Use Clues to Support Your Answer

Two teacher-led lessons for making inferences

Grades 3–5 | One student or a small group

Use clues to support an inference instead of adding a story the text does not give.

Choose this focus with the student

Use after a student chooses an answer labeled “Idea the text doesn’t support,” or cannot explain how a clue supports a guess. Listen before selecting this focus. New-format reports show counts and answers; the teacher chooses the support.

Check unfamiliar words and word reading before deciding the difficulty is inference. An unsupported choice is a reason to listen, not a diagnosis.

Print only what you need

Material	Lesson 1	Lesson 2
Teacher guide and key	Page 2	Page 6
Teaching text for each student	Page 3	Page 7
Shared cut-apart cards	Page 4	Page 8
Fresh exit check for each student	Page 5	Page 9

Page 10 records observations and feedback. Give the teaching page first with A–C covered. Keep cards hidden until step 3 and exit checks hidden until step 5. None of these passages comes from the app checks or the first lesson pack.

Use talk to reveal the thinking

Each child chooses before hearing the group. Invite pointing, underlining or an oral explanation. With one student, the teacher is the discussion partner. Judge reasoning separately from spelling and handwriting.

Read aloud or explain unfamiliar words when needed and record that help. Keep a reasoning prompt separate. The exit texts ask for transfer with less support; they are not calibrated reading-level or mastery tests. Try lessons on separate days. Plan 12–15 minutes each; timings are estimates.

Background and classroom use

IES guidance supports comprehension strategy instruction, discussion, word knowledge and questioning. It does not validate this new pack.

IES comprehension guidance for K to grade 3

IES reading intervention guidance for grades 4 to 9

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Keep the Guess Within the Clues

Goal The student joins two actions to support a feeling without inventing an event.

Use One student or 3–5 students. Plan 12–15 minutes; adjust to fit. Give page 3 now with A–C covered. Keep page 5 for step 5. Prepare eight cards from page 4; keep them hidden until step 3.

Words to clarify note card = a small card with reminders; barely = only just. Define only unfamiliar words.

1 Listen first 2 minutes Keep choices and cards hidden. Ask what Leila does before speaking. Ask what feeling those actions could suggest; accept a supported idea before comparing the printed choices.

2 Model a check 2 minutes Uncover B. Say: “Ending early could make someone excited. But I need a clue that this group is ending early. The text gives no such clue.”

3 Talk and sort 4 minutes Uncover A and C. Each child chooses, then places the answer cards under the two labels. Keep the clue cards nearby. Ask which two clues support C and what rules out A.

4 Remove a support 1 minute Turn over all cards and cover the choices. Ask each child to explain a likely feeling and join two clues. Accept equivalent words such as worried about speaking.

5 Fresh exit check 3–5 minutes Give page 5 now without the teaching page or cards. Ask for a choice and an explanation. An oral response is fine. Record reading help, word help and reasoning prompts separately.

Answers and feedback

A Other choice Her book is open on her knees. The text does not show another child taking it.

B Other choice The passage does not say the group will finish early. This adds an event.

C Best answer Folding the card repeatedly and speaking very quietly support nervousness about sharing.

Useful clues 1, 2. Nervous is the best-supported feeling. Link the repeated folding or looking down with her very quiet first words.

Exit B Accept frustrated, annoyed at the puzzle, or similar wording. Link repeated failed fits with the long breath, pushing away or folded arms. A adds a threat the story never gives. C conflicts with the unfinished gap.

Before the exit Clarify dock = a platform beside water; gap = an empty space. Give meanings without naming the answer or its supporting clue.

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Before the Book Talk

Student code _____ Date _____

Leila waited for her turn to share a book. She had read it twice and marked her favorite page. A class list lay beside the teacher's chair.

Leila folded the corner of her note card, then smoothed it flat. She did this again while the next reader spoke. Her book stayed open on her knees.

When the teacher called her name, Leila stood but looked down at her card. Her first words were barely loud enough to hear.

The teacher waited. Leila took a breath and tried the first sentence again. This time, the children in the back could hear her.

Keep A-C covered until your teacher asks you to look.

How did Leila probably feel before her turn?

A. Annoyed that another reader had taken her book.

B. Excited that the group was ending early today.

C. Nervous about speaking in front of the group.

Choose before discussion. Then point, speak or write to explain.

My answer is supported by these clues

Another answer adds something the passage does not tell. What does it add?

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Answer and Clue Cards

Cut out all eight cards. Keep one set per group. Save them for step 3.

How did Leila probably feel before her turn?

Sort label cards

SUPPORTED AS AN ANSWER	NOT SUPPORTED AS AN ANSWER

Answer and clue cards

Answer A Annoyed that another reader had taken her book.	**Clue 1** “Leila folded the corner of her note card, then smoothed it flat.”
Answer B Excited that the group was ending early today.	**Clue 2** “Her first words were barely loud enough to hear.”
Answer C Nervous about speaking in front of the group.	**Clue 3** “A class list lay beside the teacher's chair.”

Put the label cards apart. Sort the answer cards under the labels.

Keep the clue cards nearby. Use them to explain your sorting.

Say: “This clue supports my answer because …”

Turn over the cards and explain the supported answer in your own words.

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The Puzzle Table

Student code _____ Date _____

Read this new passage. Choose and explain without the teaching cards.

Amir chose a puzzle from the classroom shelf. The picture showed a red boat beside a dock. He spread the pieces on a table while his partner found the corners.

Amir tried to fit a small blue piece into a gap near the boat. He turned it, pressed it, and pulled it out. He tried two more pieces in the same place.

He let out a long breath and pushed the pieces away. For a moment, he folded his arms and stared at the gap. His partner kept sorting the edge pieces.

Then Amir moved closer to the table again. He set the blue pieces in one pile and began looking at their shapes. His partner slid over an empty tray to hold them.

How did Amir most likely feel when he pushed the pieces away?

A. Worried that another child would take the puzzle.

B. Frustrated that the pieces would not fit.

C. Proud that he had finished the difficult puzzle.

Underline a clue. Explain how it supports your choice.

You may explain aloud. Your teacher can write your words.

Teacher records support used

Text read aloud: Yes / No | Word meaning given: Yes / No

Reasoning prompt given: Yes / No | Student explained: In writing / Aloud

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Use the Details to Explain a Purpose

Goal The student connects a problem with a tool that addresses it, without assigning the tool an unsupported job.

Use One student or 3–5 students. Plan 12–15 minutes; adjust to fit. Give page 7 now with A–C covered. Keep page 9 for step 5. Prepare eight cards from page 8; keep them hidden until step 3.

Words to clarify lends = lets someone use and return something; photograph = a picture made with a camera. Define only unfamiliar words.

1 Listen first 2 minutes Keep A–C and the cards covered. Ask what problem missing pieces cause and what the helper puts in each bag.

2 Model a check 2 minutes Uncover C. Say: “Knowing who borrowed a game might be useful. But the text says the photograph shows the pieces, not the borrowers. I cannot add that job without a clue.”

3 Talk and sort 4 minutes Uncover A and B. Each child chooses before discussion. Sort the answer cards, then use the clue cards to explain the supported purpose. Ask what B actually describes.

4 Remove a support 1 minute Hide the cards and choices. Ask how the photograph helps when a game is returned. Listen for a comparison of the returned pieces with the complete set.

5 Fresh exit check 3–5 minutes Give page 9 now without the teaching page or cards. Ask for a choice and an explanation. An oral response is fine. Record reading help, word help and reasoning prompts separately. This exit transfers explaining a purpose to predicting an action from clues.

Answers and feedback

A Best answer A complete picture gives players a set to compare with the returned pieces.

B Other choice The wall card gives opening days. That fact does not explain the photograph.

C Other choice The passage does not say the photograph shows past borrowers. This adds information the text never gives.

Useful clues 1, 2. The picture shows the complete set, so players or helpers can compare it with the returned pieces. Join the missing-piece problem with the photographed set.

Exit C The scissors shape is uncovered while the other tools cover their shapes. The helper is likely to look for the missing scissors. Link the checking routine with the empty shape. A conflicts with the rule for incomplete kits. B adds a replacement the text does not promise.

Before the exit Clarify kit = a set of things used together; visible = able to be seen. Give meanings without naming the answer or its supporting clue.

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The Game Checkout Box

Student code _____ Date _____

A lunchtime club lends small games to students. Each game travels in a cloth bag. A card on the wall lists the days when the club is open.

Some games have tiny pieces. If one is missing, the next players may be unable to finish their game. The pieces can hide under a chair or inside a desk.

A helper lays out every piece before taking a photograph. The photograph goes inside the bag. Beside it, a small booklet explains how to play.

When a game comes back, the helper spreads its pieces beside the photograph. A bag that needs more checking stays on the desk.

Keep A–C covered until your teacher asks you to look.

Why might the club put a photograph inside each bag?

A. To help players check that every piece is back.

B. To show students which days the game club opens.

C. To show who borrowed the game before this player.

Choose before discussion. Then point, speak or write to explain.

These two details help me explain the photograph

An answer gives the photograph a job the text does not show. Explain.

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Answer and Clue Cards

Cut out all eight cards. Keep one set per group. Save them for step 3.

Why might the club put a photograph inside each bag?

Sort label cards

SUPPORTED AS AN ANSWER	NOT SUPPORTED AS AN ANSWER

Answer and clue cards

Answer A To help players check that every piece is back.	**Clue 1** “If one is missing, the next players may be unable to finish their game.”
Answer B To show students which days the game club opens.	**Clue 2** “A helper lays out every piece before taking a photograph.”
Answer C To show who borrowed the game before this player.	**Clue 3** “A card on the wall lists the days when the club is open.”

Put the label cards apart. Sort the answer cards under the labels.

Keep the clue cards nearby. Use them to explain your sorting.

Say: “This clue supports my answer because …”

Turn over the cards and explain the supported answer in your own words.

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Borrowing the Art Kits

Student code _____ Date _____

Read this new passage. Choose and explain without the teaching cards.

An after-school art room lends kits for work at nearby tables. Each kit holds scissors, a glue stick and colored pencils. A label on the shelf gives the kit a number.

Inside the lid, a drawing shows each tool in its own space. Students lay the tools over their matching drawings before returning a kit. A tool in the wrong space will cover a different shape.

A helper opens each returned kit. If every drawing is covered by its matching tool, the kit goes back on the shelf. The helper leaves other kits on the counter.

Today, a student returns kit six. The pencils and glue cover their drawings, but the scissors shape is still visible. The helper keeps the lid open and looks toward the tables.

What will the helper most likely do next?

A. The helper will put kit six back on the shelf.

B. The helper will give the student new scissors.

C. The helper will look for the missing scissors.

Underline a clue. Explain how it supports your choice.

You may explain aloud. Your teacher can write your words.

Teacher records support used

Text read aloud: Yes / No | Word meaning given: Yes / No

Reasoning prompt given: Yes / No | Student explained: In writing / Aloud

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Observe and Choose the Next Step

Record one row per student and lesson. Use student codes. Keep these notes in approved storage with the student work.

I = reasoning without a prompt | P = reasoning prompt needed | N = not demonstrated

Add R for text read aloud and W for word meaning given. I with R is independent reasoning with reading support.

Code and lesson	Finds useful clues	Keeps the guess within the text	Explains the link	R or W support	What to teach or check next

Choose what comes next

Use the explanation, not one correct choice. Continue this focus, try another pack, check vocabulary or word reading, or fade support with a new task. One exit response is not a mastery cutoff.

Tell us how the lessons worked

Pilot feedback: email only your feedback answers.

Time used: Lesson 1 _____ | Lesson 2 _____

1. Could you get started easily?

2. Did the lessons help you choose what to teach next?

3. What confused you or your students?

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Send general feedback only. Do not email student names, codes, work samples or this completed observation table.

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