

# Y6 Therapy

# Reading

R5c: Can use clues from action, dialogue and description to interpret meaning

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# Vocabulary: Shades of meaning

Put these words in order. Explain how you have ordered them.

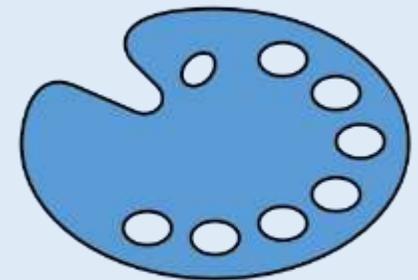
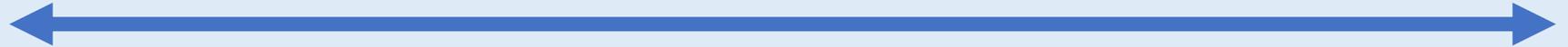
whispered

yelled

shouted

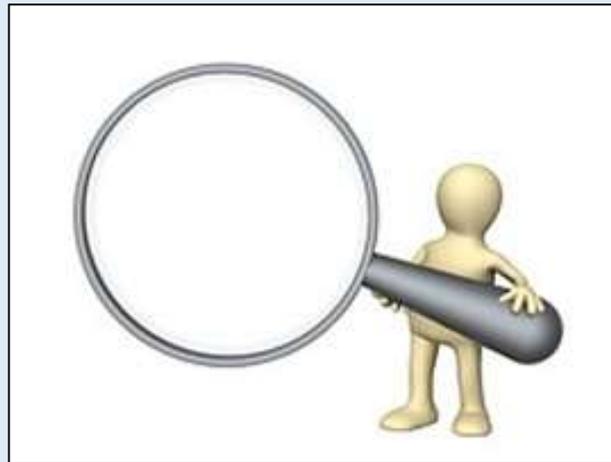
uttered

murmured



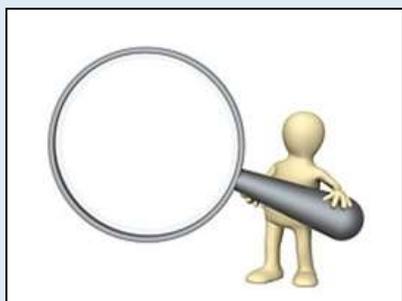
# Inference – a reminder

Inference is **reading between the lines** to understand what an author has suggested but not directly written in a text. This is different to **retrieval** where the facts can be found in the words of the text. When we **infer**, we use clues that are given in the text, along with our own experiences and knowledge, to come to a **conclusion** about what has happened.



# Inferring from action

The way characters behave, or their actions, can tell us a lot about their personality and how they are feeling. When we are reading, we must look for these clues and use our own experiences to **infer** what that character might be like or what they might be thinking.



So, for example, if a character stomps out of the room and slams the door, we can **infer** that they are angry or upset.

If a character blushes and looks to the ground, we can **infer** that they are embarrassed or shy.

The words don't tell us this but the way the character is acting does.

# An example

Look at this extract from *Pinocchio* by *Carlo Collodi*. What does it suggest about the main character?



Deep in the forest beside the ancient oak, he bumped into the cat and the fox. Breaking his promise, he foolishly let himself be talked into burying both coins in the Magic Meadow. Full of hope, he returned at dawn but, alas, the coins had vanished.

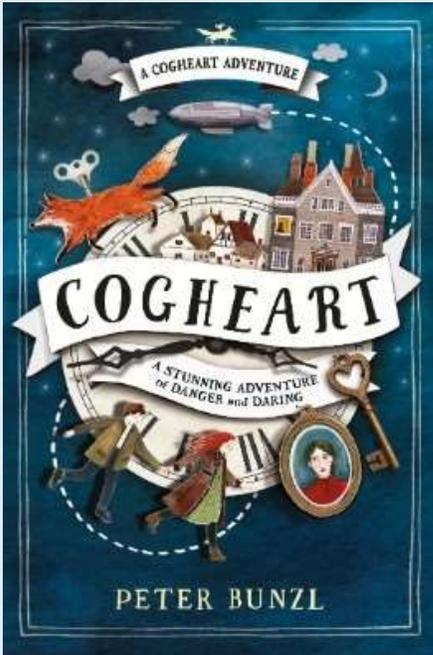
We can **infer** from Pinocchio's actions that he is not to be trusted because he broke his promise and that he is easily led, as he let himself be talked into burying the coins. We can also **infer** that he is rather silly as the word foolish is used and he buries coins!

# An example

Look at this extract from *Cogheart* by Peter Bunzl. What evidence is there to suggest that Malkin is being hunted?

Malkin **ran** for a **long time**; taking care to **keep out of sight**, he **zigzagged** between the trees in short bursts. He had to **put as much distance between himself and the crash site as possible**. He needed to get to Lily and give her John's last message, before his ticks ran out.

We can highlight the actions in the text which we know, from our own experience, relate to someone who might be running away. These will form the answer to the question.



# Inferring from dialogue

We can also use characters' speech to **infer** what might be happening in a story, such as how characters might be feeling and where the scene is taking place. We can use both the **dialogue** and the way that they are speaking. What can you find out from the text below?

When they turned to sit they discovered a woman with a grey swirling bun of hair had arrived, and taken one of their spaces. "That's our spot," Lily complained.

"You should have sat in it then," the woman admonished. She settled herself in, shutting her eyes. "Could you be a little quieter! I need my sleep."

"We were stowing our baggage, you old baggage," Lily grumbled, but she made sure it wasn't loud enough for the woman to hear.

# An example

When they turned to sit they discovered a woman with a grey swirling bun of hair had arrived, and taken one of their spaces. “That’s our spot,” Lily **complained**.

“**You should have sat in it then,**” the woman **admonished**. She settled herself in, shutting her eyes. “**Could you be a little quieter!** I need my sleep.”

“**We were stowing our baggage, you old baggage,**” Lily **grumbled**, but she made sure **it wasn’t loud enough** for the woman to hear.

So we can **infer** that the conversation must be taking place on some form of transport as they talk about *stowing baggage*. We need to make sure that we understand the meaning of *stowing*. We can also **infer** that the woman and Lily are not being friendly toward each other from *grumbled*, *complained* and *admonished* (we need to make sure that we know the meaning of this too). We also know that what they say to each other isn’t very kind although Lily isn’t really a rude girl because she knows not to say her insult aloud.

# Inferring from description



The way an author uses description can also give us evidence from which to **infer**. In both fiction and non-fiction, description can give us clues as to what a place or a person is like. What impression do we get of Iceland from this passage out of a travel guide?

Shaped by hundreds of volcanos, including around 30 that are still active, it has giant glaciers, wonderful waterfalls, bizarre beaches of black sand and eerie fields of living lava. No wonder it has been called the land of fire and ice!

# An example



Shaped by hundreds of **volcanos**, including around 30 that are still active, it has giant **glaciers**, wonderful **waterfalls**, bizarre beaches of **black sand** and eerie fields of **living lava**. No wonder it has been called the land of **fire and ice**!

From this extract, we get the impression that Iceland is a land full of natural wonders. We can **infer** this because it has many volcanos, huge glaciers, black sand and living lava. We can also **infer** that it is a land of contrasts – we get this from the fact that it has the contrasting features of volcanoes and glaciers.

# Practise

Read this extract and then answer the following questions. Remember to use evidence from the characters' actions and dialogue to **infer** how they feel.

Mr Thompson glared at Jack. His face was stern and his fingers drummed on the desk. "Come here, now!" he barked. Jack stood up and trudged reluctantly towards the front of the classroom, dragging his feet. He could feel his heart thumping in his chest and sweat starting to prickle on his palms. He stood before Mr Thompson, fixing his eyes on the teacher's shiny brown shoes.

"Look at me, boy!" sneered Mr Thompson.  
Jack slowly glanced upwards until their eyes met. He gulped.

**How do you think Jack is feeling?**

**How do you think Mr Thompson feels?**

**Use evidence from the text.**

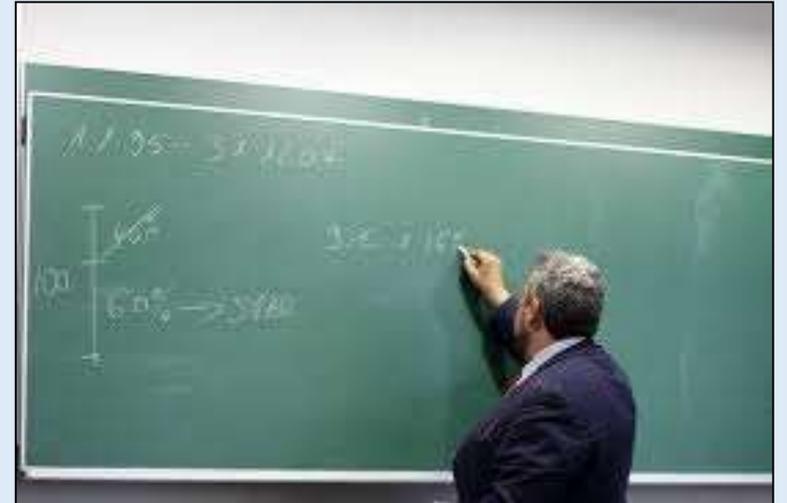
# How did you do?

**Answer:** Jack is frightened.

**Evidence:** *trudged reluctantly; dragging his feet; he could feel his heart thumping in his chest and sweat starting to prickle on his palms; fixing his eyes on the teacher's shiny brown shoes; slowly glanced upwards until their eyes met; he gulped.*

**Answer:** Mr Thompson is angry; he is also an unpleasant man.

**Evidence:** *he glared at Jack; his face was stern; he barked and sneered; his words were abrupt and rudely spoken.*



# Practise

American black bears are found in Canada, Mexico and North America. As omnivores, they mostly eat grasses, herbs and fruit, but will sometimes eat other things, including fish. The black bear's coat has lots of layers of shaggy fur, which keeps it warm in cold winter months. Female black bears give birth to two or three blind, helpless cubs in mid-winter and nurse them in the den until spring, when they all emerge in search of food. The cubs will stay with their very protective mother for about two years. Usually found in forests, or more occasionally mountains and swamps, they make their dens in caves, burrows or other secluded spots. With extremely sharp claws, they are expert tree climbers and have also been known to make dens in tree holes high above the ground.

**Find and copy** a word from the text which suggests that black bears are reclusive animals.

# Practise

American black bears are found in Canada, Mexico and North America. As omnivores, they mostly eat grasses, herbs and fruit, but will sometimes eat other things, including fish. The black bear's coat has lots of layers of shaggy fur, which keeps it warm in cold winter months. Female black bears give birth to two or three blind, helpless cubs in mid-winter and nurse them in the den until spring, when they all emerge in search of food. The cubs will stay with their very protective mother for about two years. Usually found in forests, or more occasionally mountains and swamps, they make their dens in caves, burrows or other secluded spots. With extremely sharp claws, they are expert tree climbers and have also been known to make dens in tree holes high above the ground.

**According to the text, under what circumstances might a female black bear pose threat?**

# How did you do?

**Find** and **copy** a word from the text which suggests that black bears are reclusive animals.

**Answer:** secluded

According to the text, under what circumstances might a female black bear pose threat?

**Answer:** when it is protecting its cubs as they emerge from the den to find food



# Practise

She was a peculiar looking thing – scrawny, pinched and wrinkled with a fine moustache and a brown, crinkly wart hovering just to the left of a misshapen eyebrow. Her lips were twisted, and looked like the skin of a dried date and she never, ever smiled. Not once did she make us feel welcome in her shop, even though we spent extortionate amounts between us. In fact, the only time she ever bothered to speak to anyone was when she wanted to criticise.

**What impression do we get of the woman in the extract? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.**

# How did you do?

**What impression do we get of the woman in the extract? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.**

**Answer:** The character is not very attractive.

**Evidence:** peculiar looking; scrawny, pinched, wrinkled skin; fine moustache; brown crinkly wart; misshapen eyebrow

**Answer:** The character may not be very pleasant.

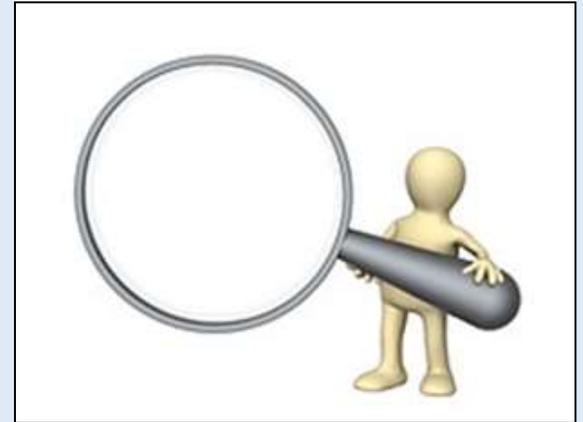
**Evidence:** never ever smiled; not once did she make us feel welcome; the only time she bothered to speak to anyone was when she wanted to criticise

# Practise

Read the text on the following slide and answer the questions below.

**What evidence is there to suggest that Eliza is resentful of her parents and their work?**

**How can you tell that Eliza's mother is trying to calm the situation down?**



# Practise

“I can’t believe you are even contemplating sending me there. How could you?” she screamed.

“Now come on darling, you know that your father and I have thought long and hard about this,” her mother replied.

“I bet you’ve thought about it, sending me away all week so that you can be free to do what you like,” she retorted. “Now you can have your precious dinner parties, with your precious colleagues without me bothering and embarrassing you. Well, I’m sorry I’m such an inconvenience in your lives.”

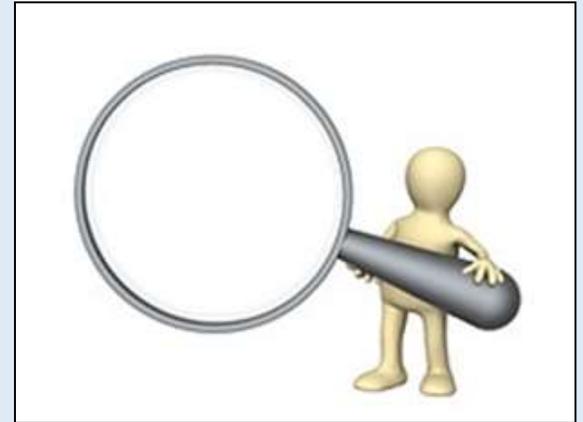
“It really isn’t like that Eliza; you know we want what’s best for you,” her mother said gently.

“The best decision for my future? Oh, you’d know all about that wouldn’t you? If you even bothered to spend so much as a minute in my company, you would know that this is the last thing I need right now.”

# How did you do?

What evidence is there to suggest that Eliza is resentful of her parents and their work?

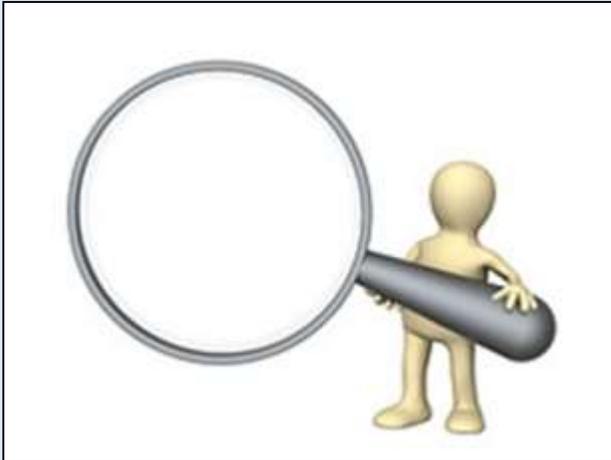
**Answer:** she says *precious work colleagues* as if she is jealous of them taking her parents' time away from her. She says *if you even bothered to spend so much as a minute in my company* which shows that her parents are too busy to spend any time with her.



How can you tell that Eliza's mother is trying to calm the situation down?

**Answer:** she says *come on darling* and she speaks to her *gently*.

# Reflection



When you are answering inference questions, remember:

- Search for clues in the text – pay close attention to action, dialogue and description.
- Identify and work out any vocabulary that you will need to understand.
- Find the evidence.
- Think about what you know from your own personal experience and learning.
- Use a combination of evidence and experience to reach a conclusion.