

# STARS Strategies to Achieve Reading Success

Name \_\_\_\_\_



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# Lesson 8

# DRAWING CONCLUSIONS AND MAKING INFERENCES

## PART ONE: Think About the Strategy



### What Are Conclusions and Inferences?

There are many times each day when you figure out something on your own without being told what is happening. If you see someone in a military uniform, you can figure out that this person is probably a member of the armed forces. If you hear a rumbling in a cloudy sky, you can guess that a storm is probably coming.

**1** Write something that you figured out on your own about a friend.

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**2** Write the clues that helped you figure this out.

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### Work with a Partner

- Take turns asking each other “What is going on?” questions.
- Ask questions such as “If someone is in bed with the covers pulled up, and there is a fever thermometer on the table, how is the person probably feeling?”

## How Do You Draw Conclusions and Make Inferences?

There are many times when you read that you draw conclusions or make inferences. Sometimes the author does not give you all the details. You need to figure something out by yourself. An author might describe a character in a story crossing the Golden Gate Bridge. The author does not tell you where the story takes place, but you can use story clues and what you already know to figure out on your own that it probably takes place in California.

**Read this passage about Lisa. See what you can figure out on your own.**

Lisa had lots of work to do to get ready for the party. She had to buy the food and prepare it. She also had to pick up the cake and buy candles to place on top. She would have just enough time to clean the house. People would be arriving at five o'clock. Her mother wouldn't arrive until six o'clock. That would be enough time for all the guests to arrive and hide. When Lisa's mother arrived, they would all jump out and yell "Happy Birthday!"

1. Let's draw a conclusion.  
Think about what the author tells you.  
Also think about what is just suggested.
2. Look at the chart below.  
The first box tells details that are directly given in the passage.  
The second box tells what is suggested but not directly stated.
3. Think about the details that are given, along with your own background knowledge.
4. Fill in the missing information in the last box to show what you can figure out.

What details are given?	What information is not directly stated?	What can you figure out on your own?
Lisa is planning a party.  Lisa has lots of preparation to do for the party.	The author does not state who the party is for.  The author does not state whether or not the party will be a surprise.  The author does not state what kind of party Lisa is planning.	Lisa is planning a surprise party.  Lisa is having a party for her _____ _____  Lisa is having a party because _____ _____.


**WHAT  
TO  
KNOW**

Details are sometimes not clearly stated or explained in a reading passage. You must draw your own conclusions and make your own inferences. Whenever you figure out something that is not directly stated in a reading passage, you are **drawing a conclusion** or **making an inference**.

- To draw a conclusion or make an inference, you must reach a decision by using your reasoning abilities. Pay attention to people, places, and objects that are not fully presented or explained in a reading passage. Use details that are given, as well as what you know from your own life, to draw a conclusion or make an inference.
- To draw a conclusion or make an inference, look for connections between statements. These connections are sometimes not directly stated.
- To draw a conclusion or make an inference about a person or character, pay attention to details that describe how a person or character looks, acts, thinks, feels, and speaks. Think about how people with similar qualities behave.

**Read the paragraph about a boy who is about to go fight in a war. As you read, see if you can figure out in which war the boy is going to fight.**

John Dawes examined the contents of his pack one more time to make sure that he had everything he needed. Mother was at the stove preparing a hardy meal for him, and Father was outside, plowing one of the many fields of their farm. John wondered how his parents would manage while he was gone. Running a farm was arduous work; every pair of hands important. But John also knew that his parents supported his decision to join the militia and become part of the revolution. They knew that if freedom from British rule was not won, there might not be any Dawes farm at all.



This paragraph does not tell you in which war John Dawes is going to fight. It does, however, provide the following details, which can help you figure out this information on your own.

**But John also knew that his parents supported his decision to join the militia and become part of the revolution.**

**They knew that if freedom from British rule was not won, there might not be any Dawes farm at all.**

These detail clues help you determine that John Dawes is going to fight in the American Revolution. From your own knowledge base, you may already know that the term *militia* is often used to describe the group of men who volunteered to fight this war against the British, even though they were not part of the regular army.



Read this article about young people with extraordinary abilities. As you read, look for details that will help you figure out what happens to most of these children as they grow older. Then answer the questions.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart began composing music at the age of five and wrote his first symphony at the age of eight. He is one of history's most famous child prodigies. A prodigy is a person with an exceptional talent.

*Child prodigy* is a term that certainly seems to fit violinist Midori. Midori began playing the violin at the age of four, and she first played with the New York Philharmonic when she was only eleven.

The world of chess also has its fair share of young talent. In 1958, at the age of 15, Bobby Fischer became the youngest player in the world to attain the rank of Grand Master. The movie *Searching for Bobby Fischer* was made about another chess prodigy, Josh Waitzkin. Josh began to astound the chess world with his spectacular play at the age of seven.

What happens to child prodigies when they grow up? Midori has been able to carve out a successful career as an adult concert violinist. Mozart, on the other hand, died unappreciated and penniless at the age of 35. After becoming World Champion at 29, Bobby Fischer did not defend his title and eventually dropped out of the chess world. He died in Iceland in January of 2008 at the age of 64.



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

1. There is enough information in this article to conclude that
  - (A) most child prodigies are female.
  - (B) a child prodigy is not necessarily successful as an adult.
  - (C) most child prodigies are unhappy.
  - (D) all child prodigies are exceptional in either music or chess.
2. What clue from the article helped you reach the conclusion?
  - (A) details about important events in the life of many child prodigies
  - (B) details about adults who had been child prodigies
  - (C) details about places mentioned in the article
  - (D) details about specific objects described in the article



### Work with a Partner

- Talk about your answers to the questions.
- Tell why you chose your answers.
- Then talk about what you have learned so far about drawing conclusions and making inferences.



## REVIEW

Drawing a conclusion or making an inference is a way of figuring out information that is suggested but not directly stated in a reading passage.

- Think about the details that are provided in a reading passage. Use these details, as well as what you know from your own life, to figure out or understand information that is not fully explained.
- Look for connections between statements. These connections are sometimes not directly stated.
- Look for details that describe how a person or character looks, acts, thinks, feels, and speaks. Think about how people with similar qualities behave.

**Read the opening paragraph from Herman Melville’s novel *Moby Dick*. As you read, ask yourself, “What details in the paragraph help me figure out what is happening? What do I know from my own life that will help me figure out what is happening?” Then answer the questions.**

### Loomings

Call me Ishmael. Some years ago—never mind how long precisely—having little or no money in my purse, and nothing particular to interest me on shore, I thought I would sail about a little and see the watery part of the world. It is a way I have of driving off the spleen, and regulating the circulation. Whenever I find myself growing grim about the mouth; whenever it is a damp, drizzly November in my soul; whenever I find myself involuntarily pausing before coffin warehouses, and bringing up the rear of every funeral I meet; and especially whenever my hypos get such an upper hand of me, that it requires a strong moral principle to prevent me from deliberately stepping into the street, and methodically knocking people’s hats off—then, I account it high time to get to sea as soon as I can. This is my substitute for pistol and ball. With a philosophical flourish Cato throws himself upon his sword; I quietly take to the ship. There is nothing surprising in this. If they but knew it, almost all men in their degree, some time or other, cherish very nearly the same feelings towards the ocean with me.



- From the paragraph, you can figure out that the speaker
  - feels abandoned by friends and family.
  - finds relief from his troubles when he is at sea.
  - treasures the ocean more than most men do.
  - prefers a life on land to a life at sea.
- Readers of the paragraph can conclude that Ishmael is
  - proud of his wealth and power.
  - tired of spending so much time at sea.
  - prone to feeling melancholy.
  - respected by others as a philosopher.

## Which Answer Is Correct and Why?

Look at the answer choices for each question.

Read why each answer choice is **correct** or not correct.

3. From the paragraph, you can figure out that the speaker

Ⓐ feels abandoned by friends and family.

This answer is not correct because there are no details in the paragraph that refer to friends or family. One could conclude that the speaker attended the funerals of friends; however, one could not draw the conclusion that he feels abandoned by friends and family from this detail.

● finds relief from his troubles when he is at sea.

This answer is correct because several details in the paragraph support this conclusion. *“Whenever I find myself growing grim about the mouth . . . then, I account it high time to get to sea as soon as I can”* and *“This is my substitute for pistol and ball.”*

Ⓒ treasures the ocean more than most men do.

This answer is not correct because the last sentence in the paragraph states that *“. . . almost all men in their degree, some time or other, cherish very nearly the same feelings towards the ocean with me.”* The reader can conclude that the speaker believes that most men probably feel the same way about the ocean as he does.

Ⓓ prefers a life on land to a life at sea.

This answer is not correct because most details in the paragraph suggest that the sea is where the speaker feels the most at peace. These details also suggest that he can stay on land only for so long before feeling the need to escape to the sea.

4. Readers of the paragraph can conclude that Ishmael is

Ⓐ proud of his wealth and power.

This answer is not correct because the first sentence of the paragraph suggests that there was a time when the speaker had little money: *“Some years ago—never mind how long precisely—having little or no money in my purse . . .”* There are no other details to suggest that the speaker has since become wealthy or powerful.

Ⓑ tired of spending so much time at sea.

This answer is not correct because most of the details in the paragraph point to the fact that it is at sea where the speaker finds the most peace. Also, the last sentence states that he cherishes the ocean. Therefore, one could not conclude that he was tired of spending so much time at sea.

● prone to feeling melancholy.

This answer is correct because most of the details in the paragraph describe grim feelings which the speaker feels the need to break away from. The speaker uses these details to describe why he prefers his time at sea to his time on land.

Ⓓ respected by others as a philosopher.

This answer is not correct because there are no details in the paragraph to suggest that the speaker is considered a philosopher or a great thinker by others.

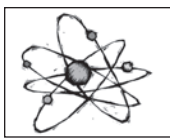




**MORE TO KNOW**

- Readers usually make inferences while they are reading. Inferences may be more specific than general.
- Readers usually draw conclusions after reading either an entire selection or part of a selection. A conclusion may be more general than an inference.
- Think about the information you figured out on your own. Ask yourself, “Which details in the reading passage help me draw this conclusion or make this inference?”

Read this science article about the different states of matter. Then answer the questions.



All matter is made up of atoms. Atoms are too small to be seen with the eye or even under a microscope. Atoms are the smallest unit of an element. All atoms of one element are alike, and they are all different from the atoms of other elements.

Atoms and molecules are always in motion. Increased temperature means a greater energy of motion, so most substances expand when heated. In solids, atoms are closely locked in position and can only vibrate. When heated, solids vibrate more and more. The atoms begin to move away from each other. This is called melting. In liquids, the atoms or molecules have higher energy, are more loosely connected, and can slide past one another. When heated, liquids get enough energy to escape into a gas. The atoms or molecules of gases are free to move away from one another except during occasional collisions.

Solid	Liquid	Gas
▶ from solid to liquid: melting	from liquid to solid: freezing from liquid to gas: evaporation    ▶	◀    from gas to liquid: condensation

- You can conclude that the main difference between a solid, a liquid, and a gas is how
  - large or small their atoms are.
  - much their particles move.
  - high the temperature must be before they melt.
  - quickly they are able to change form.
- You can tell that when a liquid is brought to a boil,
  - the molecules of the liquid become locked in position.
  - the liquid becomes a solid.
  - the liquid expands.
  - the liquid has a decreased energy of motion.
- If a substance has tightly packed particles, you can figure out that the substance is most likely
  - a gas.
  - an atom.
  - a molecule.
  - a solid.
- From the chart, you can conclude that the change in state from a gas to a liquid is called
  - condensation.
  - freezing.
  - boiling.
  - evaporation.

Read this report about sign languages. Then answer the questions.

### Sign Languages

If you have ever watched two people using sign language, you might think that they are translating English into gestures, but that is not the case. They are actually using a completely different language, known as American Sign Language (ASL).

What makes ASL a language? It has a grammar that is different from spoken and written English. For example, in ASL, a question word such as *where* or *what* usually comes at the end of a sentence. Spoken language consists of meaningless sounds that are grouped together to make meaning. In the same way, sign languages have basic meaningless elements that come together to make meaningful signs. The basic elements of a sign are the shape of the hand, which way the palm faces, where on the body the sign is made, the movement of the hands, and facial expression. Changing any one of these elements can change the meaning of a sign.

ASL is only one of hundreds of sign languages that have developed among deaf communities around the world. The native users of one sign language cannot understand another sign language unless they learn it. So, even though English is spoken by hearing people in England and the United States, deaf people in those two countries have two completely different sign languages: ASL and BSL (British Sign Language). The reverse situation also occurs. South Africa has eleven official spoken languages but only one sign language. Most official sign languages got started among groups of deaf individuals who lived near each other or went to the same school.

The use of sign languages around the world is an extensive topic. Writing this report has taught me that I have much more to learn about it.

9. According to the report, which of these individuals is most likely a native speaker of BSL?
- Ⓐ a deaf person living in South Africa
  - Ⓑ a hearing person living in England
  - Ⓒ a deaf person living in the United States
  - Ⓓ a deaf person living in England
10. With which of these statements would the author of the report most likely agree?
- Ⓐ ASL is more interesting than BSL.
  - Ⓑ Everyone should learn to sign.
  - Ⓒ Sign language is an interesting topic.
  - Ⓓ BSL is not a real language.
11. The author of this report is most likely
- Ⓐ a teacher of deaf students.
  - Ⓑ a hearing student.
  - Ⓒ a deaf student.
  - Ⓓ an author of books about ASL.
12. You can conclude that one reason there are so many different sign languages is that
- Ⓐ each one started informally among a group of deaf people who wanted to communicate with one another.
  - Ⓑ each country has to have its own unique sign language.
  - Ⓒ teachers at schools for the deaf often create a new sign language for their own students.
  - Ⓓ each spoken language has been translated into a sign language.


**TEST  
TIPS**

- A test question about drawing conclusions or making inferences asks you to figure out something that is not directly stated in a reading passage. Use information in the selection, combined with what you already know, to arrive at an answer.
- A test question about drawing conclusions or making inferences often contains the words *you can tell*, *determine*, or *conclude*.

Read this poem by William Butler Yeats. Then answer questions about the poem. Choose the best answer for Numbers 13 and 14.

### The Lake Isle of Innisfree

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,  
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made:  
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honeybee,  
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,  
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;  
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,  
And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day  
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;  
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,  
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

13. There is enough information in the poem to suggest that the speaker presently lives
- (A) on a lonely island.
  - (B) in a busy town or city.
  - (C) on a farm in the country.
  - (D) in a place called Innisfree.
14. From the poem, you can tell that the speaker most wants
- (A) peace and tranquility.
  - (B) a small cabin in the woods.
  - (C) an opportunity to study nature.
  - (D) the company of close companions.



Read this article about a successful singer and her connection to a noted author. Then answer questions about the article. Choose the best answer for Numbers 15 and 16.

Singer-songwriter Lauryn Hill launched her solo career with the album *The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill*, which debuted at number one on the Billboard pop chart. Hill said she had wanted to make an album that had “. . . the roots, the integrity, and the sound of an old record.” These qualities were expressed in the album’s music, as well as its title.

The title *The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill* recalls a book written in 1933 by noted African American historian and educator Carter G. Woodson. In his book *The Miseducation of the Negro*, Woodson wrote about the American education system. He felt that African American children did not receive proper instruction. Woodson saw no black faces in the textbooks of his time. He observed that teachers seldom mentioned Africa or the achievements of black Americans.

Carter Woodson was born in 1875. Both of his parents were freed slaves. Although they themselves could not read, Woodson’s parents stressed the importance of education. Despite having his schooling delayed by the necessity of work, Woodson went on to college. He eventually received his doctorate in history from Harvard University in 1912.

Lauryn Hill is not the only one to have honored Carter Woodson. Every February, when we observe Black History Month, we also celebrate Woodson’s legacy. Woodson worked hard to establish Negro History Week, the forerunner to Black History Month. Woodson wanted to remind all students of the role played by black Americans throughout the history of America.



Carter G. Woodson

15. You can tell that Lauryn Hill
- (A) did not expect her album to be successful.
  - (B) did not support many of Carter Woodson’s opinions.
  - (C) was familiar with Carter Woodson’s book before she made her album.
  - (D) consulted with Carter Woodson on her album.
16. Readers of the article can conclude that Carter Woodson
- (A) was the most notable author of his time.
  - (B) never received a high-school diploma.
  - (C) struggled to achieve a high level of education.
  - (D) would not appreciate his ideas being expressed in music.