Detective Readers: Inference with Evidence

Teacher		**Class**	Year 8
Subject	English	**Topic**	Reading comprehension: inference and evidence
Date		**Room**	
Lesson length	60 minutes	**Country**	United Kingdom

Students learn to make smart inferences and prove them with short quotes. They read, discuss and write like text detectives.

Curriculum links

- making inferences on the basis of what is being said and done [1]
- predicting what might happen on the basis of what has been read so far [1]

Learning objectives

- Students will make clear inferences from what is said and done.
- Students will choose short exact quotes as proof for inferences.
- Students will explain clearly how each quote proves the inference.

Success criteria

- I can make a smart inference from clues in the text.
- I can quote exact words as evidence for my inference.
- I can explain how my evidence proves my inference.

What students already know

Show thumbs up or down: if a writer does not say someone is cold, can we still work it out? Ask one student to give an everyday example.

Key words

inference	a smart conclusion worked out from clues plus what you already know [8]
evidence	exact words from the text that prove an idea is true [8]
imply	to suggest something without saying it straight out [6]
clue	a small detail that helps you work out a hidden meaning [6]

Materials

- Slides 1-12 with projector and sound for video
- Printed copies of Passage After School Corridor paragraphs 1-4
- Two-colour highlighters
- Mini whiteboards and pens
- Worksheet Task B sheets

Before the lesson

- Print class sets of Passage After School Corridor paragraphs 1-4 and Worksheet Task B sheets
- Put two-colour highlighters on desks for pairs
- Load Slides 1-12 and test Video clip 1 (0:00–3:56) on Slide 6 with sound
- Arrange desks in pairs facing the board with whiteboards ready

Lesson outline

0–10 min **Starter** 10 min · Whole class

To hook pupils and recall that inferring means working out hidden meaning from clues.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 1 Detective Readers and Slide 2 photo and read the line about working out hidden meanings every day.
2. Say the hook and read aloud Slide 5: He grabbed his coat and dashed for the door, grinning. What can you infer? How do you know?
3. Take quick ideas on whiteboards and press for the clue word grinning.
4. Link answers to inferring being like a detective finding clues to work out hidden information [6].

STUDENTS DO

1. Look at Slides 1-2 and listen to the hook.
2. Write a quick answer to the Slide 5 question on whiteboards.
3. Hold up boards and explain which word was the clue.

Say: No one tells you what happened, but you can still prove it. Today you read like detectives. Look at what he does, add what you know about people, and tell me what you can work out.

Ask: What can you infer about the person in Slide 5? (He is happy, excited or eager to go out.) · Which exact word proves it? (Grinning, and dashed shows rushing with energy.) · Is this stated or worked out? (Worked out, the writer implies it without saying happy.)

Check understanding: Scan whiteboards for grinning or dashed as proof; if many give guesses without words, re-model pointing to the exact word before moving on.

Support: Let pupils work in pairs and point to the exact helpful word on the printed Slide 5 sentence. **Stretch:** Ask quick finishers for a second inference, for example he was waiting for this moment, with a different clue.

Use: Slides 1-2, Slide 5

10–20 min **Teaching** 10 min · Whole class

To teach the clue to conclusion steps and model quoting evidence.

YOU DO

1. Show Slides 3-4 and talk through the chain from clue to quoted evidence.
2. Play Video clip 1 (0:00–3:56) on Slide 6 and ask pupils to listen for the detective trick.
3. Show Slide 7 steps and model them on the Slide 5 sentence using think-aloud.
4. Stress that an inference is a conclusion you reach by applying logic to the evidence you are given [8].

STUDENTS DO

1. Watch the video and note one detective trick.
2. Follow the teacher model and repeat the four steps quietly.
3. Copy the inference sentence and underlined quote into books.

Say: Good readers spot clues, add what they know, and make a smart inference. Then they prove it with quoted evidence. We never guess, we show the words that prove the idea.

Worked example: Slide 5 sentence: He grabbed his coat and dashed for the door, grinning. Step 1 clue: grinning and dashed for the door. Step 2 knowledge: people grin and rush when pleased and eager. Step 3 inference: He is excited to go out. Step 4 evidence quote: grinning.

Ask: What do you add to the clue to make an inference? (What you already know about life and people.) · What turns a guess into an inference? (A short exact quote that proves it, inferences are not guesses but conclusions drawn from evidence [8].)

Check understanding: Cold-call two pupils to repeat the four steps; if steps are muddled, point again to Slide 4 chain and rehearse together.

Support: Give the chain on a desk card with the clue word grinning already underlined. **Stretch:** Ask pupils to suggest what background knowledge a younger reader might miss and why it matters.

Use: Slides 3-4, Slide 6, Video clip 1 (0:00–3:56), Slide 7

20–30 min **Guided practice** 10 min · Whole class

To practise making one shared inference with exact evidence from a short text.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 9 and read aloud: Lights flickered. The girl pulled her jacket tight and rubbed her arms. Rain hammered the windows. She stared at her cold soup.
2. Model asking questions before, during and after reading to improve understanding [4], such as what might this be about and what do I already know.
3. Think aloud to link pulled her jacket tight and rubbed her arms to feeling cold and fed up.
4. Show Slide 10 key words and agree the class inference and quote.

STUDENTS DO

1. Read the Slide 9 text with the teacher and suggest clues.
2. Pair-talk a possible inference about how the girl feels.
3. Agree the shared inference and quote and write it down.

Say: We will interrogate the page together. Find behaviour clues, add what you know about cold rooms, then say what it suggests. We must examine the whole scene to answer inference questions [6].

Worked example: Clue 1: pulled her jacket tight. Clue 2: rubbed her arms. Knowledge: people do this when cold. Inference: The girl feels cold and uncomfortable. Evidence quotes: pulled her jacket tight and rubbed her arms.

Ask: What can you infer about how the girl feels? (She feels cold, uncomfortable and miserable.) · Which quotes prove it best? (Pulled her jacket tight, rubbed her arms, stared at her cold soup.)

Check understanding: Use thumbs up if pupils can point to the quote; if quotes are long or vague, model trimming to four to six words and try again.

Support: Provide the Slide 9 text printed with pulled her jacket tight already highlighted in one colour. **Stretch:** Ask pupils to note where they changed their first idea after re-reading the last sentence.

Use: Slides 9-10

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

To make inferences about the waiting student and prove each with quoted evidence.

YOU DO

1. Hand out Passage After School Corridor paragraphs 1-4, highlighters and Worksheet Task B sheets.
2. Direct pairs to paragraph 2 first and model underlining Their hands twisted the strap of a mobile phone case round and round as a clue.
3. Set the detective task: underline the clue in one colour, write I infer ___ because the text says ___ using a short quote [8].
4. Remind pupils to be an active reader who wants to make sense of the text and to check that the text makes sense as they read [1] [3].

STUDENTS DO

1. Read paragraphs 1 to 4, underline behaviour clues in one colour and inferences in discussion.
2. Complete Worksheet Task B: choose one viewpoint and write what that person would infer about the waiting student, with evidence.
3. Write one clean sentence for the inference and one short quote as proof that inferences are grounded in textual evidence [8].

Say: Read like detectives. Underline the exact clue in one colour and write what it proves. Your inference must come from what is said and done, and you must quote the words. Then complete your viewpoint choice on Task B.

Ask: In paragraph 2, what does shifting weight and twisting the strap suggest? (The student is nervous or anxiously waiting, shown by fidgeting behaviour.) · In paragraph 3, what does not answering the teacher suggest? (They are focused on waiting for someone else, not the late bus.) · In paragraph 4, why does the mood change? (Friends arrive, shown by smiled widely for the first time and ran to meet them.)

Check understanding: Circulate and read three pairs inference plus quote; if quotes are missing or too long, stop the class and re-model trimming to the key words.

Support: Give a frame with the clue partly highlighted and starters like I infer ___ because the text says ___.
Stretch: Ask students to add a second possible inference from the same clue and explain which has stronger evidence.

Use: Worksheet Task B

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

To judge what makes strong evidence and check learning against success criteria.

YOU DO

1. Invite two pairs to read their inference and quote aloud and explain the logic linking them [8].
2. Show Slide 11 and take a quick vote on what matters most for an inference.
3. Show Slide 12 exit ticket and give two minutes silent writing.
4. Close by restating that good answers make inferences on the basis of what is being said and done [1].

STUDENTS DO

1. Present inference plus quote and vote on Slide 11.
2. Complete the Slide 12 exit sentences on paper or mini whiteboards.
3. Self-check against I can statements with tick or target.

Say: One clue is never enough, we build the full case. Tell us your inference, read the exact quote, and explain how the quote proves it. Then vote and finish your exit ticket.

Ask: Which is stronger evidence for nervous waiting: twisted the strap or corridor was almost empty? (Twisted the strap, it shows behaviour linked to nerves.) · Why must we look at the whole scene? (Because to answer inference questions you have to examine the whole scene [6], start and end together.)

Check understanding: Collect exit tickets and sort into got it, wobbly, help needed; reteach quoting to the wobbly group next lesson if needed.

Support: Allow pupils to copy the class example quote and add their own inference sentence. **Stretch:** Ask pupils to predict what might happen next on the basis of what has been read so far [1] with one quote.

Use: Slides 11-12

Common mistakes

Mistake	How to spot it	How to fix it
Treating a guess as an inference with no quote.	Answer gives a feeling or event but no words from the text.	Insist on because the text says ___ and remind them inferences are not guesses but conclusions drawn from evidence [8].
Quoting a whole paragraph instead of short proof.	Long copied chunk that does not point to the clue.	Model trimming to four to six words and backing up inferences with specific quotes [8].
Mixing up what is stated and what is suggested.	Pupil says the text said nervous when it only showed fidgeting.	Sort into Said versus Unsaid columns and check that inferences come from what is said and done [1].

Support

- Sentence frames with I infer ___ because the text says ___ and pre-highlighted clues.
- Word bank for behaviour clues like pacing, frowning, sighing and staring.

Stretch

- Add a second inference from the same clue and judge which has stronger evidence.
- Plant two conflicting clues for a partner to weigh and decide the stronger case.

For the LSE or teaching assistant

Sit with target pairs in main activity, prompt pointing to exact words, scribe the quote if handwriting slows them, and check Task B viewpoint is linked to proof.

Check for understanding

Question	Answer
What is an inference?	A smart conclusion from clues plus what you know.
Give one short quote showing the waiting student is anxious.	Twisted the strap round and round or shifted their weight from one foot to the other.
Why is twisted the strap stronger than corridor was almost empty?	It shows nervous behaviour directly linked to the inference.

Homework

Underline two behaviour clues at home in a book and write one inference plus quote.

Sources

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