain one inference with two details.

Curriculum links

- Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

Learning objectives

- Students will quote exact details to show what the text says straight out.
- Students will make an inference backed by two details from the text.

Success criteria

- I can point to words that prove what the text says.
- I can say I infer ___ because ___ using two details.

What students already know

About 2 minutes: hold up a closed umbrella and ask: What do you know for sure by looking, and what is a smart guess about the weather? Listen for straight-out facts versus guesses with reasons.

Key words

detail	a small piece of information the author puts in the writing
explicit	said straight out in words you can point to
inference	a smart guess that uses clues plus what you already know
evidence	the exact words you copy or point to that prove an answer

Materials

- Slides 1, 3-7
- Video clip 1 (0:00-5:00) on slide 6, tested
- Printed Passage The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch, paragraphs 1-3, one per student
- Worksheet Task A copies, one per pair
- Two color highlighters per student, yellow and blue
- Plastic magnifying glass per pair
- Notebooks and pencils
- Two-column chart drawn on board: Author Says / I Infer

Before the lesson

- Print lighthouse passage and Worksheet Task A, one per student plus enlarged copy for modeling
- Test Video clip 1 (0:00-5:00) on slide 6 for sound and captions
- Set out two color highlighters and plastic magnifying glass per table
- Draw Author Says / I Infer chart on board and prepare exit slips

Lesson outline

0–5 min **Starter** 5 min · Whole class

Hook students as detectives and recall proof words for explicit ideas and guesses.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 1, welcome class as text detectives hunting for proof.
2. Show Slide 5 question about boots, umbrella, and dark gray sky and read it aloud.
3. Give 30 seconds turn-and-talk: what will happen and which words prove it.
4. Take 2 answers and underline proof words students name.

STUDENTS DO

1. Listen to hook and look at Slide 5.
2. Turn and talk with partner about what will happen and proof words.
3. Share ideas aloud and point to proof words.

Say: We are text detectives today, and every answer has to be caught with proof from the words! Look at the clues, tell your partner what you think will happen, and be ready to point to the exact words that prove it.

Worked example: Question: The student grabbed boots and a big umbrella. The sky turned dark gray. What will happen? Answer: I infer it will rain soon because the text says grabbed boots and a big umbrella and sky turned dark gray.

Ask: What do you think will happen, and which words prove it? (It will rain; proof is boots, big umbrella, sky turned dark gray.) · Which part did the author say straight out? (The student grabbed boots and umbrella and the sky turned dark gray.)

Check understanding: Thumbs up if you can name a proof word; if many are unsure, reread Slide 5 slowly and point to boots, umbrella, dark gray together.

Support: Point to the three proof phrases on Slide 5 while the student repeats them aloud. **Stretch:** Ask student to add what they already know about dark clouds and umbrellas to the clue.

Use: Slides 1, 5

5–15 min **Teaching** 10 min · Whole class

Teach explicit meaning versus inference and the 4-step prove-it routine.

YOU DO

1. Show Slides 3-4 and explain Right There clues versus Hidden Clues plus what you know.
2. Show Slide 7 steps: Read, find 1-2 clue words, add what you know, say I think _ because _.
3. Model with paragraph 2 of lighthouse passage on enlarged copy using yellow for explicit.
4. Think aloud an explicit answer, reading the exact words in a clear voice [2].

STUDENTS DO

1. Chant Right There versus Hidden Clues with hand signals.
2. Copy 4 Steps to Prove It into notebooks.
3. Repeat exact quote after teacher: Only crumbs and a torn piece of cloth were left.

Say: Some answers are right there and you can point to them. An inference is a smart guess where you put clue words together with what you already know. We will always prove it by saying the exact words out loud.

Worked example: Question: What was left in the basket? Explicit answer: The text says, Only crumbs and a torn piece of cloth were left. I point to those exact words in paragraph 2. Inference uses more clues: Wet paw prints led from the small open vent across the floor to the table.

Ask: How is an explicit answer different from an inference? (Explicit is said straight out and you can point to it; inference you figure out from clues plus what you know.) · What exact words prove something was in the basket before? (his cheese sandwich was gone and Only crumbs and a torn piece of cloth were left.)

Check understanding: All show on mini whiteboards D for detail said straight out or I for inference for: The cheese sandwich was gone; if split, reteach with yellow underline.

Support: Keep enlarged copy with the two key sentences already underlined so student matches question to underline. **Stretch:** Ask student to name a second clue in paragraph 2 that hints an animal came in.

Use: Slides 3-4, 7

15–30 min **Guided Practice** 15 min · Whole class

Watch how readers use proof and practice the because sentence together.

YOU DO

1. Play Video clip 1 (0:00-5:00) on Slide 6; pause twice to name clue words the video points to.
2. Think aloud paragraph 3 inference that a cat took the sandwich, linking two details.
3. Chart on board Author Says quotes on left and I Infer on right for the cat idea.
4. Lead choral practice of frame: The text says _, so I infer _ because _.

STUDENTS DO

1. Watch video and call out clue words heard.
2. With partner, read paragraph 3 aloud and find two cat clues.
3. Practice saying The text says _ so I infer _ because _ with partner.

Say: Watch how they point to text to back the guess. We will do the same with the keeper. Find two clue words, add what you know about small animals, then prove it with because and the exact words.

Worked example: I think a small cat took the sandwich because the text says Only a small animal could slip through that vent, and only a cat leaves prints like these and Wet paw prints led from the small open vent across the floor to the table. Two details prove one smart guess.

Ask: What two details prove the keeper thinks it was the cat? (Wet paw prints led from the small open vent across the floor to the table and Only a small animal could slip through that vent.) · What did you add from what you already know? (Small animals can fit through small vents and cats leave paw prints.)

Check understanding: Partners hold up two fingers when they have two quotes; listen to 3 pairs read quotes aloud, reteach if quotes are not exact.

Support: Give printed paragraph 3 with the two cat sentences lightly underlined in blue for student to trace and read. **Stretch:** Ask student to explain why wind or a person is a weaker inference using the vent size detail.

Use: Video clip 1 (0:00–5:00), Slide 6

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30–50 min **Main Activity** 20 min · Pairs

Underline explicit proof in one color and inference clues in a second color to answer Task A.

YOU DO

1. Hand out lighthouse passage, Task A sheet, highlighters, and magnifying glass and demo: yellow for what it says straight out, blue for clues for inference.
2. Set task: with magnifier, underline 2 details that prove it, then finish I infer _ because _ and be ready to read proof aloud.
3. Circulate 12 minutes, asking pairs to read exact words and checking underlines match Task A questions.
4. Stop class at 15 minutes for two pairs to model strongest proof; remind that this joint practice transfers to solo reading and writing [1].

STUDENTS DO

1. Read passage with partner using magnifier, underline yellow for explicit and blue for inference clues.
2. Complete Worksheet Task A talk using exact quotes from paragraphs 2-3.
3. Write one explicit answer with quotes and one inference sentence with two details.

Say: You are magnifier detectives now. Read paragraph 2 and 3 with your partner. Use yellow for what the author says straight out and blue for clues that prove your smart guess. Finish with I infer _ because _ using two blue details.

Worked example: Explicit: The basket held his cheese sandwich is proved by When the keeper opened his basket, his cheese sandwich was gone. Inference: I infer a cat stole it because Wet paw prints led from the small open vent across the floor to the table and Only a small animal could slip through that vent.

Ask: Read me the exact words for your explicit answer. (Listen for word-for-word quote like his cheese sandwich was gone or Only crumbs and a torn piece of cloth were left.) · Which two blue details prove your inference? (Listen for paw prints plus small vent / cat prints quotes from paragraphs 2-3.)

Check understanding: Collect Task A sheets and have each pair read proof aloud; if quotes are paraphrased, have them reread and fix underlines before finishing.

Support: Give a copy with the key sentences already underlined so the student only has to match them to the questions. **Stretch:** Have students add a second possible inference and explain which details make it weaker or stronger.

Use: Worksheet Task A

50–60 min **Plenary** 10 min · Whole class

Fix mistakes, restate what proves explicit and inference, and check who met success criteria.

YOU DO

1. Return to objectives chart and ask students to state success lines in own words.
2. Show two claims, one wrong: It was windy so a dog took the sandwich; ask class to spot mistake and fix with evidence from vent and prints.
3. Take votes for Detail or Inference for two statements and require exact line as proof.
4. Hand out exit slips with lighthouse question and preview homework.

STUDENTS DO

1. Restate I can lines and show yellow versus blue underlines.
2. Spot mistake in claim and read correct evidence aloud.
3. Complete 3-question exit slip on their own.

Say: Let's prove we met our goals. Tell me what you can point to and what you inferred. No points for guessing, only points for proving with words from the text. Fix the wrong claim by reading the detail it missed.

Worked example: Wrong claim: A big dog squeezed through the vent. Fix: The text says Only a small animal could slip through that vent, so I infer it was a small cat, not a big dog, because of the narrow vent and cat prints.

Ask: Why is big dog a weak inference? (Because the text says only a small animal could slip through that vent.) · What will you do first when you must prove an inference? (Find 1-2 exact clue words, add what I know, say I infer _ because _.)

Check understanding: Read exit slips for two exact quotes; if fewer than most have them, reteach tomorrow with gym floor paragraph before new text.

Support: Let student point to printed key sentences while answering instead of recalling from memory.
Stretch: Ask student to ask partner a why question that needs two separate details to answer.

Use: Worksheet Task H

Common mistakes

Mistake	How to spot it	How to fix it
Paraphrasing instead of quoting exact words as proof.	Answer sounds right but words do not match the passage.	Have student reread and copy 4-6 words exactly, then read them aloud to match [2].
Treating an inference like a wild guess with no clues.	Student says I infer with because I think so and no text words.	Require two blue underlines first, then finish because with those words.
Mixing up explicit detail and inference labels.	Student puts paw prints idea under Says Exactly when it needs putting together.	Ask: Can you point to it in one line? If you had to combine two lines, it is an inference.

Support

- Give a copy with the key sentences already underlined so the student only has to match them to the questions.

Stretch

- Have students add a second possible inference and explain which details make it weaker or stronger.
- Have students rule out one wrong answer by naming the detail it is missing.

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- Provide sentence frames: The text says _ and I infer _ because _ with word bank tall, wet, small, narrow.
- Let student use magnifier to track one line at a time with partner reading aloud.
- Have students write a follow-up question that would need another detail from paragraphs 1-3 to answer.

For the LSE or teaching assistant

Sit with target pairs in main activity; prompt exact quoting, help match pre-underlined sentences to Task A, and scribe inference frame if writing is slow so oral proof stays the focus.

Check for understanding

Question	Answer
What was in the basket at first, and what exact words prove it?	Cheese sandwich; When the keeper opened his basket, his cheese sandwich was gone.
What two details prove something small came through the vent?	Wet paw prints led from the small open vent across the floor to the table and Only a small animal could slip through that vent.
What do you infer took the sandwich, and why with proof?	A cat; I infer a cat because of paw prints and Only a cat leaves prints like these.

Homework

Reread paragraphs 1-3 and underline one new explicit detail in yellow to share tomorrow.

Sources

1. Foundational Skills (K-5) · cps.edu · https://www.cps.edu/sites/skyline/curriculum/ela/foundational-skills/
2. Science of reading · Wikipedia · https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Science_of_reading

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