

## 2.1 Introduction to inference

Inference <display the word inference on the screen> is a word that language teachers use to describe when students use evidence or reasoning to gain understanding. If you heard the idiom “to read between the lines,” that’s another way of saying to read for inference. It’s when you find meaning that is hidden, or not actually overtly written or said.

For instance, <this can be said in an expressive way> let’s say you met someone who is very pale, only comes out at night, and will not eat garlic. Based on this evidence, you could *infer* that this person is a vampire ... and that you need to stay away from them!

Now, you might think that is something that you just observed, but inference is using both evidence and observation. An observation is something you notice, witness, or see. An inference is something you conclude by putting together different pieces of evidence. Being able to read between the lines is a high-level language skill because it means that you have to understand and process language on a deeper level. I think you are ready to go between the lines and start to find some hidden meanings, so let’s get started!

 Video: [Introduction to inference](#)

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## 2.2 Reading between the lines

When you are reading, you cannot be sure there will be something written between the lines. So how do you know when to make inferences? Or what to look for? One thing to look out for is noticing when the writer is “showing” not “telling.”

For example, compare these two sentences. “The sweat was forming on her forehead even after she took her jacket off.” and “It was hot.” The first sentence *shows* what happens when someone is hot, and the second one, well, just comes right out and says, “It’s hot.”

Another way to recognise inference is when you notice clues or evidence by applying your real-world knowledge. In that last example, did you think, <pretend to think> “Oh, she is sweating, maybe she’s in a hot place?” If so, you were using your real-world experiences along with your reading comprehension skills to make an inference.

You will practise these two skills throughout the rest of this lesson. Look for evidence and examples of showing instead of telling, and you are sure to make some accurate inferences. You’ve got this!

 Video: [Reading between the lines video](#)

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## 2.3 Figurative language

Figurative language, or figures of speech, is when someone uses a word or a phrase to have a different meaning to its direct meaning. An example of figurative language that you just read

was that something was <show “as clear as mud” on screen> “as clear as mud.” When you think of the direct, everyday meaning of mud, you think of wet, brown puddles or maybe dry dirt on your shoes. In fact, mud is anything but clear! Then, why do we have this English phrase, “as clear as mud”? This is one example figure of speech called a paradox. With a paradox, the meaning of a phrase seems to contradict their literal meaning. When we say something is as clear as mud, we mean it is not clear at all! Another example is the phrase, “less is more.”

In this lesson, you will learn about a few kinds of figures of speech, including similes, metaphors, personification, and paradoxes. It is important to remember that these are all examples of when the direct meaning is not the actual meaning. Using figurative language will help you improve your English level and will also be helpful for your final project for this course. So, go be as busy as a bee and learn more about figurative language!



Video: [Figurative language](#)