

Science Skills 7

Inferring

Have you ever walked into the cafeteria, smelled chocolate chips cookies baking and thought, “We’re having cookies for desert”? You made an observation using your sense of smell and used past experience to conclude what your next desert would be. Such a conclusion is called an **inference**.

Making an inference, or inferring, is explaining or interpreting an observation or statement. Inferences should be reasonable – they must make sense.



Figure A

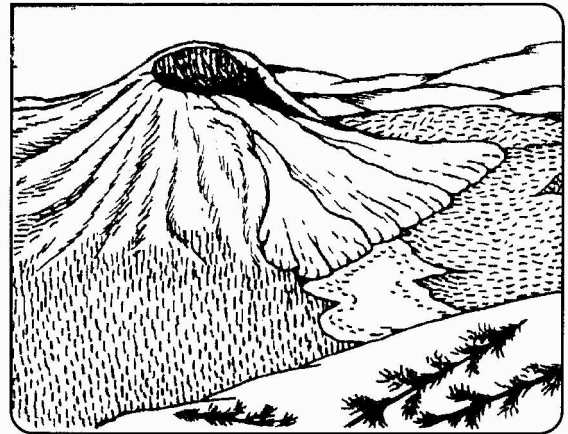


Figure B

Directions: Make 3 observations about Figure A. Write in **complete sentences**.

Directions: Observe Figure B. Make 3 observations about Figure B. Write in complete sentences.

Directions: Explain what happened to the mountain in Figure B by making an inference.

You can also make observations and inferences from readings. If you can find the information in the reading it is an observation or fact. If you can't find it directly in the reading it is an inference.

Read the stories below and determine the facts and inferences.

1. Ruth's hobby was making radio-controlled airplanes. But even more than making them, she enjoyed flying the planes. Once Ruth spent every weekend for an entire month working with her dad to build an airplane. The next Saturday Ruth decided to try out the plane. When Ruth set up the airplane for takeoff, she didn't notice the tall pine trees standing in its path.

Fact Inference

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | A. Ruth enjoys flying radio-controlled planes. |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | B. Tall trees were in the path of the plane. |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | C. The airplane crashed in the trees. |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | D. Ruth worked with her dad to build a plane. |

2. Crocodiles lay their eggs in sand. Three months later the eggs are ready to hatch. The baby crocodiles are too weak to dig out the sand around them, so they start to peep from inside their shells. Their mother, who has never strayed very far away, hears the calls and digs the eggs out.

Fact Inference

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | A. The mother stays nearby so she can hear the babies. |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | B. The babies have loud voices. |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | C. Sand protects the crocodile eggs. |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | D. The mother digs the eggs out. |

3. Have you ever thought about how keys open doors? A key is cut a special way so that it matches the pattern of its lock. Inside the lock there is a metal bar. A row of pins holds the bar in place. When the matching key is put into the lock, it raises the pins and allows the bar to move. The bar then slides out of the way and unlocks the door when the key is turned.

Fact Inference

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|--|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | A. Keys are cut a special way. |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | B. A metal bar is inside the lock. |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | C. The bar keeps the door locked. |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | D. The wrong key won't raise a lock's pins. |

