



Inferences are made when main ideas and supporting details are not clearly defined or when information is missing or not available in a text or story. When students infer, they must draw on prior knowledge to fill the void in order to propose or predict an idea that is “probably true.” To that end, **inferring** is often defined as “reading between the lines”; at other times, it is defined as “drawing conclusions.”

Inferences can also be made when adequate information is available. In these instances, students go beyond the literal meaning of the text in order to include some of their own knowledge, beliefs, and experiences in the interaction with the content. In this way, students connect with the reading on a more personal level, which in turn makes the reading more meaningful. When students make connections and construct their own knowledge, they in turn increase their level of comprehension.

Narrative text provides more opportunities for inference; however, expository text also lends itself to this strategy. When good readers infer, they may

- draw conclusions from the text,
- make predictions as they read,
- construct unstated main ideas,
- interpret the text, and
- make judgments about what is being read.

Selection 13 - The Final Days of the Civil War

Soon after Union troops took Savannah, Georgia, the Civil War started coming to an end in other parts of the South. On January 15, Fort Fisher, North Carolina, was captured. This closed the last Confederate port. A month later, Sherman burned Columbia, South Carolina.

In Virginia, Robert E. Lee kept fighting Grant's army, which was twice the size of the remaining Confederate troops. Lee's men were weary and starving. As a result, on March 2, Lee asked for a meeting with Grant to talk about ending the war. President Lincoln refused to allow the meeting unless the South agreed to surrender.

On March 25, Lee tried once again to push federal troops back from Petersburg, Virginia. He failed and, before he could reach the Confederate army in North Carolina, Union troops cut off the retreat. When the disheartening news reached Confederate President Jefferson Davis, he knew the war was almost over and left Richmond to go to Danville, Virginia, to avoid capture.

On April 9, 1865, General Lee and General Grant met at Appomattox Court House in Virginia to arrange the terms for surrender. The meeting was rather startling. Lee arrived wearing a new general's uniform, carrying a bejeweled sword, and riding his white horse Traveller. Grant met him wearing a private's uniform, with three stars indicating his rank fastened to the shoulders. After the surrender, there were a few more small battles in North Carolina, but the Civil War was officially over. It was time to make the North and the South one nation again.



Graphic Organizer 18

The T-Chart

From the Text	Inference
<p data-bbox="386 583 574 621">Illustrations</p> <p data-bbox="386 1205 461 1243">Text</p>	

Reading Visual Information

Everything that students read does not necessarily contain words. For example, when they read their textbook, besides words they “read” pictures, graphs, charts, tables, and maps. Noting the details and inferring or drawing conclusions from these virtually wordless aids can increase students’ comprehension of the content. Information presented in this manner is attractive to visual learners, but it is also especially helpful to students who are otherwise poor readers. Following are some strategies for helping students “read” visual aids.