KEY into inference

SAMPLE GUIDE & ANSWERS PAGES

The following sample pages are from the Guide & Answers Book that accompanies the copymaster book. Answers for the Copymaster samples can be found on pages 10 - 12. Copyright prohibits these sample pages being copied and distributed for purposes other than to help ascertain the value of purchasing the complete resource.

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ANSWERS & KEY WORDS
specifically compiled for copymaster sample pages

WHAT IS INFERENCE?

Inference is understanding implicit information. It is fundamental to understanding most written texts. It requires the reader to unravel the *implied meaning* of words.

Because they are easy to formulate, literal questions are the type of question most frequently asked of younger students. Indeed, students have become so used to literal questions that one researcher found that,

"many children were surprised to learn that it was okay to give answers not explicitly stated in the text." ①

Inference is needed, to comprehend newspaper headlines and stories, magazine articles, virtually all fiction writing, advertisements and descriptive writing. Although not so prominent in expository prose, inference appears, even in scientific texts.

As well as creating images and ideas which can be readily comprehended, the writer is also charged with the task of engaging and retaining the interest of the reader. To do this, figurative and inferential language is often used. Although this is more marked in fiction writing, non-fiction writers frequently infer information to save the space required for lengthy explanations , or use figurative language to emphasise a point.

Compare these two sentences:

'The teak trees are felled with chainsaws, creating gaps in the forest.'

'With a relentless roar, the metal teeth rip through the ancient giants of the forest, which take many of their smaller cousins with them in their death throes.'

The first sentence the presentation of information is explicit (literal).

In the second sentence much of the meaning is implicit (inferential). The reader has to pick up cue words such as *forest* and *metal teeth* and use acquired knowledge to interpret the meaning of the figurative use of language, such as 'smaller cousins' and 'death throes',used to make a polemical point.

The ability to understand implied information impacts on other areas of comprehension, including finding the meaning of unknown words and phrases from context and evaluating information. The meaning of unknown words and phrases can often be gleaned by picking up clues from the preceding or following words.

In addition to improving students' overall comprehension ability, understanding inference also increases awareness of literature in general and can be used to develop the depth and quality of students' own written language.

① Pearson, P.D., *Four Essential Changes in Comprehension Instruction*, unpublished manuscript, 1981, p.9

KEY into inference

Inferring meaning requires the reader to draw into focus the clues (**key** words and phrases) provided in the text. Not all students, even those who are demonstrably capable at decoding, are able to do this.

When it has been established by an assessment of reading comprehension that students are experiencing difficulty in their ability to infer, the task of teaching can begin.

Key into inference has been written in direct response to a need identified by comprehension testing results and in response to the knowledge that the teaching of any category of comprehension, though necessary, is difficult.

Key into inference is designed to assist the classroom teacher to address the complex problem of teaching comprehension, specifically inference.

Key into inference is designed to be used with a whole class, groups or individuals.

Key into inference's structure enables the students to begin with simple, single inferences contained in a sentence and to progress to paragraphs and complete texts, such as they would have to deal with in regular classroom or study situations.

Sentences enable the students to gain confidence, and to see how inference is translated to literal. By connecting the clues they can begin to see the pattern of inferred meaning.

Paragraphs bridge the gap between sentences and complete texts. They allow the consolidation of skills and the opportunity to increase confidence by handling more than one inferential concept within a single piece of writing.

Texts provide the opportunity to apply these skills to a complete narrative or topic.

KEY into inference - QUESTION DESIGN

The aim of the questions in **KEY into inference** is to provide practise in the skills needed to identify and understand inference.

For this reason the questions have been carefully worded to ensure that they are clear, easily understood, with no ambiguity which could confuse or mislead students.

Most of the questions in **KEY into inference** are *open questions* requiring other than a yes/no answer.

a. Jane pushed the button and waited for the lights to change.

Where was Jane?

b. Anne's plate was empty again, but this time she really couldn't eat any more.

Why could Anne not eat any more?

Closed questions (i.e. questions requiring a *yes*/*no* answer) are used where this is the clearest way of eliciting a response.

Whenever a closed question is used, it is followed by a supplementary question (*How do you know that?*) designed to elicit text-supported reasons for the response.

c. Ralph was usually a quiet dog.

Did Ralph bark often? How do you know that?

d. Mandy lay in the bath until the water was cold.

Was Mandy in the bath for a long time ? How do you know that?

KEY into inference - PREPARING TO USE

KEY into inference is designed to be user-friendly for both students and teachers. With its graded levels, model sentences and variety of material, the resource is very flexible, allowing for a range of approaches to the way it is used. The following are *suggestions only* and users should feel free to use the material in ways which best meet the needs of their students.

WHERE IN THE READING PROGRAM IT CAN BE USED

♦ **KEY into inference** can be used as part of the **guided reading** program.

♦ As the practise examples are photo-copiable, it can readily be used with **individuals, small groups and a whole class**.

STUDENTS WHO WILL BENEFIT

♦ **KEY into inference** is primarily designed for students who have a **decoding age*** of at least eight - nine years.

♦ Experience has proven that there are many students who can successfully decode above their chronological age, but this is not matched by their comprehension ability.

♦ Even those who comprehend well can improve their ability to infer using **KEY into inference**

♦ This material is also suitable for adult students and for ESL students.

DETERMINING A STARTING POINT

♦ Ideally the reading age* of students using **KEY into inference** will be known before starting.

♦ **KEY into inference** aims at increasing students' reading skills, therefore the reading material being used should provide a challenge but should not be too difficult.

♦ To ensure that the material is within the reader's 'comfort zone', it is **recommended** that students begin at a level BELOW their current **decoding age.***

♦ **KEY into inference** has three levels to maximise the choices available to users. It is expected that those using the material will use their own knowledge and experience in deciding the most appropriate starting point.

*A NOTE ON READING/DECODING AGES

'Reading age' is a widely used and often debated term, but its meaning, as it is used in **KEY into inference** needs a brief word of explanation.

♦ Where decoding <u>only</u> has been measured, the term *decoding age* is used.

♦ The term *reading age* is preferred to describe the combination of comprehension <u>and</u> decoding level (as measured, for example, by the **PROBE Reading Assessment**).

♦ There are students whose measured ability to comprehend text is higher than their decoding level, which can be referred to as a *comprehension age.*

Before using this material it is advisable to read through all the information that precedes this section as well as familiarising yourself with the material in the book of copymasters.

IT IS NOT A TEST

♦ Make sure the students know that this is about understanding inference - it is NOT A TEST.

IMPORTANT POINTS

♦ For maximum results give as much guidance and assistance as possible.

♦ Some students will go faster than others. Don't penalise the slower students - they may need more time, or practice, to understand the concepts.

♦ The material is flexible. Customise your use of the material. Not all examples need to be used. When the students are competent, move on. It is not always necessary to proceed sequentially. You can move up (to extend) or down a level (to review/reinforce a concept).

♦ The model sentences can be worked orally to stimulate discussion and inferential thinking. has been provided between questions for written answers. Remember that this is a reading resource, so care should be taken to ensure that only the answer is assessed, not spelling, grammar etc.

♦ Answers to inferential questions are not absolute. Answers given in this book are based on the **writer's intent**; that is what the writer most likely intended.

SUGGESTED INTRODUCTION

DEFINE INFERENCE
as... *information implied (suggested) but not given directly in the text.*
There are key words that can be found to help unravel the message.

CLARIFY the definition with some examples - from newspapers, magazines, books etc.
Point out the key words.

EXPLAIN why writers use inference rather than always being literal -
they don't always state the obvious because it is unnecessary or repetitive, and because it makes the writing more interesting for the reader.

EXPLAIN that inference skills are necessary -
in order for them to develop a keener awareness of literature in general and their own written language will benefit by having more depth and quality.

USING THE MODEL SENTENCES

Whether your students are starting at level one, two or three, it is advisable to start with the sentences. These give the basic keys to unravelling inference.

With these questions you are looking for **KEY** words that tell you:
when something happened, or how often things happened.

MODEL

SENTENCE: It was still quite dark when Uncle Harry woke Paula to go fishing**.**

QUESTION: When did Uncle Harry wake Paula?

ANSWER: In the early morning.

KEY WORDS: **quite dark** - tells you it is not completely dark; it is starting to become light
still - tells you that it had been dark for sometime before
woke - tells you that Paula had been sleeping

PRACTICE

1. The children like to play indoors during the cold winter months.

When would the children most likely play outdoors?

2. It was time to turn the lights on.

What time of the day was it likely to be?

SUGGESTED PROCEDURE

♦ Explain what the student is expected to look for -
key words that tell you *when something happened, or how often things happened.*

♦ Read the model sentence, then the model question and answer.

♦ Discuss the key words/phrases **quite dark, still** and **woke** and how they lead to the answer.

♦ Read a sentence and question from the **PRACTISE** set and give an answer.

♦ Encourage students to identify the key words (they could underline them).

♦ Read another sentence, give the question and key words; ask students to supply the answer.

♦ Read another sentence and question; ask the students to give the key words and answer.

♦ Students can complete remaining questions of set independently.

ANSWERS & KEY WORDS - **LEVEL ONE**

LEVEL ONE SET S1 when	page 4

1. *in the warmer months / summer*
KEY: indoors / cold winter months

2. *evening*
KEY: time / lights on

3. *morning*
KEY: breakfast

4. *no - hardly ever cleans them*
KEY: hardly ever

5. *yes - water had gone cold*
KEY: until / cold

6. *no - usually a quiet dog*
KEY: usually / quiet

7. *before Good Friday*
KEY: all sold by

8. *morning / evening (not midday)*
KEY: by midday / too hot

LEVEL ONE SET S2 where	page 5

1. *school*
KEY: bell rang / children

2. *in the garden*
KEY: weed / pull

3. *playground*
KEY: swings / slides

4. *on the clothes line*
KEY: clothes flapped

5. *railway (or train) station*
KEY: train stopped / people / off

6. *airport (international)*
KEY: passenger jets / from / world

7. *in a cage (zoo, circus...)*
KEY: looked out / bars

8. *at a pedestrian crossing*
KEY: pushed / button / lights / change

LEVEL ONE SET S3 what	page 6

1. *feeding baby James*
KEY: baby / spat / back

2. *reading*
KEY: turned / page

3. *windy*
KEY: kites / dipping / rising

4. *cooking bacon*
KEY: smell / bacon / attention back

5. *cutting / chopping a tree*
KEY: axe / deep cut / tree

6. *taking a bath*
KEY: stood up / dripping water / towel

7. *snow*
KEY: fell / white

8. *birthday card*
KEY: envelope / birthday

LEVEL ONE SET S4 who	page 7

1. *the baby's mother*
KEY: her baby

2. *pilot*
KEY: landed / plane

3. *dentist*
KEY: filling / tooth

4. *coach*
KEY: told / team / practice

5. *teacher*
KEY: waiting / my homework

6. *hairdresser*
KEY: hair / same / last time

7. *plumber*
KEY: fix / pipe

8. *neighbours (next door)*
KEY: over my fence

LEVEL ONE SET S5 why	page 8

1. *it was wet*
KEY: rain

2. *he was too short*
KEY: only one / couldn't reach

3. *he had hurt his foot*
KEY: bandaged foot

4. *washing machine was noisy*
KEY: every time / machine / on

5. *to get rid of the hiccups*
KEY: but / hiccups / still there

6. *had a damaged wheel / flat tyre*
KEY: looked / his front wheel

7. *the gate was open*
KEY: open gate

8. *to water the plants*
KEY: saw / wilting plants

INFERENCE
ANSWERS & KEY WORDS

specifically compiled for the
16 sample pages of
copymasters

INFERENCE: ANSWERS & KEY WORDS
specifically compiled for sample pages of copymasters
LEVEL ONE

copymaster sample page 3

LEVEL ONE SET S1 when	page 4

1. *in the warmer months / summer*
KEY: indoors / cold winter months

2. *evening*
KEY: time / lights on

3. *morning*
KEY: breakfast

4. *no - hardly ever cleans them*
KEY: hardly ever

5. *yes - water had gone cold*
KEY: until / cold

6. *no - usually a quiet dog*
KEY: usually / quiet

7. *before Good Friday*
KEY: all sold by

8. *morning / evening (not midday)*
KEY: by midday / too hot

copymaster sample page 4

LEVEL ONE SET P3 fiction	page 11

ITEM 11a. *cleaner*
KEY: worked / bin / vacuuming / be home

ITEM 11b. *early morning*
KEY: be home / before kids / up / breakfast

ITEM 12a. *evening*
KEY: sun / going down

ITEM 12b. *they walked*
KEY: boots / sore feet

ITEM 13a. *the bus was old / bounced on the rickety bridge*
KEY: old / bounced / rickety

ITEM 13b. *over the side of the bridge*
KEY: flew off / railing / disappeared

ITEM 14a. *fishing*
KEY: line jerked / water

ITEM 14b. *he thought he had caught (hooked) a fish*
KEY: long time / nothing / line jerked

copymaster sample page 5

LEVEL ONE SET P5 non-fiction	page 13

ITEM 19a. *no - it's unusual*
KEY: unusual

ITEM 19b. *no - the wind pushes them gently*
KEY: gently pushed along

ITEM 20a. *you have to shake the jar a lot*
KEY: keep on shaking

ITEM 20b. *when you see the lumps forming in the cream*
KEY: see lumps / in / cream

ITEM 21a. *sound for movies had not been invented*
KEY: made / movies / but / sound / invented

ITEM 21b. *yes - his voice was heard when sound invented*
KEY: all over / world / heard / voice / first time

ITEM 22a. *no - others had tried but birds flew away*
KEY: tried / but / flown away

ITEM 22b. *they were too noisy*
KEY: knew / creep quietly / careful

copymaster sample page 6

LEVEL ONE SET T5 fiction	page 21

a. *night*
KEY: not a light

b. *yes - surprised there were no lights on and there was no sound*
KEY: surprised / not a light / unusually quiet

c. *yes - he'd been there since he was little*
KEY: ever since / very little

d. *in a kitchen drawer*
KEY: drawer

e. *he was looking for a note*
KEY: sigh / relief / note

INFERENCE: ANSWERS & KEY WORDS
specifically compiled for sample pages of copymasters
LEVEL TWO

copymaster sample page 8

LEVEL TWO SET S3 what	**page 30**

1. *a bird*
KEY: feathers

2. *she had lost weight*
KEY: month after / plane went down / clothes / too big

3. *he was dirty*
KEY: long time / contact / soap & water

4. *circus*
KEY: clowns / parade / gigantic tent

5. *Scott's spade hitting the buried treasure (chest / box)*
KEY: spade / buried treasure

6. *green*
KEY: blend / trees

copymaster sample page 9

LEVEL TWO SET S6 negatives	**page 33**

1. *his memory*
KEY: not so much / age as

2. *no - it says 'not noted'*
KEY: not noted

3. *cold*
KEY: not describe / as warm

4. *an adult*
KEY: not / by a child

5. *in groups*
KEY: not live alone

6. *yes - they weren't wrong*
KEY: weren't wrong / was clever

copymaster sample page 10

LEVEL TWO SET T6 fiction	**page 49**

a. *poor*
KEY: screwed up her eyes / peered

b. *No - The ball didn't travel far*
KEY: didn't travel far

c. *it was too fast*
KEY: complained / next / bowled slowly

d. *Gloria catching Mira out*
KEY: triumphant shout / caught her out

e. *Gloria / Uncle Jimmy's (new) wife*
KEY: shout / behind / new wife / caught

copymaster sample page 11

LEVEL TWO SET T7 non-fiction	**page 50**

a. *witch doctors seemed strange & mysterious*
KEY: strange / took on / meaning

b. *it was the largest known elephant in captivity*
KEY: largest / in captivity

c. *Jumbo the elephant was so big*
KEY: Jumbo / huge elephant

d. *it was the largest passenger plane*
KEY: carry more passengers than any other

e. *it was wrecked*
KEY: nor / train survived / collision

INFERENCE: ANSWERS & KEY WORDS
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LEVEL THREE

copymaster sample page 13

LEVEL THREE SET S4 who	page 63

1. *parking warden*
KEY: purposefully / check / parked cars

2. *cousins*
KEY: uncle / his kids

3. *customs officer*
KEY: suitcase / counter / examined / contents

4. *a bodyguard*
KEY: watchful / same distance / employer

5. *songwriter*
KEY: his song / sat / back of / hall

copymaster sample page 14

LEVEL THREE SET P3 fiction	page 68

ITEM 9a. *yes - he was trying to recall the house*
KEY: recall

ITEM 9b. *the houses were all the same*
KEY: no distinguishing feature

ITEM 9c. *yes - he was trying desperately to find it*
KEY: trying desperately

ITEM 10a *he had pressed the ball down over the sideline*
KEY: father / halfway line / father / right there

ITEM 11a. *fiction*
KEY: here's the novel

ITEM 11b. *no - she's looking for a non-fiction book in the fiction section*
KEY: information / East Africa / nothing here

copymaster sample page 15

LEVEL THREE SET T3 fiction	page 77

a. *so she wouldn't wake anyone*
KEY: 5:30 / other bedrooms

b. *the front*
KEY: along the hallway / to / back of house

c. *no - her spare time was spent on design*
KEY: most of / spare time

d. *no - she needed to earn money for university*
KEY: relieved / money / hadn't been easy

e. *no - she was tired & it was frustrating*
KEY: still tired / frustrating

copymaster sample page 16

LEVEL THREE SET T12 non-fiction	page 86

a. *germs*
KEY: germs / synonymous

b. *yes - they take over when the aerobic bacteria can no longer survive*
KEY: aerobic / air / no longer survive / take over

c. *a bacterium*
KEY: each / split into two

d. *when they form colonies with millions of members*
KEY: colonies / millions of members

e. *yes - antiseptics & drugs have reduced deaths*
KEY: intervention / antiseptics / drugs / reduced / deaths