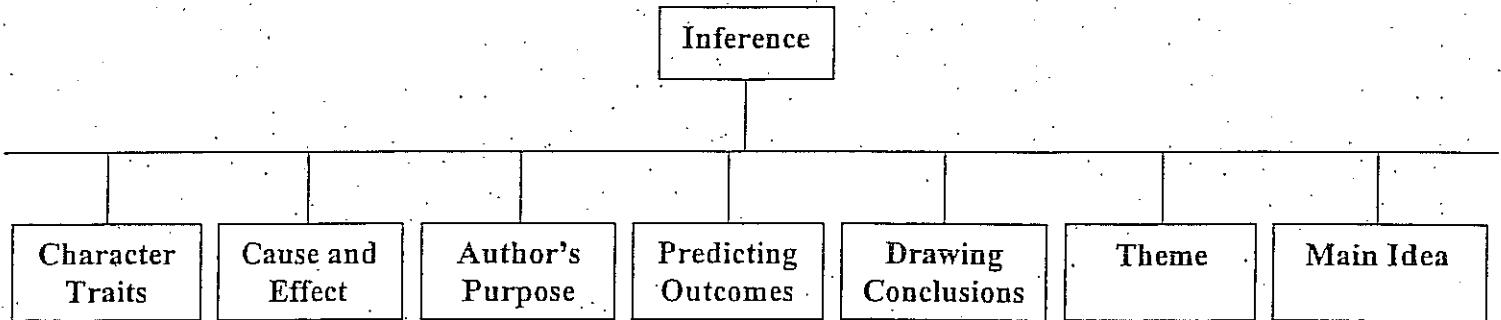


Inference

Definition: to conclude by reasoning when information is not explicitly stated. In order to make inferences, the reader uses her background knowledge and the clues provided in the text (LBUSD, 2000).

Readers of text are required to make various types of inferences.



Task Analysis: the reader uses evidence from the text and background knowledge to anticipate what will happen in the text (LBUSD, 2000).

Predicting Outcomes

Proficient readers are constantly revising and adjusting their predictions. Reader uses evidence from the text and background knowledge to anticipate what will happen in the text.

Provide students with some possible scenarios that they can identify with in their lives and have them state possible outcomes.

- If I eat too much pizza, I predict that....
- If I don't practice playing my instrument, I predict that....
- If I talk during class, I predict that....
- Explain to students that based on prior experiences they can predict that a certain outcome is highly likely to occur.

Next, provide students with short excerpts and give them the outcomes. The excerpts can come from any text in content that lends itself to making predictions. Have the students explain what prior knowledge led them to make that prediction.

“After a time, the larva goes into the second stage of complete metamorphosis and becomes a **pupa** (plural *pupae*). During the pupal stage, the insect is enclosed in a protective covering and gradually changes from a larva to an adult” (*Science Explorer, Focus on Life Science*, “Insects,” 2001, pg. 414).

Teacher prediction:

I predict that this insect is a butterfly or moth.

Students then use schema to agree or disagree with the teacher prediction. For example, a student might share that when they were younger they learned about silkworms and saw that moths come out of cocoons. Another student might discuss something they had read about butterflies in another text.

"I didn't know what I was going to do. Then, by pure chance, a notice on a wall jumped at me out of the blue. 'Maggs & Son,' it read. 'Will fix anything, Chimneys, coal stoves, roofs, leaks. Satisfaction Guaranteed.'"

Perfect, I thought.

Maggs & Son turned out to be Maggs only. The first of Magg's lies." (*Holt, Interactive Reader, "The Overhead Man,"* 2003, pg. 191).

Teacher predicts:

- *I predict that Maggs will not do a good job.*
- *I predict that Maggs is a repairman.*

Ask students to explain if they agree with this prediction based on their previous experiences. For example, a student might agree with the prediction that Maggs is a repairman because one time when they needed their washer fixed they called a repairman. Whereas another student might disagree with the prediction that Maggs will not do a good job because whenever someone has promised them satisfaction they did a great job. Most times when someone guarantees something they follow through because of the promise.

Next, give them an excerpt, predict the outcome, and have students provide the evidence from the text.

"One question facing George Washington was whether to recruit African Americans. Many white southerners opposed the idea, and at first Washington banned African Americans from serving. When the British promised freedom to any slave who fought on their side, however, thousands signed on. In response the Continental Army began allowing free African Americans to serve" (*Holt, United States History, "Patriots Gain New Hope,"* 2006, pg. 90-91).

Teacher prediction:

- *I predict that more African Americans would have joined the British cause.*

Students use text clues to support whether they agree or disagree with the predictions. For example, a student might agree with the prediction because the passage states that the British were giving freedom to the slaves who fought on their side. Another might also agree and indicate that the Continental Army was only allowing the *free* African Americans to fight, so there would be no incentive for the slaves to join the Continental Army.

Now, have students use both background knowledge and evidence from the text to support a teacher generated prediction.

"The process by which a cell captures the energy in the sunlight and uses it to make food is called **photosynthesis**. The term *photosynthesis* comes from the root word *photo*, which means "light," and *synthesis*, which means "putting together." Photosynthesis means using light to make food. Photosynthesis is a very complicated process. **During photosynthesis, plants and some other organisms use energy from the sun to convert carbon dioxide and water into oxygen and sugars, including glucose**" (*Science Explorer, Focus on Life Science, "Photosynthesis,"* 2001, pg. 41).

Teacher predictions:

- *I predict that a plant that has been overshadowed by another larger plant will die.*
- *I predict that a plant that has a lot of sunlight will grow equal in size to a plant that has less sunlight.*

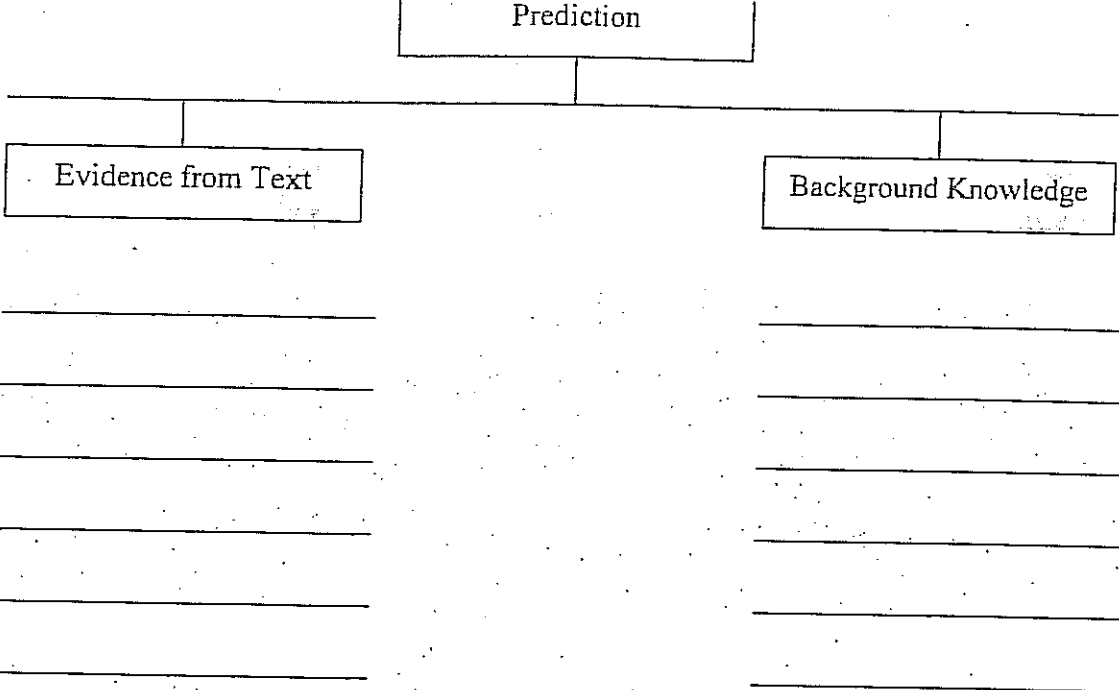
Students use both text clues and schema to support whether they agree or disagree with the predictions. For example, a student might agree with the first prediction because the text tells us that energy from the sun is used to make food and their schema tells them that a large plant overshadowing the other plant would block the sun from it and thus not allow it to make food. Another student might disagree with the second prediction because the text states that the plant uses the sun's energy to make food, but their background knowledge tells them that more sunlight would probably mean the plant would have more food and more food usually means that things grow to be stronger and healthier. Thus the student might predict that the plant with more sunlight would probably be larger than one with less sunlight.

An additional example might be that while reading Hansel and Gretel the teacher predicts that the children will not be able to find their way home. For background knowledge support, the students might say that they've been lost with their parents in a parking lot or at the mall. The evidence from the text for support would be that the bird is eating the bread and so the children have no trail to follow.

Practice this until students are comfortable providing evidence from their prior knowledge and from the text. Make sure students can support their responses by explaining why they made that prediction.

Once students are comfortable providing evidence, give the students excerpts that lend themselves to predicting outcomes. Have students predict the outcome and provide both background knowledge that supports prediction and evidence from text.

In the beginning to facilitate students' ability to make logical predictions with appropriate evidence, students will benefit from some type of graphic organizer or thinking map such as the one below.



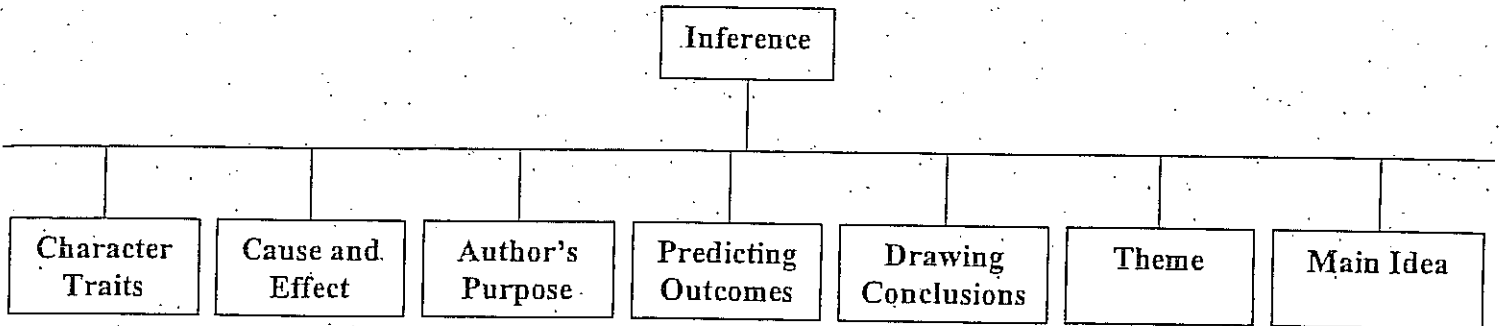
Once students are proficient we recommend they practice continually making and monitoring their predictions. The following graphic organizer is a helpful tool (LBUSD, 2000).

Text Title:				
Prediction	Background Knowledge	Text Confirmed (Page #)	Text Doesn't Support	Modified Prediction

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Task Analysis: the reader needs to be able to use related facts to generate an appropriate inference (LBUSD, 2000).

Drawing Conclusions

Students use clues from the text and background knowledge to make educated guesses.

Begin with pictures. Show students pictures that lend themselves to drawing conclusions. For example, show them a picture of a child in the rain without an umbrella. Ask the students what they think will happen to the child's clothes? Have them explain why they reached that conclusion. Students should be able to explain that when they haven't had an umbrella, they've gotten wet. Show them a picture of students with books in their hands. Ask the students what conclusions they can make from the picture. Students should be able to provide a variety of educated guesses such as: they are returning from the library; they're going to school; they love to read. Ask the students to explain the clues that led them to that conclusion. Students should be able to respond that the books in the picture and their own personal experiences led them to that conclusion.

As the students feel more comfortable taking risks by drawing conclusions; move to a short excerpt. Give the students the conclusion and explain which clues support the conclusion and how they used their background knowledge to help them reach that conclusion.

Tami raced downstairs. She couldn't wait to ride her bike. The excited youngster opened the door and felt the brisk morning air. Tami turned around opened the hall closet and put on a jacket.

Give them the conclusion: Tami must have been cold.

Have students give you evidence from the text and their background knowledge that led them to that conclusion. A T chart is a good way to help students write down their thoughts and allows them to see the connection between text clues and background knowledge.

Evidence from Text

Background Knowledge

brisk morning air
put on a jacket

They put on jackets when they're cold.

Next, give students the clues, and have them draw the conclusion. Ask them to explain their reasoning. This is where their background knowledge will come into play. The students must connect the clues from the text with their background knowledge in order to draw a logical conclusion. It is possible that some students will not draw logical conclusions. Teachers should ask follow-up questions prodding them to think about their personal experiences in order to help students bridge the gap between using clues and background knowledge.

For example, provide students with copy of text with the clues underlined or bolded or italicized.

"These Indians traveled from the valleys during hot summer months to the cooler regions of the foothills. In the winter, they moved back to the valleys" (From *Reflections, Our Communities*, 2007, pg. 95).

Ask students what they can conclude about the weather when the Indians returned to the valleys.

Students should be able to state that the Indians were searching for warmth because when they are cold, they try to get warm by either going in the house, or turning on the heat, or putting on some warmer clothing.

Finally, help students draw conclusions by themselves. They need to be able to ask themselves certain questions that facilitate drawing conclusions.

How do I know that...?

Where do I think this is taking place...?

Why do I believe that...?

What do I already know about...that leads me to believe this?

Finally, students must always support their conclusion with evidence from the text and from their background knowledge.

Drawing Conclusion		
Conclusion	Background Knowledge	Text Clues (Page #)

(LBUSD, 2000).