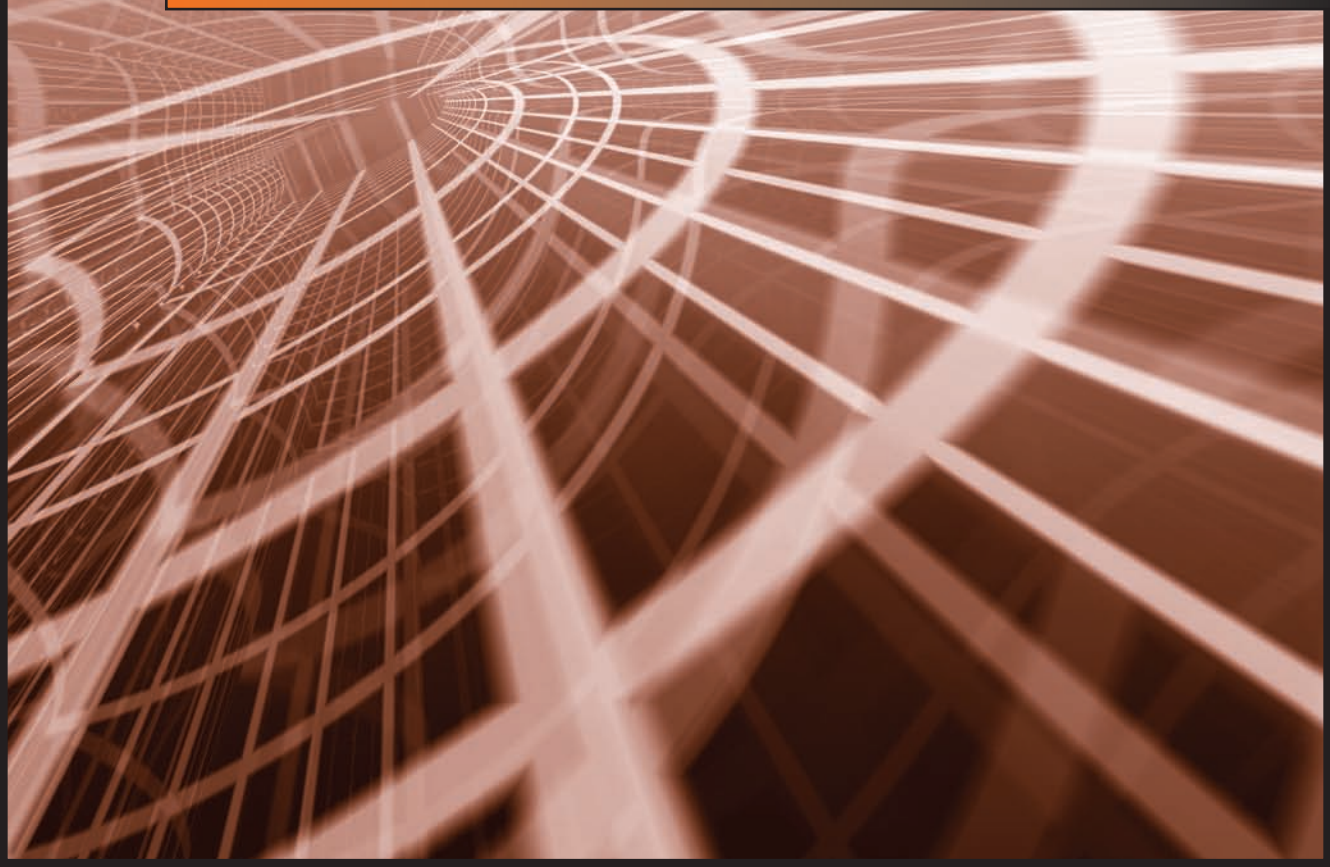
TEACHER GUIDE F

FOCUS on

DRAWING CONCLUSIONS AND MAKING INFERENCES



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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 working out information that is suggested or hinted at but is not directly or fully stated or explained in a passage. To work 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 (appearances, feelings, attitudes, motivations, etc.), 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.

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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.

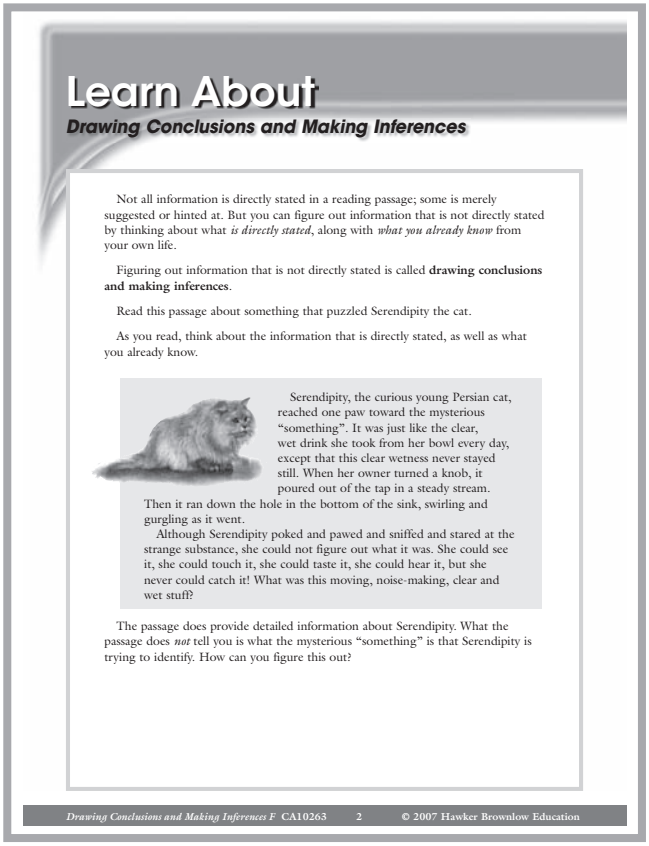
Students should write their answers to the constructed-response questions directly on the lines provided in the student book. Students who use the Answer Form for the selected-response questions should fill in the circle on the Answer Form to show that they have answered the constructed-response question,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

READING STRATEGY TIPS FOR THE TEACHER

When you draw a conclusion or make an inference, you come to a decision or form an opinion by "adding up" information that is given, along with what you already know related to clues in the information that is given. You aren't looking for information that is hidden, as in a mystery; you are merely uncovering what is "there" but not directly stated. It is "in the background". You "read between the lines" to draw conclusions or make inferences.

Conclusions and inferences can be made about people (what they look like, how they feel, what their attitudes are, etc.), times, locations, situations, events, 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 about the cat Serendipity and a mysterious "something" that she is fascinated with, but the passage doesn't tell you precisely what the mysterious substance is. As you think about the clues (the substance is clear and wet and something like what she drinks from her bowl except that this substance moves; it comes out of a tap; it goes down the sink) and what you already know, you can come to the conclusion that the mysterious something that Serendipity is fascinated with is tap water.

Some passage clues are concrete. For example, if you are reading a story about a character who is pushing away overhanging branches as she tries to find her way on an unfamiliar rock-strewn path, you can figure out that the character is outside and probably in a wooded area such as a forest, whether the story states that directly or not. If the character has shivered and pulled her parka around her, you can assume that it is cool or cold outside. You can work these things out from the information in the story and from what you already know related to that kind of information.



Learn About

Drawing Conclusions and Making Inferences

Not all information is directly stated in a reading passage; some is merely suggested or hinted at. But you can figure out information that is not directly stated by thinking about what *is directly stated*, along with *what you already know* from your own life.

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

Read this passage about something that puzzled Serendipity the cat.

As you read, think about the information that is directly stated, as well as what you already know.

Serendipity, the curious young Persian cat, reached one paw toward the mysterious "something". It was just like the clear, wet drink she took from her bowl every day, except that this clear wetness never stayed still. When her owner turned a knob, it poured out of the tap in a steady stream. Then it ran down the hole in the bottom of the sink, swirling and gurgling as it went.

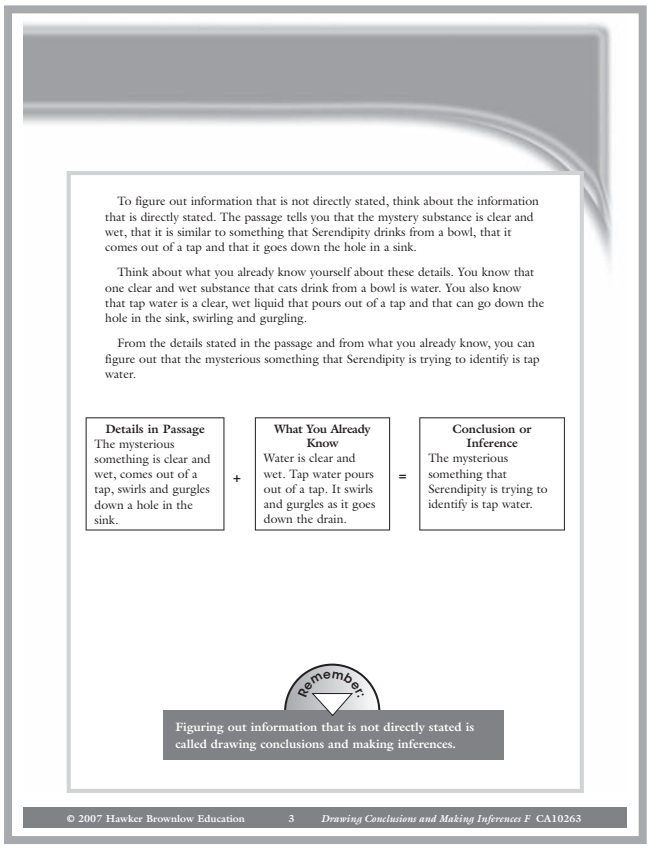
Although Serendipity poked and pawed and sniffed and stared at the strange substance, she could not figure out what it was. She could see it, she could touch it, she could taste it, she could hear it, but she never could catch it! What was this moving, noise-making, clear and wet stuff?

The passage does provide detailed information about Serendipity. What the passage does *not* tell you is what the mysterious "something" is that Serendipity is trying to identify. How can you figure this out?

Drawing Conclusions and Making Inferences F CA10263 2 © 2007 Hawker Brownlow Education

You can't draw conclusions or make inferences about things for which no clues have been given. For example, you can't figure out from the passage what Serendipity's owner looks like because there are no clues at all in the passage about that. It's fine to form a picture in your mind, but it won't be backed up by details from the passage.

Some passage clues are about abstract concepts, such as character traits, feelings, attitudes, motivations, and so on. In the story about the character on the path, you can guess that she is lost, as she is trying to find her way on an unfamiliar path. You might also conclude that the character is brave because she is trying to move forward in unfamiliar territory. Or, you might decide that she is foolish, depending on your own attitude about that kind of behaviour.



To figure out information that is not directly stated, think about the information that is directly stated. The passage tells you that the mystery substance is clear and wet, that it is similar to something that Serendipity drinks from a bowl, that it comes out of a tap and that it goes down the hole in a sink.

Think about what you already know yourself about these details. You know that one clear and wet substance that cats drink from a bowl is water. You also know that tap water is a clear, wet liquid that pours out of a tap and that can go down the hole in the sink, swirling and gurgling.

From the details stated in the passage and from what you already know, you can figure out that the mysterious something that Serendipity is trying to identify is tap water.

Details in Passage		What You Already Know		Conclusion or Inference
The mysterious something is clear and wet, comes out of a tap, swirls and gurgles down a hole in the sink.	+	Water is clear and wet. Tap water pours out of a tap. It swirls and gurgles as it goes down the drain.	=	The mysterious something that Serendipity is trying to identify is tap water.

Remember:

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

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

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

The literary device of flashback often provides information about the past that allows you to draw conclusions or make inferences about characters or situations in the story's present. For example, if you learned through flashback that a character had got a lot of positive attention for being funny when he was young, that could help you figure out why he was being so persistent about trying to make it in the difficult business of stand-up comedy as an adult.

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.

Here are some examples of conclusions and inferences.

When Evan saw Shirley walking toward him, he ran to her and gave her a big hug. (Evan knows Shirley and is very happy to see her.)

Grandpa put Repairs for Those Who Don't Know How *back on the counter. He peered under the sink, scratched his head and mumbled, "But how do I turn the water off?"* (Grandpa is attempting to repair something, probably the sink. He is not used to repairing sinks. He is using the book *Repairs for Those Who Don't Know How* to learn how, but he is perplexed, which is reflected by his scratching his head and mumbling about how to turn the water off.)

Fiction writers often use similes, metaphors, personification, and so on, to enliven their stories. Understanding these types of figurative language requires inferential thinking on the part of the reader.