

Toolkit 1 - Learning Unit 2

Post-Intervention

Activity 3 - Inference



Training

3. Inference

Why teach inference?

- Inference is a "foundational skill" — a prerequisite for higher-order thinking and 21st century skills (Marzano, 2010)
- Inference skills are used across the curriculum, including English language arts, science and social studies.
- Because inferring requires higher order thinking skills, it can be difficult for many students. However, it can be taught through explicit instruction in inferential strategies

Improve your inference skills by placing focus on making educated guesses rather than quickly drawing conclusions. This requires slowing down to carefully look for and consider as many clues as possible—such as images, data or reports—that might help you evaluate a situation. Really useful could be some games for example

One simplified model for teaching inference includes the following assumptions:



- We need to find clues to get some answers.
- We need to add those clues to what we already know or have read.
- There can be more than one correct answer.
- We need to be able to support inferences.

Marzano (2010) suggests teachers pose four questions to students to facilitate a discussion about inferences.

- **What is my inference?**
This question helps students become aware that they may have just made an inference by filling in information that wasn't directly presented.
- **What information did I use to make this inference?**
It's important for students to understand the various types of information they use to make inferences. This may include information presented in the text, or it may be background knowledge that a student brings to the learning setting.
- **How good was my thinking?**
According to Marzano, once students have identified the premises on which they've based their inferences, they can engage in the most powerful part of the process — examining the validity of their thinking.
- **Do I need to change my thinking?**
The final step in the process is for students to consider possible changes in their thinking. The point here is not to invalidate students' original inferences, but rather to help them develop the habit of continually updating their thinking as they gather new information.

Source: Marzano, R. (2010). *Teaching inference. Educational Leadership*, 67(7), 80-01.

<https://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/inference>

