**Study Island**

*Study Guide*

# Inferences and Generalizations



Inferences

Textual Information → Inference

Prior Knowledge → Inference
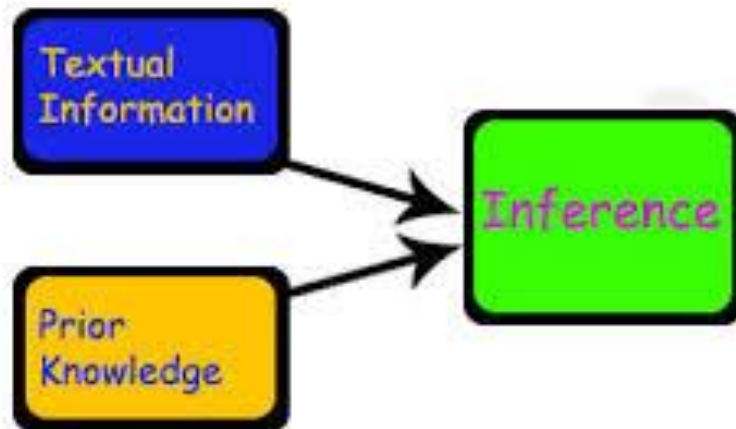
# Inferences

**Inferences** *are evidence-based guesses. They are the conclusions a reader draws about the unsaid based on what is actually said. Inferences drawn while reading are much like inferences drawn in everyday life. Making an inference is the same thing as drawing a conclusion or making a generalization.*

## Tips for Drawing Inferences

1. Make sure your inferences rely mainly on the author's words rather than your own feelings or experience. Your goal is to read the author's mind, not invent your own message.

2. Check to see if your inference is proven wrong by any statements in the paragraph. If it is, it is not a useful inference.

3. If the passage is a difficult one, check to see if you can actually identify the statements that led you to your conclusion. This will help you test your understanding of the text. You can also remember the material better.

*examples*:

- If your mom tells you to put your rain coat on before leaving the house, you can **infer** (or make an educated guess) that it is raining outside.

- Read this sentence: He is known as the president with the beard and the black top hat who led us through the Civil War.

  You can **infer** that the president being spoken of in the sentence is Abraham Lincoln.

# Make an Inference

1) You see a woman pushing a baby stroller down the street.

2) You are at a corner and see two cars stopped at an intersection. The rear car starts honking its horn.

3) You are walking down the street, and all of a sudden a dog comes running out of an opened door with its tail between its legs.

# Make an Inference

1) You see a woman pushing a baby stroller down the street.

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For the first example, you probably came up with something simple, such as that there was a baby in the stroller. For the second, you could infer that the first car should have started moving or was waiting too long at the corner and holding up the second car. For the third, you could reasonably guess that the dog had done something wrong and was afraid of being punished. You do not know for certain that these inferences are true. Just like Sherlock Holmes, you would have to test your theories. If you checked 100 strollers, 99 times you would find a baby, but maybe one time you would find something else, like groceries.

# Practice

Hybrid cars are good for the environment, but they may not perform as well as cars that run only on gasoline. The Toyota Prius gets great gas mileage and has low emissions, making it a good "green" option. However, many people think that it is unattractive. The Prius also cannot accelerate as quickly as other models and cannot hold as many passengers as larger gas-fueled SUVs. Although they save money on fuel, hybrid cars cost more up front than gas-

fueled cars. A new hybrid car can cost almost $3,500 more than the same car configured to run just on gasoline.

Which of the following can you infer from the passage?

a) Hybrid cars are more dangerous than other options.

b) Toyota is making a lot of money from the Prius.

c) Cars that use gasoline are going to destroy the environment.
d) Hybrid cars may not be the best choice for everyone.

# And the answer is…

All four answers are about hybrid cars in some way, but none of the answers can be found directly from the text. Read through and see what hints you can find from the text. You will notice right away that there is nothing about car safety in the passage at all, so you can eliminate choice a. Choice b could be the answer, since the passage mentions that hybrids cost more to purchase. But is it the most reasonable conclusion? To be sure, you need to go through all of the answers—don't just stop when you find one that looks okay. You may think that choice c is true; after all, many people want hybrid cars because emissions are harmful to the environment. Although this choice seems accurate, it does not follow from anything in the passage. Choice d could be inferred from the text. If a person had a large family, was short on money or needed a car that could accelerate quickly, then a hybrid might not be the best choice for them. Now compare choice d with the other possible answer, choice b. Choice b might not be as good an answer because you don't know how much it costs Toyota to make the cars, and you don't know how many they sell, so you can't reasonably infer that they are making a lot of money. Choice d is the correct answer.

# Sample Question...

**Nunavut**

Nunavut is the newest Canadian territory. Iqaluit is its capital city. Nunavut, meaning "our land" in Inuktitut, is located between the Northwest Territories and Greenland. It is larger in size than Mexico, and most of its area is made up of islands. Almost all of its land lies above the Arctic Circle and is covered by snow for most of the year.

Native Canadians called Inuit have lived in the area for more than 6,000 years and make up a large part of the present population. Only about 30,000 people live in Nunavut. Because of its location, almost no farming takes place in Nunavut. Most of its people make a living in the mining and fishing industries.

The territory is home to the most northern permanent settlement in the world, called Alert. It can be found on Ellesmere Island. Alert's weather station has a permanent population of five people in winter but can grow as large as fifty people in the spring and summer months when Canadian Forces officers monitor a military signals intelligence station and researchers work at a Global Atmosphere Watch station.

**9.** Which of the following can the reader **infer** based on this article?

- A. The population of Nunavut is small because of the climate.
- B. Thirty thousand people live in the capital city of Iqaluit.
- C. Nunavut would have more people if it had more land area.
- D. Native Canadians founded Nunavut thousands of years ago.

# Sample Question...

On Friday nights in the fall, everyone in Kerryville shows up to watch the marching band. The Golden Pride Marching Band draws record crowds at the high school football games. About 5,000 people pack into the stadium each week. Attendance at the games always peaks just before halftime. People may miss the first two quarters of the game, but they don't care as long they are in their seats at halftime. After the band's performance, the stadium will only have about 200 people left. The town is proud that its band won the state championship last year.

**10.** Based on the passage, which generalization can the reader make?

○ A. Most people do not care about the football game.
○ B. Football is the most exciting sport in Kerryville.
○ C. Most high school students are bored on Friday nights.
○ D. No one on the football team likes the marching band.