# EMPOWERING TEACHERS

## Comprehension Instructional Routine:
## Making an Inference from an Implied Message Within a Text
**Preparation/Materials: several sentences, marker**

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- *Italicized sentences are what the teacher does*
- **Bold type is what the teacher says**
- Regular type is what the student(s) say

- **Bullet (•) and bolded type are what the teacher and student(s) say in unison**
- Teacher or student slides finder under <u>underlined</u> letter(s) or word(s)

| TEACHER EXPLAINS TASK |
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**We are going to make inferences by making connections between what we read and what we already know. We make inferences to figure out what the author is telling us when it is not directly stated in the text.**

| TEACHER MODELS TASK |
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**To make inferences, we have to find the important details, words, or clues in the text. Then, we have to think about what we know about these words. When we can connect the text with what we know, we can figure out what the author is trying to tell us.**

**Here is an example:**
**Suppose your parents told you to wear a warm coat, a hat, and gloves when you go outside.**

**Did you automatically think that it is cold outside? If you did, then you made an inference. You asked yourself, what is this about? What are my parents trying to tell me?**

**No one said it was cold. You made an inference based on what your parents said and your past experiences with the important words in the sentence.**

**First, you used the important details or words (i.e., warm coat, hat, and gloves) as clues. Then, you thought about what you know about these words. This helped you to figure out that when you wear a warm coat, a hat, and gloves, it is usually cold outside. You were able to figure out what your parents were telling you- it is cold outside- by making these connections.**

**Our inferences come from making connections between what we read or hear and what we already know.**

| TEACHER AND STUDENTS PRACTICE TASK TOGETHER |
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**Let's make an inference from another sentence. Remember what we do to make an inference about a sentence. First, we find the important details, words, or clues in the text.**
**What do we do first?**
- **We find the important details, words or clues.**

**That's right.**

**Then we have to think about what we know about these words. What do we do next?**
- **We think about what we know about these words.**

**Next, we connect the text with what we know to make an inference.**
**What do we do next?**
- **We connect the text to what we know to make an inference.**

**Sometimes we are not sure what words are the most important. It helps to ask, what is this about?**

**Follow along as I read a new sentence. Together we will figure out what the author is trying to tell us.** *Display the sentence for students to see.*

<u>**In the cloud of gunfire, he longed to hear the voices of his family but he heard only the sounds of the enemy's horses.**</u>

**Let's reread it together.**
- <u>**In the cloud of gunfire, he longed to hear the voices of his family but he heard only the sounds of the enemy's horses.**</u>

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**If we do not understand this sentence we may not enjoy or remember reading it when asked questions about it. So, we need to find out what the author is telling us by filling in the gaps. Let's start with what do we know about this sentence?** *Accept all relevant answers (e.g., The author mentions gunfire and enemy horses. There could be fighting or a battle. There are horses running.). Provide support as needed by asking questions such as, What is happening?*

**Now, let's find the clues or important words.**
*Underline these words: gunfire, he longed to hear the voices of his family, enemy's horses.*
**These are the important words in the sentence. We need to figure out the meaning of each word.**
**This word is 'gunfire'. What word?**
- **gunfire**

**What do we know about gunfire during a battle?** *Lead students in a discussion about fighting where the gunfire creates a cloud of smoke. Also mention that being in a battle or an army usually means being away from home. Limit discussion to two minutes.*
**In our sentence, the author is telling us the person is in a battle probably away from home.**
**Where is this person?**
- **The person is in a battle probably away from home.**

**These words are 'he longed to hear the voices of his family'. What words?**
- **he longed to hear the voices of his family**

**When we long for someone, we miss them or feel homesick for them.** *Lead students in a discussion about a grandparent who lives far away and how one misses them or feels homesick to see them again. Limit discussion to two minutes.*

**In our sentence, the person misses his family. The words are 'he longed to hear the voices of his family'.**
**What are the words that tell us the person is missing his family?**
- **he longed to hear the voices of his family**
**If he misses his family, then this agrees with our idea that he is probably away from home.**
**Does it sound like he is away from home?**
- **yes**
**The next words that are underlined are 'enemy's horses'. What are the words?**
- **enemy's horses**
**What do we know about these words?** *Lead students in a discussion about an 'enemy' as the person one fights in a battle and 'horses' as a way that soldiers used to ride in battle. This sets the stage for whether it is now or long ago and confirms what they said earlier about being in a battle. Limit discussion to two minutes.*
**The author gave us another clue that the person is in a battle because there is an enemy and he hears their horses. The author also gave us a clue that this may have taken place a long time ago when horses were used in fighting.**

**Let's look again at our sentence.**
<u>In the cloud of gunfire, he longed to hear the voices of his family but he heard only the sounds of the enemy's horses.</u>

**The inference we can make from this sentence is this: a long time ago there was a man who really missed his family while fighting in a battle.**

**What inference did we make from this sentence?**
- **A long time ago there was a man who really missed his family while fighting in a battle.**
**Yes, the author used other words but this is what he wanted us to figure out. This is the meaning of his sentence.**

**STUDENTS PRACTICE TASK**

**Remember, to make an inference, we find the important details, words or clues in the text and then we think about what we know about these words.**
**What do we do first?**
    We find the important details, words or clues.
**What do we do next?**
    We think about what we know about these words or clues.
**Then we connect the text with what we know to make an inference. What do we do next?**
    Connect the text to what we know to make an inference.
**Yes, nice work remembering the steps.**

## STUDENTS PRACTICE TASK (continued)

Remember, sometimes you have to begin by asking, what is this sentence about? This helps if you are not sure what words are the most important.

Follow along as I read a new text. Then you will figure out what the author is trying to tell you. *Display the text for students to see.*

<u>These athletes train a great deal. They eat a very healthy diet. Some compete in short races and others compete in long races called marathons.</u>

Remember, if we do not understand this sentence we may not enjoy or remember reading it when asked questions about it. So, we need to find out what the author is telling us by filling in the gaps. Let's start with what do we know about this sentence? *Accept all relevant answers. Provide support by adding statements such as… The author says there are athletes and they race in something. Limit discussion to two minutes.*
The author doesn't tell us the name of the sport. Let's follow our steps to see if we can make an inference about what sport this is.

What are the clues or important words? *Underline the words students suggest.*
    Athletes, compete, marathons
Now we need to figure out the meaning of each word.
What do we know about the word, athlete? *Lead students in a discussion about its meaning, e.g., someone who trains to participate in a sport. You may need to give examples of different sports. Limit discussion to two minutes.*

What do we know about the word, compete? *Lead students in a discussion about its meaning, e.g., to race or try to win at a sport or some other competition. Limit discussion to two minutes.*
In our sentence, how do the athletes compete?
    They complete in short races and long races.

The next word we underlined is 'marathons'.
What do we know about this word? *Lead students in a discussion about its meaning, e.g., a competition or race where people run 26.2 miles. Limit discussion to two minutes.*

In the sentence, who are in marathons?
- the athletes

Yes, this is a clue that these athletes compete by running in very long races.

Let's read our sentences again.
<u>These athletes train a great deal. They eat a very healthy diet. Some compete in short races and others compete in long races called marathons.</u>

Do we know more about what the author had to tell us? Our first idea was that they are athletes and they race in something.
What inferences can we make? *Lead students in forming an inference sentence.*
    The athletes are runners who compete in short runs and long runs called marathons.

## INDEPENDENT PRACTICE

*When students consistently make inferences from a sentence, provide opportunities to practice individually or in pairs using other appropriate sentences and longer text.*

## SCAFFOLDING SUGGESTION FOR ERRORS

*Verify that students are first identifying important words and providing the 'gist' of the sentence. If students are having difficulty with this concept, use more familiar examples like the one in Teacher's Model Task and reteach the Second Grade Comprehension Instructional Routine: Summarization. If necessary during student practice, prompt students by giving them the response before you ask them to state it.*

**Adaptations using this Instructional Routine:**

- Use an easier sentence for Students Practice Task (e.g., The boy watched nervously as his father removed the training wheels from his bike.).
- Pair students so that one student finds a sentence from a history or science text then asks the other student to find the inference.
- Model the instructional routine using a longer text. Read through the entire text, then cover up most of the text, exposing only small parts at a time when rereading the text.
- Introduce a different type of inference that expects students to rely more on what they know about certain characteristics (e.g., In the magical land of Id, cats had wings on them so they could fly. One day a cat got to a fence and wanted to get over. How did the cat do it? While cats would normally walk around the fence, this cat could fly because he had wings so we can make the inference that the cat flies over the fence.).
- Provide an example of an inference that requires the student to know that the meaning of a separate word, vessel, means the same as 'oil tanker' in order to understand the text. For example, "The oil tanker was traveling through the channel to deliver a cargo of oil. The vessel had traveled across the Atlantic Ocean to get to the delivery port." In this case, it is important for the teacher to preteach the vocabulary word, vessel.

**For further independent practice with narrative text sequencing, refer to the following Second and Third Grade FCRR Student Center Activities at http://www.fcrr.org/Curriculum/PDF/G2-3/2-3Comp_3.pdf**

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In the cloud of gunfire, he longed to hear the voices of his family but he heard only the sounds of the enemy's horses.

These athletes train a great deal. They eat a very healthy diet. Some compete in short races and others compete in long races called marathons.