

TEACHER GUIDE **E**

FOCUS **on**

DRAWING CONCLUSIONS
AND MAKING INFERENCES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Reading Strategy Tips for the Teacher	12
Reproducibles:	
Teacher Assessment 1	14
Teacher Assessment 2	15
Teacher Assessment 3	16
Class or Group Performance Graph	17
Research Summary	18
Answer Form	27
Answer Key	28

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INTRODUCTION

What is the **FOCUS** series?

FOCUS is a reading-strategy practice series. Each student book in the series provides brief instruction and concentrated practice for students in one targeted Reading Strategy. *FOCUS* also allows students the opportunity for self-assessment of their performance. It allows teachers the opportunity to identify and assess a student's level of mastery.

6 Reading Strategies featured in the *FOCUS* series:

- Understanding Main Idea and Details
- Understanding Sequence
- Recognising Cause and Effect
- Comparing and Contrasting
- Making Predictions
- Drawing Conclusions and Making Inferences

The *FOCUS* series spans 8 reading levels (1.0–8.9). The reading passages in each book are designed so that the book can be used by all students performing at that reading level. The reading passages in each book progress from low to high along that reading level range.

Book	Reading Level
Book A	1.0–1.9
Book B	2.0–2.9
Book C	3.0–3.9
Book D	4.0–4.9
Book E	5.0–5.9
Book F	6.0–6.9
Book G	7.0–7.9
Book H	8.0–8.9

What is Drawing Conclusions and Making Inferences, the Reading Strategy featured in this *FOCUS* book?

Drawing a conclusion or making an inference is figuring out information that is suggested or hinted at but that is not directly or fully stated or explained in a passage. To figure out information that is not directly stated, use information that *is* directly stated, along with what you already know from your own experience. Conclusions and inferences can relate to people, places, objects, situations, events and so on.

What is in each student book?

There are 48 student books in the *FOCUS* series. There is one student book for each of the 6 Reading Strategies, at each of the 8 reading levels. Each student book contains:

- *To the Student*
This introduces the program and should be read and discussed with students to make sure they understand what they are to do in the book.
- *Table of Contents*
- *Learn About (Modelled Practice)*
These two pages provide basic instruction and modelling in the understanding and application of the Reading Strategy. The Learn About should be read and discussed with students to make sure they understand the Reading Strategy. Additional tips for helping students understand and use the Reading Strategy are included in the Reading Strategy Tips for the Teacher on pages 12–13 of this teacher guide.
- *Lesson Preview (Guided Practice)*
These two pages include a sample reading passage and two selected-response questions with explanations of why each of the eight answer choices is correct or not correct. The Lesson Preview should be read, worked through and discussed with students to make sure they understand how to answer strategy-based questions.
- *20 Lessons (Independent Practice)*
Each two-page lesson contains one reading passage, four strategy-based selected-response questions and one strategy-based constructed-response writing question.

Reading Passages: The reading passages progress across the reading level. The passage genres include:

—**Fiction:** personal narrative, realistic fiction, historical fiction, fantasy fiction, mystery, folktale, fable, legend

—**Nonfiction:** report, article, interview, letter, postcard, book report, movie review, diary entry, journal entry, biography, textbook lesson, directions, instructions, recipe, invitation, announcement, experiment

Selected-response questions: In each lesson, students apply the Reading Strategy to a reading passage and then choose the correct answers for four selected-response (multiple-choice) strategy-based questions. You should model how to answer these kinds of questions using information on the Lesson Preview pages.

Constructed-response writing questions: In each lesson, students apply the Reading Strategy to a reading passage and then write a short response to a strategy-based question. You should model how to answer these kinds of questions by using one of the sample answers provided on pages 28–29 of this teacher guide.

- *Tracking Chart*
Students use this chart for noting their completion of and performance in each lesson.
- *Self-Assessments*
These five forms allow students the opportunity for self-assessment of their performance.
- *Answer Form*
Students may use this form to record their answers to the eighty selected-response questions and to indicate that they have answered each of the twenty constructed-response writing questions.

What is in each teacher guide?

There are 48 teacher guides in the *FOCUS* series, one for each student book. Each teacher guide contains:

- suggested instructions for using the *FOCUS* series effectively in the classroom
- Reading Strategy Tips for the Teacher, a facsimile of the Learn About on pages 2–3 of the student book, with tips for additional discussion related to understanding and using the Reading Strategy
- four reproducibles: three Teacher Assessments to be used for individual student assessment in the Reading Strategy and one Class or Group Performance Graph to be used for class or group assessment in the Reading Strategy
- summary of research that supports the *FOCUS* series
- a completed Answer Form for the eighty selected-response questions in the student book
- Answers for the eighty selected-response questions, plus sample answers for the twenty constructed-response writing questions in the student book

How should I use the Reading Strategy Tips for the Teacher?

These pages contain a facsimile of the Learn About on pages 2–3 of the student book, along with extended information about the Reading Strategy, which you can use as a basis for in-depth discussion to make sure students understand the strategy and how to use it for better reading comprehension.

Where do students record their answers?

Students should fill in their answers to the selected-response questions on the Answer Form on page 53 of the student book. If students use the Answer Form, they may detach it from the book. Alternatively, students may fill in the correct answers directly on the student book page.

Students should write their answers to the constructed-response questions directly on the lines provided in the student book. Students who use the Answer Form for the selected-response questions should fill in the circle on the Answer Form to show that they have answered the constructed-response question, which is the fifth question in each lesson.

READING STRATEGY TIPS FOR THE TEACHER

When you draw conclusions or make inferences, you come to a decision or form an opinion by “adding up” information that is given, along with what you already know related to the clues from your own experience. You aren’t looking for information that is hidden, as in a mystery, you are merely uncovering information that is “there” but is not directly stated. It is “in the background”.

Conclusions and inferences can be made about people, times, locations, situations, events, feelings, attitudes, characteristics, and so on. Conclusions and inferences are made about things that already exist but aren’t directly stated or fully explained in a passage. For example, the Learn About passage gives a lot of information that indicates that Richard is upset, but the passage doesn’t tell you precisely what has made Richard so upset. As you think about the clues (cold neck, not daring to look in the mirror, feeling horrified, etc.) and what you know, you can come to the conclusion that Richard has just had a haircut that he thinks is too short.

You can’t draw conclusions or make inferences about things for which no clues have been given. In other words, you can’t figure out what kind of shoes Richard is wearing because no clues are given about his footwear. It’s fine to form a picture in your mind, but it won’t be backed up by details from the story.

Drawing conclusions and making inferences means “reading between the lines” to fill in missing information.

Learn About

Drawing Conclusions and Making Inferences

Not all information is directly stated in a reading passage. Some information may merely be suggested or hinted at. But you can figure out information that is not directly stated. To do this, think about the *information that is directly stated*. Also think about what *you already know*. Then you can figure out information that is not directly stated.

Figuring out information that is not directly stated is called **drawing conclusions and making inferences**.

Read this passage about Richard. As you read, think about the information that is directly stated. Also think about what you already know.

Richard didn’t have the nerve to look, so his fingertips reached cautiously for the back of his neck. “Oh no,” he groaned. It felt unfamiliar and strangely cold, no doubt because it wasn’t used to being so exposed.

When the suspense finally became too much for him, Richard took a deep breath and peered at the mirror sideways.

“No-o-o-o-o!” he shrieked, for it was much, much worse than he had imagined. The person staring back at him was a hideous stranger – seemingly with no hair! Richard was horrified!



The passage tells you directly that Richard was horrified. But one thing the passage does *not* tell you directly is just what made Richard feel so upset. How can you figure this out? What are the hints?

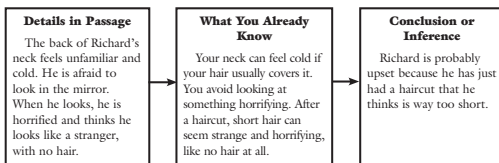
Drawing Conclusions and Making Inferences E CA10150 2 © 2007 Hawker Brownlow Education

Some passage clues are about things that are concrete. For example, if you are reading a story about a character who is dipping a paddle in the water and skimming along the surface of the water, you can figure out that the character is in a boat, whether the story says so or not. If the character is squinting her eyes, you can figure out that it is during the day and sunny. You can also assume that the character is not wearing sunglasses. You can figure these things out from information in the story and what you already know about things related to that information.

To figure out information that is not directly stated, think about the information that is directly stated. The passage tells you that Richard touched the back of his neck and that it felt unfamiliar and strangely cold because his neck was not used to being so exposed. It also tells you that Richard didn't have the nerve to look in the mirror. When he did look, he was horrified. He thought that he looked like a stranger, with no hair.

Then think about what you already know. You probably know that the back of your neck might feel unfamiliar and cold if your hair was usually long enough to cover your neck, but now it wasn't. You probably also know that people sometimes hesitate to look at something if they are afraid they won't like it. People often think their hair is too short right after a haircut and they don't like it. They can feel horrified and think that they look like someone else. Their short hair can seem like no hair at all. From this, you can figure out that Richard is upset because he has just had a haircut that he thinks is much too short.

From what the paragraph tells you and from what you already know, you can figure out why Richard is upset.



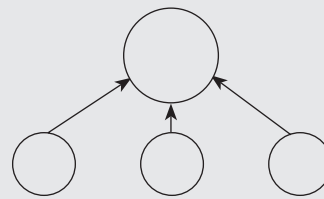
Figuring out information that is not directly stated is called drawing conclusions and making inferences.

Definitions: “The explicitness with which teachers teach comprehension strategies makes a difference in learner outcomes, especially for low-achieving students (modeling and careful scaffolding is key).” (Abadiano & Turner, 2003, p. 76).

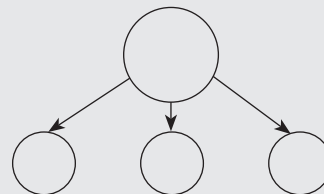
Abadiano, H. R., & Turner, J. (2003). The RAND report: Reading for understanding: Toward an R&D program in reading comprehension. *New England Reading Association Journal*, 39(2), 74–79.

Some passage clues are about abstract concepts, such as character traits, feelings, attitudes, motivations, and so on. A story might say that a character hid behind the bushes until the strangers passed and then ran quickly to warn the townspeople. The story might not say specifically that the character was skillful and brave. But you could figure this out from the character's actions and from what you already know or think about those kinds of actions. Or you might decide that the character was foolish, depending on your own attitude about those kinds of actions.

Here is one way to think about conclusions and inferences: A conclusion is a big idea figured out by thinking about some related smaller ideas.



An inference is a small idea figured out by thinking about a related bigger idea.



A conclusion or inference is related to something that already exists but isn't directly stated. For example: *What must Josh be doing right now? What is the weather like?*

A prediction, on the other hand, is about something that might happen in the future. For example: *What will Josh probably do next? Will the weather most likely stay the same or change?*

Here are some examples of conclusions and inferences.

Ryan made a V with his fingers and exclaimed, “Yes!” (He is happy, feeling victorious.)

Megan put Look to Cook back on the bench and shook her head. She picked up a measuring cup and opened the bag of flour. “But what does it mean to sift it?” she pondered, glancing at the clock in dismay. (Megan is trying to prepare something from a recipe in the book *Look to Cook*. She isn't used to cooking and feels confused and somewhat frustrated. She probably needs to finish what she is baking by a certain time and doesn't think she will be able to.)