

Inference Strategy

Crash Course

The Inference Strategy is best described as looking for clues so that you can make your best guess in order to answer questions posed by yourself or others. You begin by previewing the passage to get the gist of what it's about. If there are questions associated with the passage, you read them and recall what you already know about the information. You also notice what kinds of questions are being asked. If there are no questions associated with the passage, you pose your own questions. Then you read the passage, looking for clues to the answers to the questions. When you find one clue, you look for additional supporting evidence. Once you have decided on your best guess, you answer the question. The strategy is helpful because the reader focuses first on the questions to give him/herself a reason for reading. Second, it helps students become active detectives while they are reading and to base their answers on information in the passage. Active minds focus better while reading, thus improving understanding and retention of information. The steps of the strategy are as follows:

- **Interact with the questions and the passage.**
 - ✓ Preview the title and the passage to get the gist of what it's about.
 - ✓ Read the questions at the end of the passage, or pose your own questions.
- **Note what you know.**
 - ✓ Decide the type of question, and mark a code letter next to it.
 - ✓ Think about what you already know about the topic of the question.
- **Find the clues.**
 - ✓ Read the passage.
 - ✓ Look for clues to answers of the questions.
- **Explore any supporting details.**
 - ✓ Continue reading the passage.
 - ✓ Look for additional clues that support the original clue you found.
- **Return to the question.**
 - ✓ Read the question and all the answers provided, or repose your own question.
 - ✓ Based on all the clues you've gathered, answer the question.

As you are reading the passage, work through the steps and then recycle.

When there are no questions associated with the passage, good questions and answers should meet these requirements:

- ✓ Must be useful. (The information is important to remember.)
- ✓ Must be a complete statement that includes a subject and a verb.
- ✓ Must be accurate. That is, only include information that is related to the information you have read.
- ✓ Must relate to the clues in the passage.
- ✓ Must make sense.
- ✓ Must be put in your own words. Don't repeat the same words as in the passage.