Making Inferences: Guided Notes

LEQ: How can making inferences help readers further understand the meaning of a text?

What is an inference?
- A conclusion drawn from textual evidence and prior knowledge/experience.
- Reading between the lines.
- When you make an inference, you go BEYOND the author’s words, to understand what is NOT SAID in the text.

Prediction vs. Inference
- Predictions and inferences are very similar, but they are NOT the same.
- Prediction = an educated guess about what will happen next or later in a text that can be confirmed or denied.
  - Typically made BEFORE and DURING reading. (You cannot predict something that has already happened).
- Inference = an educated guess about something that is not stated directly in the text, based on evidence and clues, that cannot be confirmed or denied.
  - Typically made DURING and AFTER reading.

How do you make inferences?
- Inferences are made by questioning during the story.
- Ask yourself about why a character does something, how a character feels, etc.
- Draw on past experiences and prior knowledge.
- Look at the words and phrases an author chooses to use.
- Consider the title, if one is given.

Inference Equation

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What I Read</th>
<th>What I Know</th>
<th>What I Infer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use textual evidence/quotes</td>
<td>Use background knowledge &amp; prior experience</td>
<td>Put two &amp; two together &amp; make a conclusion about the story</td>
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Practice With a Partner

Directions: Read the following passage. Using textual evidence, past experiences, and other clues, discuss and write down three plausible inferences you can make. Include the textual evidence and past experiences that led you to that inference on the designated lines.

Reflection

Kneeling there, bent over the stream, neck craning forward toward the water, I could almost pretend I was someone else. The reflection staring back at me shared similar features, of course: brown eyes and long dark hair falling over thin shoulders, whipping across a tanned face in the persistent wind. Everything else, though, was slightly blurred, my nose and mouth morphing into different shapes, the outlines of my chin and cheekbones shimmering in the natural current of the water, constantly reworking the contours of my face.

Looking more closely, however, I began to recognize more and more of myself in that reflection. It might have been something in the forlorn expression I had seen so many times in the mirror. Or it could have been in the way my shoulders slumped forward, tired and defeated. Whatever it was, I didn't want to see it there; in the one place my identity could be kept a secret.

So I grabbed the first stone I saw, small and pearly, and flung it into the water. With a splash, it landed directly in the center of my reflected image, sending a series of ripples surging outward from my nose, coercing my features to dance an unrehearsed waltz with the water as it swelled and fell, circled and waved. Finally, I couldn't make out anything that gave me away. I was no one. I was anyone.

Inference 1: ________________________________________________________________.
Textual Evidence: ____________________________________________________________________.
Prior Experience/Knowledge: ____________________________________________________________________.

Inference 2: ________________________________________________________________.
Textual Evidence: ____________________________________________________________________.
Prior Experience/Knowledge: ____________________________________________________________________.

Inference 3: ________________________________________________________________.
Textual Evidence: ____________________________________________________________________.
Prior Experience/Knowledge: ____________________________________________________________________.

Answers will vary but should draw conclusions about what the character is thinking/feeling, what has happened to the character, where the character is, etc. The key here is that students are using BOTH text evidence and prior experience to draw these conclusions. I always have students share out after they have finished recording their answers.