

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

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.

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

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 raincoat 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.

Question 1 .

"I can't believe Emily's going to be here!" Maria squealed with glee as she jumped up and down in her room. Her favorite singer was performing at a local theater this weekend.

The show will cost \$15, and I really want to go with all my friends, she thought. But I don't get paid until the Monday after the concert. Suddenly, Emily coming to town didn't seem so exciting after all.

Maria had been working as a cashier at the local supermarket on weekends and sometimes after school. The past few months she had been saving her paychecks to buy her father a good birthday present. Dad always complains that he never gets gifts as good as Mom's on his birthday, Maria thought.

She had asked him what he wanted and had saved up enough money to buy the cordless drill set. Maria couldn't wait to see his face when he opened the gift on his birthday, which was also Monday.

Maria decided to ask her mom for advice. "I could borrow money to pay for the concert from my savings, but then I won't be able to buy Dad's gift this weekend," she said. "I could get him something else, but what if he doesn't like it?"

"Well, honey, what do you think you should do?" her mom responded after Maria told her the problem.

"I'm not sure, Mom. Who knows when Emily will come back to town again?" she replied. "This could be my only opportunity to see her in person."

Maria's mom said, "Looks like you have a tough decision to make, but think about what your father would do if the tables were turned." She patted Maria on the shoulder before she walked out the room.

A couple of months before her birthday every year, Maria's father would always start asking questions to get an idea about what to get her. He always gets me exactly what I ask for on my birthday, she thought. Dad deserves the same special treatment.

Maria grabbed her purse and headed to the shopping center.

Which of these can be inferred from the last sentence in the passage?

- A. Maria is going to the concert and will tell her dad she forgot his birthday.
- B. Maria is on her way to buy her and her friends concert tickets.
- C. Maria is going to ask her mom to buy her dad the drill.
- D. Maria is on her way to buy her dad's birthday present.

Question 2 .

Sylvie looked at herself in the mirror and smiled at her beautiful reflection. She was wearing a lovely peach-colored gown with layers of lace and delicate frills on the hem and the neckline. She had borrowed her mom's jewelry, and she felt confident that she would be crowned "The Princess of the Year" today. The winner would get an all-expense paid trip to Hawaii. Winning this title would pave the way for her to participate in the national beauty pageant, which would be conducted later in the year. And if she won the national-level pageant too, her life would change overnight. She could roam the world, see places, stay at luxurious hotels, become rich, own penthouses in expensive cities, and enjoy and live the life of her dreams.

Thinking about her wonderful future, she waited for her turn to go on stage. She was so engrossed in her fantasy world of exotic holidays and luxurious penthouses, that when one of the participants nudged her, she realized that this was the last call for her to go on stage. In her haste, she tripped and fell. She sat up with a start and found herself alone in a dark room.

Which sentence best supports the inference that Sylvie was daydreaming?

- A. Thinking about her wonderful future, she waited for her turn to go on stage.
- B. Winning this title would pave the way for her to participate in the national beauty pageant, which would be conducted later in the year.
- C. She was so engrossed in her fantasy world of exotic holidays and luxurious penthouses, that when one of the participants nudged her, she realized that this was the last call for her to go on stage.
- D. She could roam the world, see places, stay at luxurious hotels, become rich, own penthouses in expensive cities, and enjoy and live the life of her dreams.

Question 3 .

After a morning filled with interruptions like the construction crew jack hammering outside their window, the writers were consumed by story deadlines. Everyone was typing like mad at his or her computer, trying to finish everything before the end of the day.

Suddenly, a loud burst of laughter broke their concentration. One of the sales managers was hosting a meeting with his team nearby, and their noisiness was driving the writers nuts. Along with shattering the silence, the sales team had also derailed many trains of thought.

John was so upset he just put his head down on his desk next to his keyboard. "I'll never finish with this story in time. My deadline is 5 p.m.," he said.

When the noise from the conference room quieted down, a huge sigh of relief echoed across the floor. "Finally!" John said.

Lisa shook her head in agreement, "I couldn't even hear my own thoughts."

The returned silence helped people wind down and clear their minds. The click-clack of computer keys once again filled the room as the writers resumed their work. At this rate, I may be able to make it home in time to catch my favorite shows, Lisa thought to herself.

Just as creativity began flowing freely, the sales people got loud again. Finally, one writer had enough of all the noise! She jumped up from her computer and headed toward the meeting room to have a little talk with the sales manager.

Why is John concerned about meeting his deadline?

- A. He was having a meeting with the sales manager.
- B. He was distracted by noise all morning long.
- C. He was watching television shows all day.
- D. He was making too much noise to concentrate.

Question 4 .

In 1215, King John of England was forced to give up some of his royal power with the adoption of the Magna Carta, which means “Great Charter” in Latin. The main effect of this document, which was written in Latin, was to secure the liberties of the English Church, the rights of English nobles, and to restrict abuses of royal power. It required the king to concede certain rights to the nobles. In essence, it meant the king could no longer rule by whim, such as arresting anyone for any reason, but had to respect certain legal procedures. The Great Charter gave the king’s subjects certain rights that the king could not violate.

One of the laws that the Great Charter set out was the rule of habeas corpus. This is a Latin term meaning “show me the body,” and it meant that the king or his officers had to prove that a person in their custody had broken a law and was not in jail because the king was mad at him or wanted his property.

King John had taken the throne upon King Richard’s death. King Richard was his oldest brother, and according to English property law of the time, the oldest son inherited all his father’s land. As the youngest son, John inherited no land and was known as “John Lackland.” Without land, King John could only raise money to support himself by taxing his subjects, and this made him very unpopular. He was the king that the famous Robin Hood fought against.

Which of these statements can the reader infer from this passage?

- A. John hated Richard because their father had given him all the land.
- B. When someone was jailed, jailers had to show the king the body.
- C. After 1215, King John could not make the nobles do as he wanted.
- D. After 1215, King John could steal the land from English noblemen.

Question 5 .

(1) Originally from Japan, kudzu is a vining plant first planted in the United States in the nineteenth century by southern farmers looking for a fast-growing plant that cattle and other livestock could graze. Kudzu hay has a high nutritional content compared to other types of forage. Unfortunately, the nutritional quality decreases as vine content increases relative to the leaf content. Unlike alfalfa hay, which grows like a grass, kudzu is hard to bale due to its vining growth and tendency to absorb rain.

(2) The climate of the Southeastern U.S. is perfect for growing kudzu. The vines grow as much as a foot a day during summer months, climbing trees, power poles, and anything else they contact. Under ideal conditions kudzu vines can grow 60 feet each year. Southerners joke that if you don’t close your windows at night, it’ll climb inside the house. In Japan, kudzu is kept in check by insects, but it has no natural enemies in the U.S.

(3) While they help prevent erosion, the vines can also destroy valuable forests by climbing trees and preventing them from getting sunlight. This problem has led researchers to find methods for killing kudzu. After years of research, they found that one herbicide actually makes kudzu grow better while many have little effect. Even with the most effective herbicides, it takes many years to kill the plants.

(4) Today, kudzu covers more than seven million acres of Georgia, Alabama, and South Carolina.

What can the reader infer from paragraph 3?

- A. American researchers are not very efficient.
- B. Kudzu is a hardy plant that is difficult to kill.
- C. Finding a solution to kudzu took a long time.
- D. Erosion is a big problem in southern forests.

Question 6 .

Passage 1

The Art of Making Pizza

Pizza is a scrumptious and mouthwatering dish that requires no introduction. It is one of the most popular foods around the globe today. It is a dish that can be enjoyed as a snack and can also be eaten as a family meal. While everyone knows how delicious a pizza is, not everyone is aware of the effort that goes into creating this mouthwatering piece of art.

Pizza is said to have originated in Greece. However, the Greek pizza was more like a flatbread without any topping. The modern-day pizza, on the other hand, originated in Italy. The story goes that King Umberto I and Queen Margherita were on their way to Naples after the unification of Italy in 1861. They demanded a change from their usual meals and were presented with an assortment of pizzas. The type of pizza that Queen Margherita enjoyed the most had a topping of red tomatoes, green basil, and soft white cheese. This variety of pizza thus came to be known as pizza Margherita. However, the art of pizza making was little known beyond the borders of Naples. It was only after the 1940s that pizza making spread like wildfire, and different cultures across continents adopted it, adding their own flavors to make it more appealing to the local public. Pizza evolved from a simple flatbread with a melted cheese topping to a dish with several varieties and all kinds of toppings.

Making a pizza may seem simple, but that is far from the truth. A good pizza isn't simply about kneading dough, adding toppings, and baking. To make a delicious pizza, one needs to be passionate about the process involved in creating it. One of the key factors in creating a delicious pizza is to use fresh ingredients. Pizza toppings should be farm fresh and tasty. No compromises should be made with the ingredients, especially the cheese. Cheese is what gives pizza its essential flavor, and only the best quality cheese should be used. The next important factor is the pizza dough, which needs to be at the right temperature and of the right quantity, and flattened correctly to make a smooth and even layer. The final and most important part of creating the perfect pizza is baking it at the right temperature. The result, if all goes well, is a perfectly cooked base topped with delicious melted cheese and a garnished with a choice of ingredients. Ultimately, whether pizza is a thin crust, deep dish, or the New York slice, its history and the art of creating it remain marvelous.

Passage 2

Consumption of Pizza Should Be Reduced

There is perhaps no other dish that delights people as much as pizza. Pizza has the reputation of being considered one of the most satisfying foods around the world. There is no

proper count to the varieties of pizza available in the world today, but it surely surpasses any other fast food. But have you ever stopped to think about the health effects of consuming pizza on a daily basis? Pizza definitely cannot be categorized as a "healthy food," yet the consumption rate of pizzas is startling. For example, 4% of pizza consumed by children in the United States is during breakfast time. Having pizza for breakfast, which is ideally the healthiest meal of the day, can only have a negative impact on the health of children. The amount of calories that children consume through pizzas is staggering, and can lead to numerous health problems. Even though children's calorie intake through pizzas has reduced considerably between 2003 and 2010, it still leads to obesity, gastrointestinal difficulties, and other health problems among children aged between 2 and 19.

According to government policy in the United States, all school meals must contain some vegetables. In 2011, the amount of tomato sauce used on pizza was enough for it to be considered a "vegetable" by the United States Government. This fact is not only absurd, but also makes something as unhealthy as pizza easily available to children in school cafeterias.

There are several reasons to avoid eating pizzas. One major reason is the increase in blood cholesterol levels that makes people prone to heart disease. This is due to the calorie and sodium content in pizza. Saturated fats in pizza cause blockages in arteries that can lead to heart attacks. Adolescents absorb an extra 230 calories, 5 grams of saturated fat, and 484 milligrams of sodium on days when they eat a pizza. These figures indicate a much higher level of intake than what is required by our body on a daily basis. This in itself is an indication that pizzas should be avoided as much as possible.

The point that nothing good comes out of eating pizzas cannot be stressed enough. Farm fresh ingredients, the best quality cheese, and the most delicious meats cannot hide the fact that pizzas ultimately do more harm than good to a person's health. A snack like pizza can never be completely removed from the diet. But through conscious effort, pizza consumption can surely be reduced considerably.

What inference can be drawn from "The Art of Pizza Making" that cannot be found in "Consumption of Pizza Should be Reduced"?

- A. Pizza is one of the most widely consumed foods all across the globe.
- B. People use a number of unhealthy ingredients to make the pizza delicious.
- C. Pizza is more appealing to children and teenagers than adults.
- D. Making a pizza requires a lot of effort, passion, and precision.

Answers

1. D
2. C
3. B
4. C
5. B
6. D

Explanations

1. The story says Maria wants to get her dad something good for his birthday because he always gives her good presents. She is going to the shopping center to buy her dad's drill set.
2. While waiting for her turn to step on the stage, Sylvie had to be nudged by her friend, which shows that she was daydreaming.
3. John and the other writers are in a rush to finish their work because noise has been breaking their concentration all morning long. Notice how annoyed John is when he hears the noise from the conference room.
4. First, King John "was forced" to give up some of his power by agreeing to the Great Charter. Second, without land of his own, he could only support himself through taxes. These two facts allow the reader to infer that King John was not powerful enough to make the English noblemen do as he wanted.
5. Look to details in the text to support your inferences. Any plant that takes many years to kill despite repeated use of poison must be a hardy plant.
6. "The Art of Pizza Making" provides details about the importance of using the right ingredients and the precision required to make the perfect pizza. The passage highlights the passion and effort that goes into making pizza. On the other hand, "Consumption of Pizza Should be Reduced" does not mention the effort taken to make pizza, and only focuses on the nutritional value of the dish.