

Science Skills 8

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.

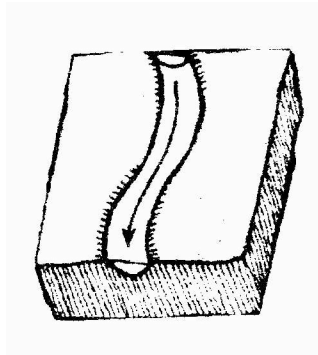


Figure A

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

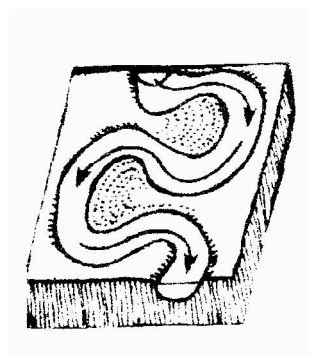


Figure B

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

Directions: Explain what happened to the river 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. Some animals make long journeys to escape cold or to find food. For example, a gray whale can travel up to 5,600 miles. Bats have been known to travel as far as 1,500 miles, and the record distance traveled by a butterfly is 4,000 miles. For toads the record is 2 miles. This may not seem like much, but that's a lot of hopping!

Fact Inference

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|--|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | A. A butterfly has traveled 4,000 miles. |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | B. Some animals travel to escape cold. |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | C. Scientists can track how far an animal travels. |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | D. Some bats have traveled 1,500 miles. |

2. Have you ever heard of a "swan song"? This saying means a farewell appearance or a final act. The saying comes from an ancient legend about swans. It was once thought that a swan would remain silent all its life. But when it was dying, it would sing out in its final minutes. This swan song would be one of great feeling and beauty.

Fact Inference

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|-----------------------|-----------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | A. Ancient people thought swans were special. |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | B. A "swan song" means a final act. |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | C. Swans were supposedly silent until near death. |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | D. The swan's final song was supposed to be very beautiful. |



3. The date was January 10, 1901. Captain Anthony Lucas had his men hard at work in the Spindletop oil field in Texas. Suddenly their equipment began to shake. Then oil gushed from the ground, shooting high into the air. Everything nearby was coated with the thick, black oil. But Lucas and his men didn't mind. They had struck oil! Spindletop soon became one of the highest-producing oil fields in the world.

Fact Inference

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|-----------------------|-----------------------|--|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | A. The Spindletop oil field was in Texas. |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | B. Captain Lucas knew a lot about oil wells. |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | C. Lucas and his men found oil. |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | D. It was exciting when the men struck oil. |