REFERENCE GUIDE

ONLINE READING COMPREHENSION LAB

https://owl.excelsior.edu/orc

Excelsior Online Writing Lab

Inferencing

Inferencing:

A **conclusion** reached based on **evidence** and **reasoning**.

Inferencing as You Read = Reading between the Lines

1. Infer details
2. Infer the main idea

When to Infer the Main Idea:

🙁 The main idea is not clearly stated

❓ The text begins with a question

Vs. The text compares and contrasts two or more things

= Each sentence in the paragraph contains equally specific information

😝 The text is satirical or the author's tone is ironic

We make inferences every day.

When we are with someone, we might infer what they are thinking or feeling based on what they say or do.

In a text message or email, we often infer what someone means based on what they write.

How to Infer the Main Idea:

1. Observe signposts like abstracts, titles, headings and subheadings, transitions, and summaries
2. Identify key words that are repeated or referred to by other words (pronouns, substitutes, and associated words)
3. Find a major sentence that almost states the main idea and add a word or phrase to it
4. Combine two or more key sentences into one sentence
5. Summarize all the sentences into one sentence
6. Observe the author's attitude or tone

In new situations we infer what's going on by interpreting clues around us.

You can check whether your inference is logical or not by asking these questions:

- Is it based on words and sentences in the text?
- Is it based more on the author's words than on your point of view?
- Does it manage to avoid contradicting other statements made in the text?
- Does it comply with the author's attitude or tone about the topic?
- Could it function as the thesis or topic sentence?

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