



Literacy in the Sciences: Activity No. 11
Making Inferences and Drawing Conclusions
By: Reading Rockets

Inferences are what we figure out based on an experience. Helping your child understand when information is implied (or not directly stated) will improve her skill in drawing conclusions and making inferences. These skills will be needed for all sorts of school assignments, including reading, science and social studies.

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Observations occur when we can see something happening. In contrast, inferences are what we figure out based on an experience. Helping your child understand when information is implied, or not directly stated, will improve her skill in drawing conclusions and making inferences. These skills will be needed for all sorts of school assignments, including reading, science and social studies. Inferential thinking is a complex skill that will develop over time and with experience.

Families can create opportunities to practice inferential thinking. Below are a few ways to help familiarize your child with this way of thinking and learning:

- Explain to your child that we make conclusions about things and draw inferences all the time. Draw a conclusion together and then talk about what clues were used to come to that conclusion. For example, Erin played outside today. How can we tell? Muddy shoes, jump rope on front porch, water bottle out. Dad seems tired tonight. How can we tell? He's rubbing his eyes, he's on the couch, he was yawning at the dinner table.
- Paper bag mystery person: Put a few items into a brown paper bag. Tell your child the bag belongs to a certain type of person. Their job is to tell you something about the person. Then, take out each item one by one and talk about it.

- Example #1: goggles, a swim cap, a swim ribbon, a stop watch
- Example #2: a bookmark, a library card, a stuffed animal, a book
- Wordless picture books provide your child with practice using clues to create meaning. There are no wrong stories with wordless picture books, only variations based on what the "reader" sees and puts together. **Rosie's Walk**(<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0020437501/readingrocket-20>) (Hutchins), **Good Dog, Carl**(<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0689817711/readingrocket-20>) (Day), and **Beaver Is Lost**(<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0375857656/readingrocket-20>) (Cooper) are all interesting and fun wordless picture books to explore.
- Play twenty questions! This familiar word game helps build inference skills. As your child develops skill with the game, encourage him to avoid asking direct questions like, "Is it a dog?" Rather, encourage him to ask broader questions, "Does it walk on four feet?" Then, when your child figures it out, ask him to tell you the clues that lead to the right answer.
- Create scenarios in which your child must use what they already know to predict an outcome. For example, growing seeds. Present your child with various scenarios (a seed will be given water and sunlight, a seed will get no water, a seed will be in a dark room). Ask your child to predict whether the seed will grow. Help your child become aware that she used information she knew about growing seeds, combined with new information, to fill in information about the seeds.

Learning to draw conclusions and inferences is a skill that develops over time. The skill requires children to put together various pieces of information, and relies on good word knowledge. Help your child develop skill by providing experience with inferential information, making implied information more clear, and helping your child draw conclusions based on the evidence.

Recommended children's books



<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0064451755/readingrocket-20>

Archaeologists Dig for Clues

By Kate Duke

Archaeologists on a dig work very much like detectives at a crime scene. Every chipped rock, charred seed, or fossilized bone could be a clue to how people lived in the past. In this information-packed Let's-Read-and-Find-Out Science book, Kate Duke explains what scientists are looking for, how they find it, and what their finds reveal. (Age level: 6-9)

- [Purchase book](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0064451755/readingrocket-20)(<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0064451755/readingrocket-20>)

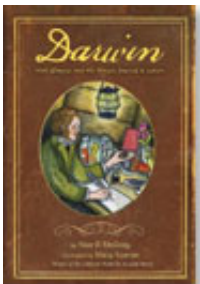


(<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0375857656/readingrocket-20>)

Beaver Is Lost
By Elisha Cooper

A beaver's adventure begins on a log that floats away from his home and into the city. Before finding his way back, the beaver has many plausible adventures. The action is depicted in well-placed, realistic illustrations in a nearly wordless book. (Age level: 3-6)

- [Purchase book](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0375857656/readingrocket-20)(<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0375857656/readingrocket-20>)



(<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0618995315/readingrocket-20>)

Darwin
By Alice McGinty

This picture-book biography begins with Darwin's childhood interest in collecting specimens and experimenting with chemistry. The story then focuses on his five-year voyage aboard the Beagle, when he observed geology, animals, and plants; collected specimens; and took extensive notes. He returned to England and spent his life researching, reflecting, and writing about his discoveries. (Age level: 6-9)

- [Purchase book](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0618995315/readingrocket-20)(<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0618995315/readingrocket-20>)

(<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0066239354/readingrocket-20>)

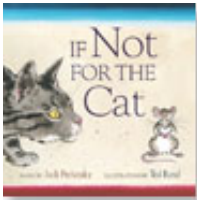
Home
By Jeannie Baker



This wordless picture book with Baker's characteristically beautifully detailed collage illustrations conveys a subtle message about how we can bring positive change to our communities. Every double-page spread is a view through the same window, a view that changes over a generation. Children can share what they think is happening to the neighborhood based on the illustrations. (Age level: 5-8)

- [Purchase](#)

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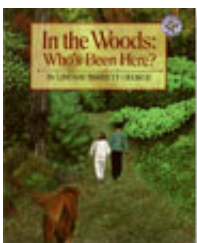
If Not for the Cat

By Jack Prelutsky

"If not for the cat/And the scarcity of cheese,/I could be content." The essence of animals is evoked in rich language and the short form of haiku poems in this engaging book. The brief but rich language can prompt children to think about what creature is being described. (Age level: 6-9)

- [Purchase](#)

[book\(http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0060596775/readingrocket-20\)](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0060596775/readingrocket-20)



<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0688161634/readingrocket-20>

In the Woods: Who's Been Here?

By Lindsay Barrett George

A girl and a boy and their dog explore the woods on an autumn afternoon and begin to notice all kinds of things around them — an empty nest, a gnawed branch, feathers, and bones. Each observation prompts the question, "Who's been here?" Turning the page reveals the answer. Others in the series include [In the Garden: Who's Been Here?\(http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0060787627/readingrocket-20\)](#) (Age level: 3-6)

- **[Purchase book](#)**(<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0688161634/readingrocket-20>)
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Reading Rockets (2011)

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nice books and info.

Submitted by Anonymous (not verified) on June 25, 2013 - 8:36pm

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"You may have tangible wealth untold. Caskets of jewels and coffers of gold. Richer than I you can never be — I had a mother who read to me." — Strickland Gillilan