



Reading On The Move

Can You See the Future?

Predicting and Inferring

One way to be an engaged reader is to make **predictions**. Making predictions means to use what you already know to guess what will happen next. We make predictions every day. For example, when the sky gets cloudy and you hear thunder, you can predict that it will storm. You can make this prediction because you have experienced a storm before. This experience is your background knowledge and you use it to make an educated guess. When making predictions while reading, you do the same thing. You use what you already know and what you have already read to guess what will happen next. You will not always be correct in your guesses or predictions, but that is not important. It is important for you to try to make predictions.

Gathering information while reading is necessary for making an educated prediction. A prediction could be something as simple as reading the title of a story and guessing what you think the story will be about. For example, if you are going to read a story entitled, *Working the Fields*, you could easily predict the story will be about someone working in fields. In predicting what will happen next in a story, you will need a little more background information. This information can come from your own personal experiences and also from what information you have gathered while reading.

When making a prediction you finish one of the following sentences:

I predict....

I think....

I believe....

Once you have made a prediction, you should be able to support your prediction with evidence. This evidence can be details from the reading or personal experience.

Example: *Pedro put on his cleats and jersey, grabbed his goalie gloves, and left for his game. He was excited because after weeks of hard practice, he was finally going to be the starting goalie. Pedro's high school team was considered the best in the area. He hoped they could continue their success by defeating their rival today.*

Prediction: *I predict Pedro's team will win the game.*

Supporting evidence: *Pedro's team is considered the best in the area. The team has been practicing hard. So, it is possible to **predict** that Pedro's team wins the game.*



Read the passages below. Practice making predictions by circling the letter of the phrase that best completes the statement following each passage.

1. After the man found rest in the shade of a large willow tree, he began to fall asleep. Remembering an appointment he had with his father, he looked lazily at his watch. “The appointment is in an hour,” he thought “and it takes twenty minutes to walk there.” The man slowly closed his eyes and smiled. The man will probably—
 - a. get up and continue to his appointment.
 - b. go home and take a nap.
 - c. rest until it’s time to leave for the appointment.

2. Angry that it had lost the contest, the wind headed north. Along the way it saw several children in a field. The wind was feeling grumpy and did not enjoy seeing the children happily playing. As it passed the children, the wind suddenly turned. The wind will probably—
 - a. angrily blow cold air against the children.
 - b. send a gentle breeze to please the children.
 - c. go back and ask the sun to warm the children.

3. Mrs. Letang read “The Wind and the Sun” to her English class. The children really enjoyed the fable and often talked about it. Mrs. Letang will probably—
 - a. read the fable to her class again sometime.
 - b. decide not to read the fables anymore.
 - c. tell the children they have to check the fables out on their own.

Much like making a prediction, you use what you know and the information you have gathered while reading to make an ***inference***. While predicting has to do with what will happen *next* or *in the future*, inferring is *drawing a conclusion* from information you have already read. An author often does not tell who, what, when, why, or how something takes place in a story. You are sometimes left to infer, or figure it out, on your own. Take another look at the example below.

Example: *Pedro put on his cleats and jersey, grabbed his goalie gloves, and left for his game. He was excited because after weeks of hard practice, he was finally going to be the starting goalie. Pedro's high school team was considered the best in the area. He hoped they could continue their success by defeating their rival today.*

Who is Pedro? The passage does not tell you exactly who he is, so you would use surrounding clues, or context clues, to ***infer***. Many different kinds of athletes wear cleats and a jersey, but only a soccer player would also need goalie gloves too. Because Pedro is playing for a high school team, it is possible to infer that he is a high school soccer player.



Read the passages below. You will have to use your “inferring” skills in the questions that follow each passage.

4. The warm sun beat down on the tired traveler. Bright daisies waved gently in the rolling fields lining the dusty road.

What time of year is it? Daisies and other flowers usually grow in the _____ or _____.

5. “Mark darling, please take your coat. The wind looks strong, and it’s a long walk to your parents’ house,” said Jessica.

How are Jessica and Mark related? Since Mark is going to his parents’ house, he is probably an adult with his own home. Jessica calling Mark “darling” suggests they are _____.

6. Moving out from behind a cloud, the sun shone down on the man. As the sun continued to shine brightly, the man removed his coat and found rest in the shade.

Why do you think the man went to sit in the shade? The man probably needed to sit in the shade because _____.

7. Just as the man reached his home, the sky darkened and the wind began to blow. Leaves flew past the window as bright light streaked through the sky.

What is happening? Darkening skies and high winds suggests a _____.

Read the passage and answer the questions.

It was snowing so hard that Ray could barely see the car in front of him. He could feel the rear wheels of his car slipping back and forth on the road. The car in front of him seemed to disappear, leaving Ray seeing nothing but a wall of white.

As he woke up in the hospital bed, he could remember seeing bright headlights and feeling a biting cold on his feet.

8. Write a prediction for what you think will happen next:

9. What supporting details did you use to make this prediction?

10. What happened in this passage? Make an inference:

11. What evidence from the text helped you make this inference?

Once you continue reading, you will be able to see if your prediction was correct or not. If your prediction was correct, then you have confirmed it. If your prediction is not correct, you need to adjust it and make a new prediction based on new information you have learned. Confirming and adjusting predictions is key to being an active reader.

It was snowing so hard that Ray could barely see the car in front of him. He could feel the rear wheels of his car slipping back and forth on the road. The car in front of him seemed to disappear, leaving Ray seeing nothing but a wall of white.

As he woke up in the hospital bed, he could remember seeing bright headlights and feeling a biting cold on his feet.

He looked around at faces he did not recognize. His heart began to race. Where am I? Who are all these people? Why can't I move my legs? Ray started to panic. He felt a warm gentle hand on his shoulder. The touch was familiar to him. He felt calm. His eyes followed the arm up to a smiling face. A woman. A beautiful woman. But, who is she?

12. Was your prediction correct? _____

13. What happened in this passage? Make an inference:

14. What evidence from the text helped you make this inference?

15. Confirm or adjust your prediction.

Answer Key

1. c
2. a
3. a
4. Spring or Summer
5. Boyfriend and girlfriend, husband and wife, or they could be related such as aunt and nephew.
6. The man was probably too warm from the sun and needed to rest in the shade.
7. A thunder storm
8. Based on what you have read, guess what will happen next. Use the details of the story to help make your prediction.
9. In the reading, you can see that Ray was driving in a snow storm and woke up in a hospital. These are good details to help support your prediction.
10. In this passage, Ray was driving in a snow storm. He was not able to see very far in front of him because of the snow. He woke up in the hospital and remembers seeing another car's headlights and feeling cold on his feet. You can infer that Ray was in a car accident and ended up in the hospital.
11. Supporting details are: Ray could barely see the car in front of him, his tires were sliding on the road, he saw another car's headlights and then woke up in the hospital.
12. If your prediction was correct, write yes. If your prediction was not correct, write no.
13. Ray was driving in a snow storm. He was not able to see very far in front of him because of the snow. He woke up in the hospital and remembers seeing another car's headlights and feeling cold on his feet. He is surrounded by people he doesn't know and he does not know where he is. He feels a familiar touch by a beautiful woman but does not know who she is. You can infer that Ray has lost his memory.
14. Ray could barely see the car in front of him, his tires were sliding on the road, he saw another car's headlights and then woke up in the hospital. Ray has a lot of questions about where he is and who he is surrounded by.
15. If your prediction was correct, you can confirm it. If your prediction was not correct, you should make a new prediction.