

Detective Skills: Mastering Inference

Be a Literacy Detective: Read Between the Lines!

- An inference is a conclusion reached on the basis of evidence and reasoning, rather than something explicitly stated in the text.
- To be a great detective, look for clues in a character's body language, such as a furrowed brow or clenched fists.
- Always look for 'because': If you think a character is sad, can you point to the specific sentence that makes you think that?
- Consider the setting: How does the description of a dark, stormy night suggest a feeling of mystery or danger?
- Think about motivation: Why did the character act that way? What did they want to achieve?
- Remember: Your inference must always be backed up by evidence from the text to be a strong argument.

Did you know? Did you know? Authors often leave 'breadcrumbs' in a story. They rarely tell you exactly how a character feels; instead, they describe their actions or their environment so you can work it out for yourself. If an author writes, 'Pip the caterpillar snapped his book shut and stomped toward his leaf,' they haven't said he is angry, but the evidence makes it clear!

Key vocabulary: Inference · Evidence · Deduction · Implied · Character motivation · Atmosphere