



Making inferences



What is an inference?

- a guess we make using the information given in the text



When do we need to make an inference?

- when the information we are looking for is not expressed directly in the text
- when the question contains words such as 'suggest', 'imply' and 'infer'

How do we make an inference?

- Read the text to look for contextual clues.
- Use what you know about the world, i.e. your common sense, to support your assumptions.



Let's look closer!

'What have I done?' implies that the writer felt guilty about throwing away plastic bags.

I used to use a lot of plastic bags, sometimes coming home from my shopping runs with as many as ten plastic bags. One time, after emptying the bags and throwing them into the rubbish bin, I thought to myself, 'What have I done?' From then on, I have been using reusable cloth bags when I go shopping, and I do not feel guilty anymore!

The writer does not use plastic bags now, so she does not feel guilty anymore.

DSE 2021 Part A Q8 Extended response

e.g. What does the writer imply when she writes that she does not 'feel guilty anymore'?

She implies that she no longer has to feel bad about throwing away plastic bags.

The horn of the black rhino is prized as a valuable medicine in some Asian countries. Traders pay high prices for them, leading to the deaths of thousands of rhinos at the hands of hunters. There are now only about 3,000 of these animals remaining in Africa. We must stop the rhino horn trade as soon as possible, otherwise, we will only see black rhinos in documentary films.

The writer warns that unless people stop killing black rhinos for their horns, soon all black rhinos will be killed. The only ones we can see then are the ones in documentaries.

DSE 2022 Part A Q5 Extended response (changed to Multiple choice)

e.g. What does 'we will only see black rhinos in documentary films' suggest about black rhinos?

- A. More documentary films about black rhinos will be made.
- B. The price of black rhino horns will increase.
- C. The black rhino population will increase.
- D. There will be no black rhinos alive.

A B C D

Let's practise!

Dr Alex Poon, from the environmentalist group Green Future, asked why the government has sent thousands of tons of used plastic bottles to landfills. He pointed out that during last year alone, more than 5,000 tons of plastic bottles ended up in landfills, rather than being sent to recycling facilities to be made into new products.

Our reporter Cathy Lo talked to the owner of a plastic recycling facility in Yuen Long. When we told him about Dr Poon's discovery, he simply shook his head.

DSE 2021 Part A Q2 Multiple choice

- ① How did Dr Alex Poon suggest the government deal with used plastic bottles? He suggested ...
- | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| A. the plastic bottles be sent to landfills. | | | | |
| B. the government reply to his question. | | | | |
| C. the plastic bottles be recycled. | A | B | C | D |
| D. a closer look into the matter. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

DSE 2022 Part A Q21 Extended response

- ② What does the writer imply by stating 'he simply shook his head'?

Exam Booster

Recently, it was observed in South Africa that some orca whales attacked sharks for their nutritious livers. At first, only one to two dead sharks were found. But a few weeks later, dozens more were spotted. Scientists suspected that the number of orcas that attacked sharks for their livers had increased.

Also, in Spain, boat owners reported that their boats were hit by orcas when they were sailing in the sea. Over a period of two years, the number of reports has shot up, leading authorities to believe that it is not the work of a small number of orcas.

DSE 2019 Part B2 Q58 Multiple choice

- ① Which of the following does the writer NOT imply in the text?
- | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| A. Orcas only attack sharks and boats. | | | | |
| B. Orcas can teach other orcas new skills. | | | | |
| C. Orcas understand what food is good for them. | A | B | C | D |
| D. Orcas can be a threat to humans. | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |