



Lesson 4: Inferences and Conclusions

Authors provide a lot of information for their readers. This may come in the form of **explicit information**, which is information that is stated directly. For example, an author may include this sentence in a story: "Devon is lazy."

However, sometimes authors trust that readers will figure out certain things on their own. **Implicit information** is understood even though it is not directly stated. For example, instead of describing Devon as lazy, the author may write, "Devon never does his chores because he is too busy watching TV." The reader understands that Devon is lazy without the author stating it.

Read the following passage. It will help you understand the tips in this lesson.

Zack and Jess had been close friends since kindergarten. They hung out together, had the same friends, and liked the same music. Every day at school, they stopped in the hallway to talk to each other before fifth period. One day, Zack waited for Jess by her locker, but she didn't come by.

The break was almost over, and Zack knew he'd be late if he waited any longer. He shrugged to himself and then headed to his class. About halfway down the hall, he saw Jess rushing to her class. Zack called, "Jess! What's up?" Jess gave Zack a dirty look and then disappeared into her classroom.



TIP 1: Pay attention to information and details stated directly in the passage.

Most of the time, authors tell you everything you need to know directly in the passage. Many questions on tests will ask you about events or information that stated explicitly in the text. So if you read a passage carefully, you can answer most questions. You can always go back to the passage to look for the answer if you need to.

Try the following questions.

1. In the passage, Zack waited for Jess
 - A. by his locker.
 - B. by her locker.
 - C. in the lunch room.
 - D. in the schoolyard.

2. What did Jess do when she saw Zack?

3. Write one thing that Zack and Jess have in common.

Back to Zack and Jess . . .

Since getting that dirty look, Zack had been hurt and confused. He couldn't think about anything else. So after class, instead of going to team practice, he put his helmet and pads back in the locker and went outside to wait for Jess. He had to talk to her. While he was waiting, he hardly noticed anyone who walked by because he was so busy thinking, *What did I do? What did I say?*

Then, Jess came out with her friends Sam and Nicole. Jess was laughing and seemed to be in a good mood. Zack felt a sense of relief. Maybe the dirty look was just his imagination. He walked up to Jess and grinned. "Hey, Jess."

As soon as she saw him, Jess stopped laughing. She gave Zack an icy stare and turned to walk away. Sam and Nicole gave Zack dirty looks and turned to follow Jess. Zack began to wonder if the whole world hated him.

Zack felt as if he stepped into a parallel universe where everyone was crazy. "Wait, Jess!"

He ran after Jess and grabbed her arm. Jess nodded at Sam and Nicole and they walked away, giving Zack another dirty look over their shoulders.

"You can let go of my arm now, thanks," Jess said.

"All right, I must have screwed up big time," Zack said. "I'm truly sorry, and I promise never to do it again. But you have to tell me what I did, because I don't have a clue."

Jess rolled her eyes and said, "Look, I don't want you to apologize if you can't even recognize what you did wrong."

"Then tell me!" Zack demanded with growing frustration. Then, more softly, "Please, Jess. You're my best friend. We can talk this out."

Jess sighed and led Zack to a bench, where they sat to talk. "You really don't know, do you? Yesterday, as we were walking home from school together, you asked me what I wanted to be when I get older, remember? What did I say?"

"An astronaut," Zack answers.

"Right. I told you how thrilling it would be to fly into outer space, look down on Earth from the space shuttle, even work on the space station. I mean, this is a serious dream of mine, and I would give almost anything to be an astronaut one day. And after I told you this, do you remember what you said?"

Zack bowed his head. He did remember, and, suddenly, he understood.

"What did you say, Zack?" Jess persisted.

Zack sighed. "I said it takes a lot of brains and dedication to get accepted into the astronaut program and that I didn't think you were cut out for it."

"And?"

Zack couldn't meet Jess's eyes. "Then, I said you'd be a great astronaut."

Jess nodded angrily. "That's right. And then you laughed. So thanks a lot, Zack."

"Jess, I am so sorry. It was a bad joke. You're 100 times smarter than I am. And when you're an astronaut, I'm going to be right there cheering for you when you lift off into outer space. If you'll let me . . ."

Jess smiled, knowing that Zack was sincere. "I'll think about it. See you at lunch."



TIP 2: Make inferences as you read.

An inference is an educated guess you make using details and evidence in a passage. It is based on implicit information in the text. Making inferences is an important reading skill. It requires you to look below the surface of a reading passage. Use the passage about Zack and Jess to answer the following question.

4. How did Jess most likely feel when she saw Zack in the hallway?

- A. angry
- B. playful
- C. happy
- D. scared

Even without reading the rest of the story, you can figure out that Jess was probably angry. This is an inference based on her actions. She didn't meet him as usual and she gave him a dirty look.

Now try Number 5.

5. Why did Sam and Nicole give Zack dirty looks?
- A. Zack made fun of their future plans, too.
 - B. They do not like how he approached them.
 - C. They always do whatever Jess does.
 - D. Jess told them why she is mad at Zack.

Eliminate the wrong answers one at a time. The passage does not suggest that Sam and Nicole do whatever Jess does. Zack went up to them in a friendly way with a grin on his face, so how he approached them is not the issue. It is not likely that Zack happened to make fun of their future plans, too. The most logical inference is that Jess told Sam and Nicole why she is angry at Zack. They are angry on her behalf.



TIP 3: Use prior knowledge to make inferences.

Prior knowledge is the collection of what you already know, based on your own education and experiences. For example, if you smell smoke and hear sirens, you might infer that there is a fire, and you'd probably be right. Your prior knowledge can help you make inferences when you read. Use prior knowledge to answer Number 6.

6. What school team does Zack play on?
- A. soccer
 - B. basketball
 - C. football
 - D. swim

The passage says that Zack uses a helmet and pads on the team. Think about what equipment each of the sports in the answer choices requires. Only one sport uses helmets and pads.

**TIP 4: Use evidence from the passage to support your answers.**

Although inferences are based on implicit information, a passage has clues that point you in the right direction. You know that the answer to Number 4 is “angry” because the passage tells you that Jess gives Zack a dirty look. This is the textual evidence that supports your inference. Questions that test explicit information in the passage will also have textual support. Try Numbers 7 and 8.

7. What is the main reason that Jess is angry at Zack?
 - A. He doesn't think being an astronaut is a good job.
 - B. He made fun of her desire to be an astronaut.
 - C. He left her waiting by the lockers.
 - D. He never takes anything seriously.

8. Underline details in the passage that support your answer to Number 7.

The correct answer must be supported by the text. Let's test each answer against the passage to see how it holds up. The easiest answer to eliminate is Choice C. The first paragraph states that Jess left Zack waiting by the lockers, not the other way around. This answer choice contradicts events in the passage.

Now look at Choice D. This is a tempting choice because we know that Jess's anger at Zack involves a joke. However, this answer choice points to a general pattern of behavior, not a specific incident. Zack does make a joke, but that does not mean that he does not take *anything* seriously. There is no clear support for this answer. Let's consider the last two choices.

Choices A and B both use the word *astronaut*. Jess and Zack's conversation at the end of the passage reveals that Jess is, indeed, angry because of something to do with her wanting to be an astronaut. But these two answer choices say different things, and only one of them is right. Choice A says that Zack does not think being an astronaut is a good job. However, in the passage, Zack says that “it takes a lot of brains and dedication to get accepted into the astronaut program.” This suggests that Zack thinks it is a difficult field to get into. This is not the same as saying it is not a good job.

In the passage, Jess reminds Zack that he told her she was not cut out to be an astronaut, called her an “astronut,” and laughed. This is textual support for Choice B. Jess is mad at Zack because he made fun of her desire to be an astronaut.


TIP 5: Draw conclusions based on evidence in the passage.

A **conclusion** is a final decision you make when you put all of the evidence together, including details, prior knowledge, and inferences you have already made. You make conclusions in real life all the time. For instance, imagine that there is a student in your school who pushes other kids around. He starts fights in the lunch room, acts out in class, and spends more time in the principal's office than the principal. What conclusion can you draw from this? Based on the evidence, you can conclude that this student is a troublemaker.

You also draw conclusions when you read. Like inferences, you need to support conclusions with evidence from the passage.

Now, answer another question about the passage.

9. Based on the passage, what can you conclude about Jess?
- A. She does not have many friends.
 - B. She has a sense of adventure.
 - C. She does not really like Zack.
 - D. She cannot be reasoned with.

As when making an inference, drawing this conclusion will require that you read between the lines. You need to support your conclusions with details from the passage.

10. What evidence from the passage supports your answer to Number 9?

Sometimes authors explicitly state their conclusions in their texts. This is more commonly seen in nonfiction passages like history books and news articles. Imagine that an author writes an editorial about a politician. She presents evidence that the politician cheated on his taxes, accepted bribes, and broke several campaign promises. The author concludes that the politician is unfit for office. By providing evidence, she has made a strong conclusion that her readers will understand.



TIP 6: Make predictions based on events and details in the passage.

A **prediction** is an educated guess about what will happen in the future. Meteorologists predict the weather using scientific instruments. But in most cases, predictions have little to do with science. As with inferences, you often make predictions based on prior knowledge. For instance, you know your mom loves a certain TV show. She records it every week without fail. Your brother erases the show from the DVR to make room for his own recording. You can safely predict that your mom is going to be mad.

In the same way, you can make predictions of what will happen in passages. Read the following paragraph.

Deshawn was the best student in history class. He had an amazing ability to remember facts and events. He was also very good at interpreting history and looking at it from different perspectives. Unfortunately, Deshawn was just as bad in math as he was good in history. The highest he had ever scored on a math test was a "C," and that's because he studied for days. At the end of the school year, his teacher announced that the final math test would cover everything the class had learned so far. Deshawn groaned. As the date of the math test grew closer, Deshawn found other things to do besides study. He never even opened his math book. On the day of the test, Deshawn settled into his seat, hoping he'd get lucky.

11. Make a prediction based on this passage, and explain how the passage supports it.

Try this last question based on the passage you read earlier.

12. What will most likely happen to Zack and Jess at the end of the story?
- A. Zack and Jess will both become astronauts.
 - B. Zack will make more jokes about Jess's goals.
 - C. Zack and Jess will never talk to each other again.
 - D. Zack and Jess will be good friends again.



LESSON PRACTICE BEGINS ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE.

Directions: This passage is about a special group of servicemen and the secret code they used. Read the passage. Then answer Numbers 1 through 11.

Navajo Code-Talkers

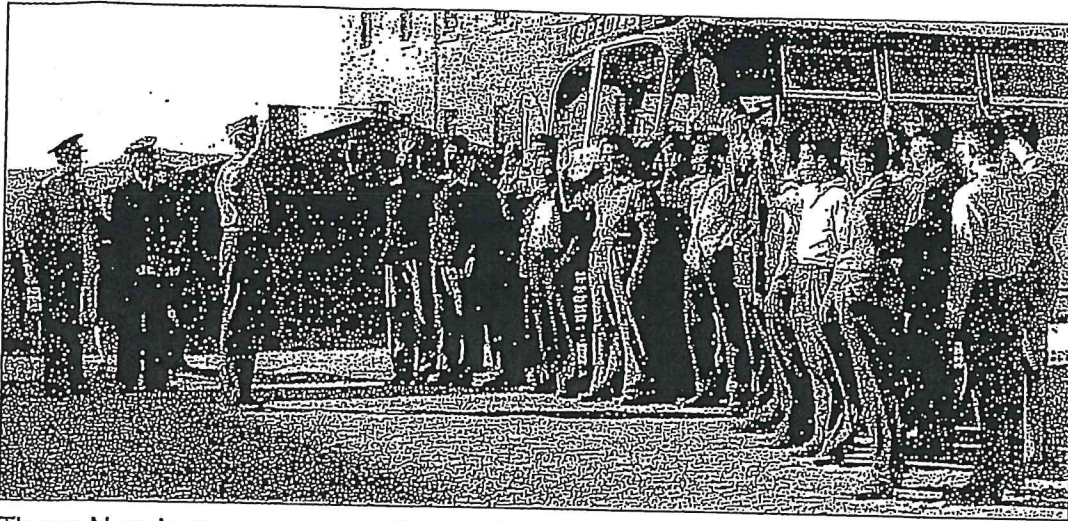
by Madeleine LaTour

When the United States joined the Allied forces in World War II, military commanders knew they would have major communication problems. Their military would have to fight over a huge area as they approached Japan. Along the way, they would need to engage the enemy on hundreds of islands in the South Pacific. The islands covered many thousands of square miles. The military would need to communicate battle plans between ships, planes, and people fighting on the islands. How could they do this without the Japanese hearing their messages?

A private citizen named Philip Johnston came up with the solution. Johnston's parents had been missionaries on the Navajo reservations in Arizona and New Mexico. As a child, Johnston had learned to speak Navajo. He knew that the language was strictly oral. This meant that it had never been written down. He also knew that not many people could speak it. At the time, only members of the Navajo tribe and about 40 others knew Navajo.

The United States Marines were responsible for the nation's military efforts at sea. Johnston convinced the marines to use Navajos as code-talkers. All messages sent by radio or wire would be given by a Navajo marine. On the other end of the line, another Navajo marine would listen. He would then translate the message into English.

More than 400 Navajo men were recruited into this top-secret project. After the men joined, they were trained in California and sent directly into battle. These men had to create and learn many new words to complete the code. Most of the new words were for military terms because there were no such words in Navajo. So, even if someone spoke Navajo, he could not understand the messages without knowing the code.



These Navajo men were recruited to the marines.

Johnston's plan worked better than expected. Some of the island-hopping battles are now a part of military history, including Guadalcanal, Saipan, and Iwo Jima. Many lives were lost in these battles with Japanese forces. But America's military saw victory after victory on these islands, due in part to the Navajos' clever communication system.

Before the war, the Navajo Nation had a bitter history with the U.S. government. Like many other Native American tribes, the Navajos lost land and were forced onto reservations by the federal government. The government even tried to stop the Navajos from speaking their native language. "When I was going to boarding school," said one code-talker, "the U.S. government told us not to speak Navajo, but during the war, they wanted us to speak it."

The code-talking patriots served their country with distinction. But when they returned home from war, they faced the same unjust treatment that Native Americans commonly suffered during that time. The top-secret Navajo code couldn't be revealed to the public until 1969. So no one knew how important their role had been in fighting and winning the war.

Eventually, the code-talkers were recognized as American heroes. David Patterson, of the 4th Marine Division, expressed his pride in this way: "When I was inducted, I was willing to die for my country, the U.S.; the Navajo Nation; and my family. My language was my weapon."

In 2001, President George W. Bush awarded Congressional Gold and Silver Medals of Honor to Navajo code-talkers for their service to their country. "Today," he said, "we give these exceptional marines the recognition they earned so long ago."

1. According to the passage, what was the major cause of difficulties in communication during World War II?

- A. the distances between U.S. military locations
- B. the language barriers among Allied forces
- C. the absence of telephone wires
- D. the poor quality of radios

2. Read the following sentence from the passage.

“When I was inducted, I was willing to die for my country, the U.S.; the Navajo Nation; and my family.”

What does the word *inducted* most likely mean?

- A. had influence with someone
- B. introduced to something
- C. became a member of a group
- D. removed someone from office

3. Which reason best explains why the Navajo language was a good choice for code-talking?

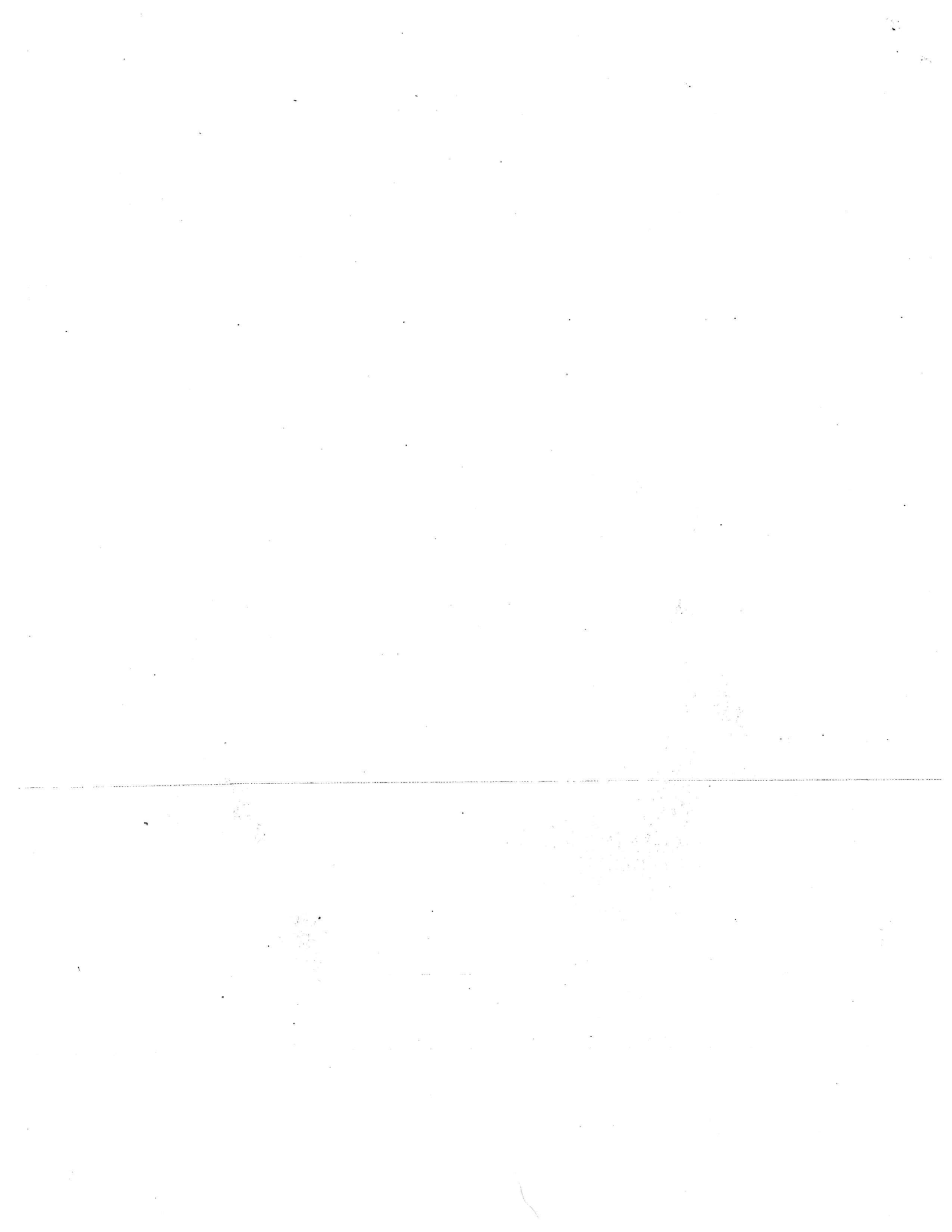
- A. Military terms were easily translated in it.
- B. The language was only spoken, not written.
- C. Most Americans were unfamiliar with it.
- D. Non-Navajos picked up the language quickly.

Unit 1 - Reading

4. Why did the Navajo Nation have a bitter relationship with the U.S. government before World War II?
- A. They were put onto reservations and forced to stop speaking Navajo.
 - B. The Navajo code-talking project was top secret until 1969.
 - C. They were not given the awards they deserved until 2001.
 - D. The U.S. government had tried to keep the Navajo from learning English.
5. Which inference about the Navajo language is best supported by the passage?
- A. It is almost identical to every other Native American language.
 - B. Code-talkers had trouble learning the Navajo language.
 - C. Code-talkers preferred to speak English instead.
 - D. The Navajo language does not have words for some modern terms.
6. Write the details from the passage that best support the conclusion that Navajo code-talkers performed a great service for their country.

7. How were the Navajo code-talkers treated by U.S. society immediately after the war?
- A. respectfully
 - B. neutrally
 - C. unfairly
 - D. kindly
8. Based on the passage, the reader can conclude that David Patterson
- A. does not think that Navajo code-talkers helped win the war.
 - B. is glad he was selected to be a Navajo code-talker.
 - C. created most of the new words used in the Navajo code.
 - D. is bitter due to the treatment he received after the war.
9. What is the most likely reason that the Navajo code was not revealed until nearly twenty-five years after World War II ended?
- A. The government was sure no one would believe it existed.
 - B. Navajo code-talkers asked the military to keep it a secret.
 - C. The U.S. government did not want to give the Navajo credit.
 - D. It was so valuable a code, the military might use it again.
10. What is this passage mostly about?
- A. the Navajos' bitter history with the U.S. government
 - B. the unique qualities of the Navajo language
 - C. how the Navajo code-talkers' role was kept a secret
 - D. the Navajo code-talkers' role in helping win World War II

11. Before World War II, why did the U.S. most likely try to stop Navajos from speaking their own language? Support your response.



Focus Lessons

Lesson 11: Making Inferences

Writers of fiction and nonfiction convey many facts directly. However, they convey other concepts or ideas indirectly, hinting at these ideas but not actually stating them. As readers, we are constantly using clues in the passage to **infer**, or guess, ideas. When we encounter an unfamiliar vocabulary word, we often use context clues to infer its meaning. We may also infer ideas in the passage that are implied, not directly stated. This process is called **making inferences**.

DIRECTIONS: *Read the following passage about Mikhail Baryshnikov and answer the questions that follow it. These questions will ask you to draw inferences.*

- 1 Mikhail Nikolayevich Baryshnikov is considered one of the world's greatest living male ballet performers. Born in Latvia in 1948, he now lives in the United States.
- 2 Baryshnikov first revealed his gift for dance when he auditioned for the Riga Dance School in Riga, Latvia (at that time a part of the U.S.S.R.). He was accepted into the program in 1960, and soon his talent began to attract attention. While on tour with the Riga dance troupe, he was spotted by Alexander Pushkin, an instructor at the famous Vaganova School. Pushkin was so impressed that he invited Baryshnikov to be his student. It was during a student performance at Vaganova that he made his dancing debut on the Kirov stage. One year later, Baryshnikov took professional status when he joined the Kirov Ballet.
- 3 Baryshnikov's physical mastery of the dance, combined with his commanding stage presence, soon won him the position as principal dancer with the Kirov. With this troupe, he danced in a range of ballets, from classical to more recently choreographed pieces, and won great critical acclaim.
- 4 In 1974, Baryshnikov left Russia to tour Canada with the Bolshoi Ballet. It was during this tour that he defected to the West. By defecting, Baryshnikov abandoned his citizenship in Russia and sought political asylum in Canada. He later sought American citizenship, leaving his homeland for good.
- 5 In America, Baryshnikov danced with the American Ballet Theatre and the New York City Ballet. He took advantage of his newfound freedom to experiment creatively, moving his career in many new directions. In 1977, he received an Oscar nomination for his acting performance in the American motion picture *The Turning Point*. He successfully tried his hand at choreography, as well. In 1980, Baryshnikov became the director of the American Ballet Theatre, a position he held until 1989. In 1990, he teamed with Mark Morris, an American choreographer, to create the White Oak Dance Project, a dance company that focuses on modern dance. Since then, he has also marketed a line of dancewear.

Lesson 1 : Making Inferences

Students of all levels and abilities can benefit from this activity. It works best when students are given a choice of reading materials. This activity can be used as a formative assessment or as a summative assessment. It can be used as a formative assessment or as a summative assessment. It can be used as a formative assessment or as a summative assessment.

OBJECTIVE: Read the following passage about William Shakespeare and answer the questions that follow. These questions will ask you to draw inferences.

William Shakespeare is considered one of the world's greatest writers and his plays are still performed today. He was born in 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon, England. He is best known for his plays and his sonnets. He is also known for his poetry and his history plays. He is considered one of the greatest writers of all time. He is also known for his plays and his sonnets. He is also known for his poetry and his history plays. He is considered one of the greatest writers of all time.

Shakespeare's plays are still performed today. He was born in 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon, England. He is best known for his plays and his sonnets. He is also known for his poetry and his history plays. He is considered one of the greatest writers of all time. He is also known for his plays and his sonnets. He is also known for his poetry and his history plays. He is considered one of the greatest writers of all time.

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Focus Lessons

6 At a time when most talented ballet dancers in America remain relatively unknown to the public, Mikhail Baryshnikov has stood out as an exception. His life proves that one can be both a serious dancer and a mainstream star.

1. What facts in the passage suggest that Baryshnikov's mastery of ballet comes from a special talent and not from training alone? Explain.

2. How did Baryshnikov's move to the West affect his career? Identify the facts that led you to make this inference and explain your answer.

3. Based on the facts in the passage, identify two things that would help explain Baryshnikov's immense popularity in the United States. Explain why you can come to this conclusion.



For more information on making inferences, see *Glencoe Literature, Course 2*, pp. 159, 469, 833, and R89.

Lesson 4: Inferences and Conclusions (Answer Key)

1. "B"
2. She gives him a dirty look and walks away.
3. They have the same friends; they like the same music
4. "A"
5. "D"
6. "C"
7. "B"
8. The details that support "B" as the answer to question #7 are: Zach told her she was not cut out to be an astronaut, called her an "astronut," and he laughed at her.
9. "B"
10. She describes the thrill of going to space, seeing Earth from the space shuttle, and working at the space station.
11. Deshawn will fail the test. He is terrible at math, and did not study for the exam.
12. "D"

Navajo Code-Talkers

1. "A"
2. "C"
3. "B"
4. "A"
5. "D"
6. Details: The U. S. Military was in a bad situation when the code-talkers were recruited. The U.S. had lost many battles, but the code-talkers helped the U.S. become victorious by developing and using a difficult code. Their language was used as a secret weapon.
7. "C"
8. "B"
9. "D"
10. "D"
11. Preventing the Navajo from speaking their own language was another way to erase their culture and force them to adopt the language and customs of other Americans.

Focus Lesson 11: Making Inferences *Mikhail Baryshnikov*

1. Paragraph 2 states that he had a "gift for dance" and that his talent attracted special attention. He was invited to attend the Vaganova School and quickly took professional status. Paragraph 3 states that he had a "commanding stage presence" and that his talent quickly propelled him to a principal position within the Karov Ballet. These things suggest it was more than training that made him stand out.
2. His move to the West expanded and improved his career. Paragraph 5 states that he was able to explore other types of performance, including acting and modern dance.
3. He was willing to explore the many facets of his talent, and that his acting, dancing, choreography, and appealing stage presence made him a star in the United States.

