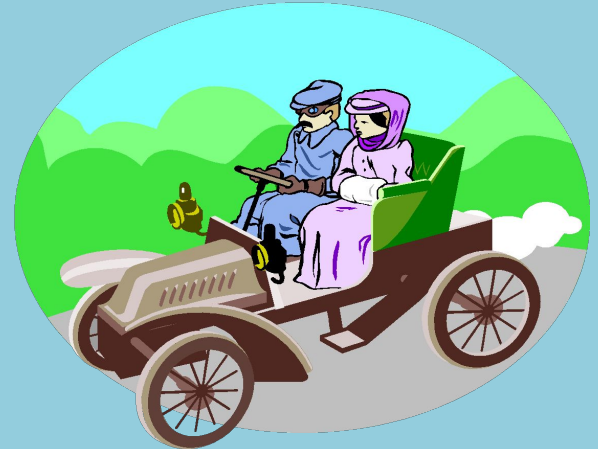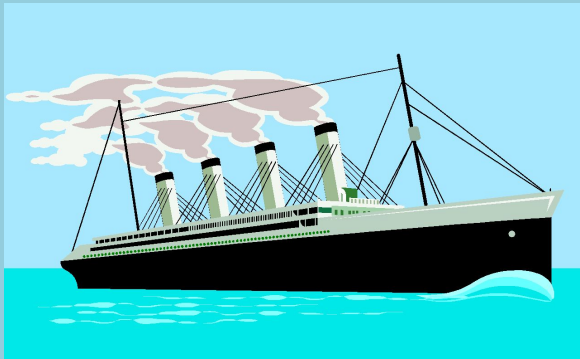# MAKING AN INFERENCE

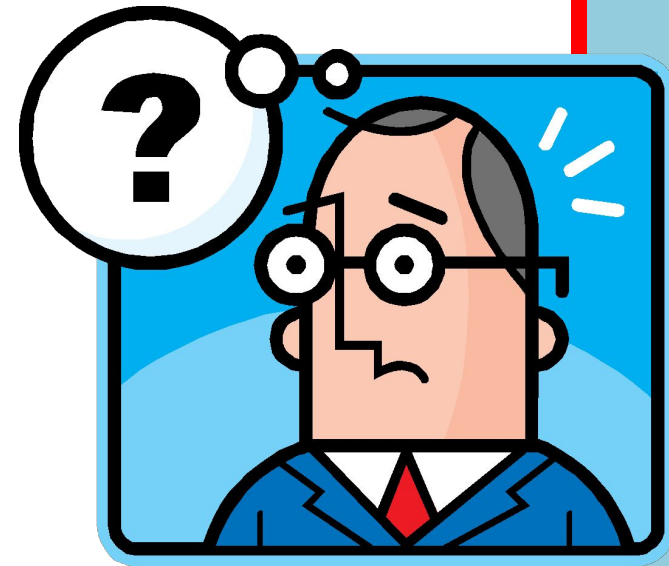## An Essential skill for Middle and High School students.

INFERENCE:

A decision reached on the basis of evidence in a text and your own background knowledge.

Definitions

- An **inference** IS an educated guess about the text.
- An **inference** IS "reading between the lines."
- An **inference** is NOT directly stated in the text you're reading.

Definitions

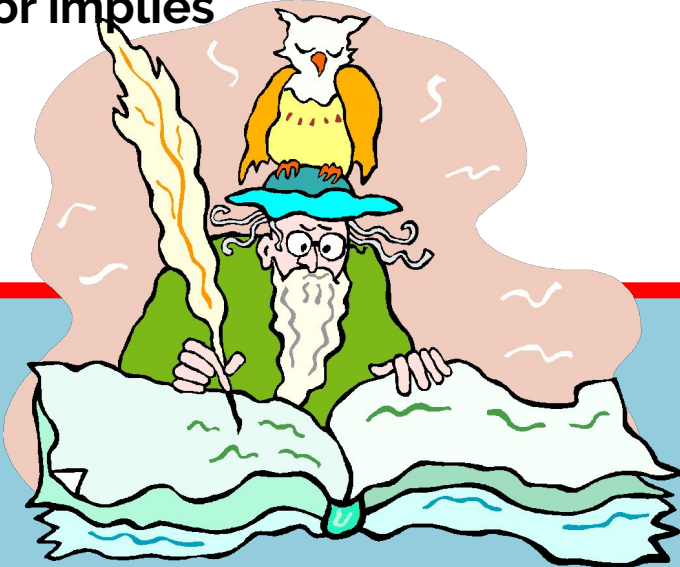**Drawing a conclusion:** is the outcome of making an **inference**.

Definitions

Prediction: is an outcome about the future that you have inferred.

Definitions

The author/character implies, but you the reader infer when you make an educated guess.

Author implies

Reader infers

How do you know that you are being asked to make an inference?

One of these verbs will be used:

*suggest (Which answer does the text suggest is …)

*imply (Which answer does the author imply is …)

*infer (What can you infer from the text as the reason….)

*reasonably infer (What can you reasonably infer is…)

*suggested that (The author suggested that who…)

*with which would the author agree

    (With which answer would the author agree as to…)

*which sentence would the author most likely use…(Which sentence would the author most likely use to explain…)

Example 1

The resilient survivors were soon cracking jokes.

Can you guess what "resilient" means from the sentence? A skilled reader uses context clues to "infer" the meaning of the word. He knows the meaning of "survivors." He "infers" that because they are soon cracking jokes,the survivor is doing fine now. "Resilient" must have to do with overcoming something.

Example 2

This example shows how to:
Use inference to learn more about a character.

"**My mother had to try to keep track of us. She finally took us and tied us all together so that we would stay together. And that's the way we came off the boat.**" --A Swiss Immigrant

A skilled reader can infer from these words of the character that his mother wanted to keep them safe.

Example 3

"The credit card has risen as a new symbol of "status" that lets people rent a plane or boat or car ...without having to pay a penny." --TIME magazine

A skilled reader infers that TIME magazine was **biased** about the use of the new credit card. To feel important, people would get a credit card and purchase as much as their neighbors did because of the magazine's article. Credit cards have faults too—interest. Quotation marks can mean sarcasm.

Example 4

President John F. Kennedy was shot and killed in a motorcade in Dallas, Texas on Nov. 22nd 1963.

A skilled reader can infer (conclude) that someone needs to take control of the United States government immediately.

INFERENCE PRACTICE

1   "I have voted the same way for years. It is the first time I've ever voted for the Green Party," said one Alabama voter.

Using inference and prior knowledge, which party would you conclude that this voter previously voted for? (Answer on next slide.)

 # 2: Since its debut in 1999, this cartoon has had people laughing at the antics of a pineapple-dwelling sponge and his friends in Bikini Bottom.

What can you infer, is the television show this sentence is about? Pull from your prior knowledge. Answer is on next slide.

As you look through the next few slides, you will be "inferring" answers to the questions.

Infer the information on the next 15 slides, your answers are this week's assignment.

"Miss America" of 1921 stood only 5 feet 1 inch tall.

With which following statement would the author be more likely to agree?

1. In 1921 judges thought tall women were less attractive than shorter ones.
2. Miss America of 1921 was shorter than winners of more recent years.

NUMBER 2

In the 1940s Joe DiMaggio was an American baseball hero. He gave Americans something to cheer about, relieving the fear they shared of the war.

The information above suggests that the war mentioned is WWII. True or false?
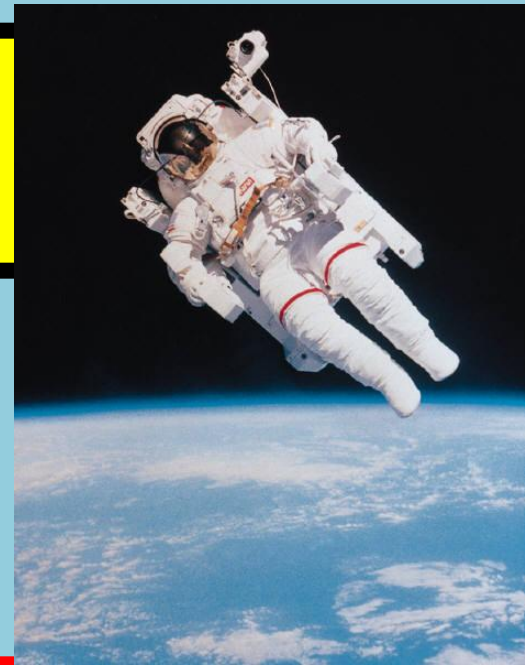
NUMBER 3

This is a quote from Greg Foudy who recently recovered from COVID-19 "I feel fortunate that I didn't die or infect anyone else," he said. "I also was lucky," he said. "I had all my ducks lined up in a row when it came to closing my business and retiring. I didn't have to worry about not having an income because I would have had to shut the business down. So I want to do everything I can to help those who may not be as fortunate."

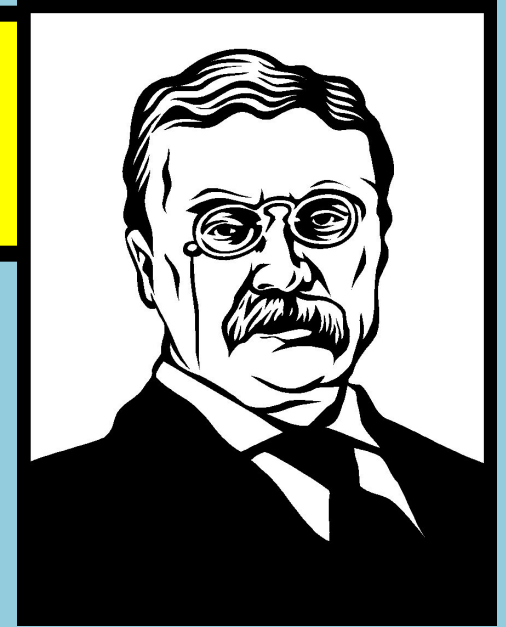What can you infer about Greg Foudy's age? How old is he?

NUMBER 4

In February 1984, Bruce McCandless II, aboard the space shuttle Challenger, floated free untethered into space above Earth.

What can you infer about McCandless's personality?

NUMBER 5

Thomas Edison once said that Theodore Roosevelt was the most striking figure in American life.

Do you feel the author is implying that we should believe Thomas Edison's opinion? Why or why not?

NUMBER 6

Radio became the most common communication medium in 1920. Three decades later television came along.

Inference: What would you infer about the sale of radios in the 1950's? Increase or decline?
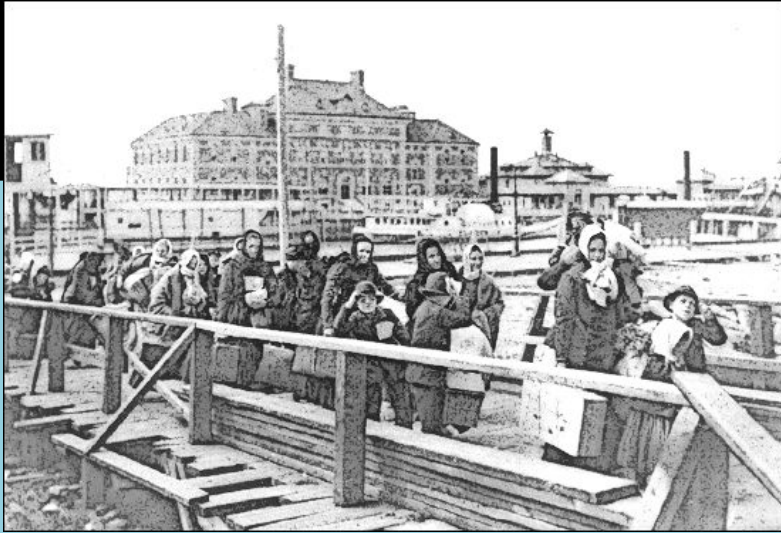
During WWII while men were away, women began filling jobs that were needed to fight the war.

Inference: What job would have been needed more?

Choose from these:

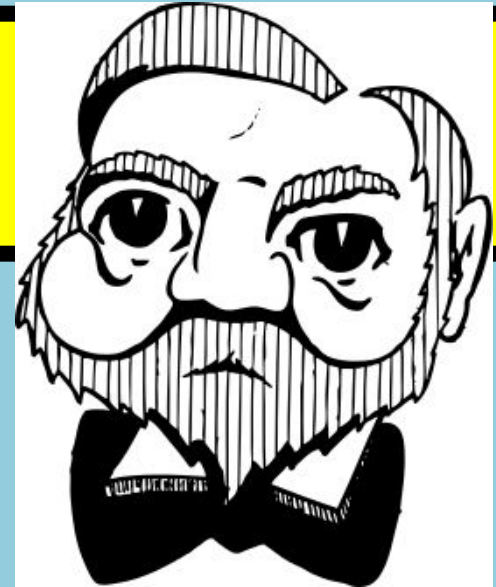Making plane parts or making car parts

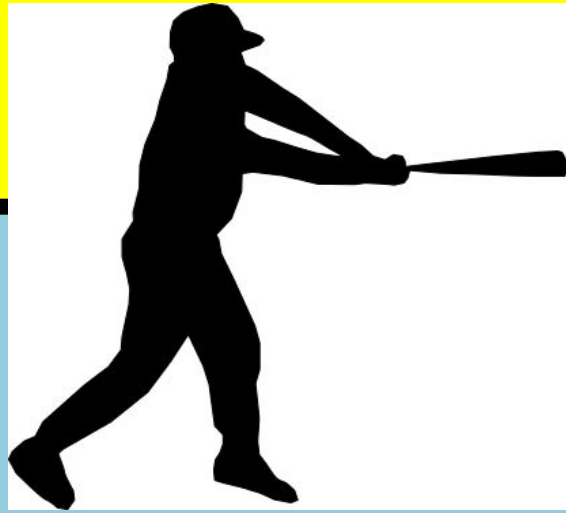**People came to Ellis Island around 1910 aboard ships.**

Inference: Would these people be Americans or immigrants?

NUMBER 9

Andrew Carnegie made a fortune in steel. He distributed much of it to colleges, libraries, and foundations. Making him a great philanthropist.

Inference: What do you think "philanthropist" means?

In 1901 the National League was joined by a competing league known as the American League in baseball.

Inference: Would there have been problems between the two leagues?

There was a crowd of customers sampling the first ice cream cones at the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904.

Can you infer what season it is?

The San Francisco Earthquake of 1906 is listed as a major event of the century.
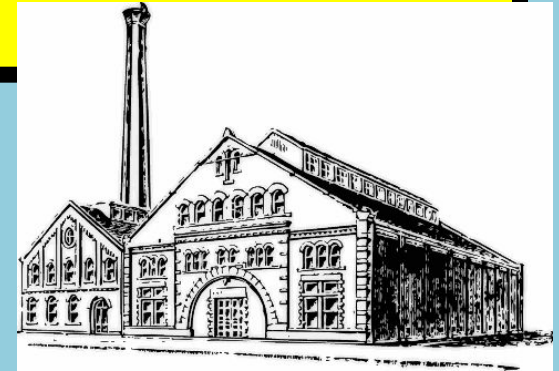
Inference: Can you reasonably infer that many people died?

Piggly Wiggly grocery store was the first store where shoppers could get their own packaged foods. Before that the clerk had to weigh and package each item.

Inference: Did the customers like this change?

NUMBER 14

In 1913 twenty percent of children in America (some, it is hard to believe, as young as 4 or 5 years old) worked in mills, factories, and mines.

Inference: Is the author implying that this was acceptable in 1913 and also today?

NUMBER 15

"The only real game in the world is baseball," said Babe Ruth in 1947.

Inference: Do you infer from this that Babe Ruth is biased or not?

BONUS: Can you create a scenario that can only be understood using inference?

Try it!