

Teaching Text-Based Inferences

Making inferences is a complex process. These passages will help students to make a specific kind of inference—a text-based inference. In this kind of inference, students put together a rule from a passage with a critical fact to come to a conclusion.

These passages are suitable for struggling readers in grades 3-6. They work especially well with students known as “word callers”—students who are reading with appropriate fluency, but are having trouble with comprehension.

As you work with students, try letting them work with the first passage on their own. What do they come up with? Then, model making the inference. Use a highlighter to show students the critical detail in the start of the passage that helps them to make the inference at the end.

Enjoy! I’ve been surprised by how much students have liked these passages. Practicing the same pattern over and over has helped them to read more carefully. It has also helped them to see how they use details from the text to make inferences.

MAKING INFERENCES: YOUR NEW MISSION

Congratulations! You have been selected for a very important spy mission.

YOUR TASK

You will use the reading strategies of *inferring* and *visualizing* as you read an important spy adventure.

YOUR STRATEGY

You will combine clues in the beginning of the text with clues in the middle and end of the text. When you put this information together, you will make an *inference*. Your inferences will help Max Mission to save the world's weather.

YOUR BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

What do you already know about spy missions? Write some ideas in the box below.

Secret Agent Max Mission

Mission 1: The Car

Secret Agent Max Mission was at headquarters. He was getting a car for his next mission. "My next mission is in the mountains," he said to himself. "I will need a car that can travel rough roads."

Max went into the gadget shop. The gadget shop was filled with neat tools and gadgets for spying. "I need a car," Max said to the head of the gadget shop, Gabby Gizmo.

"We've been working on some cars," Gabby said. "They have many special features. Let me show you what we have."

Gabby led Max down a long row of cars. She pointed to a silver car. "This one has a special stealth mode," Gabby said. "You can travel down city streets without being seen. It's called the Stealth 2000."

"That's awesome!" said Max. "Stealth mode could be very helpful."

Then they went to the next car. It was black. "This car has jet thrusters," Gabby said. "It's called the Jet 402. If you are going over a river and there is no bridge, you can use the jet thrusters."

"You invent amazing cars," said Max.

"That's not all," said Gabby. She stopped in front of a green car. "Look at this one," she said. "It has extra large wheels. It can travel over rocks and through creeks. It is called the Boulder 99."

"So many choices!" Max said. "But I know which one I want."

Secret Agent Max Mission

Mission 1: The Car

Inference: Which car does Max choose? _____

- Underline the text details that you used to help you make this inference.

Visualizing

Draw a picture to show how you visualized each of the three cars.

Stealth 2000	Jet 402	Boulder 99

Secret Agent Max Mission

Mission 2: The Contact

Max Mission zoomed along the road in his new green car, the Boulder 99. "Next I have to meet Agent Zeke," he said to himself. "He has important information to give me."

Max had never met Agent Zeke. He didn't even know what the agent looked like. All he knew was that Agent Zeke had short hair and would be carrying a green backpack.

In a few moments, Max arrived at Blue Lake Park. This was where he would meet Agent Zeke. But this part was tricky and a little dangerous. There might be evil agents around. Max would have to be very careful.

Blue Lake Park was a beautiful place. Today it was filled with people. Some were having picnics. Others were playing in the field. Still others were admiring the lake.

Max scanned the park. A man with short black hair sat at a picnic table, reading a book. His green backpack sat beside him.

On the other side of the park, a young college student was playing Frisbee with his dog. He shook back his long blond hair and pulled a dog treat out of his green backpack.

Another man sat by the lake, feeding the ducks. He pulled pieces of bread out of a bag and tossed them to the ducks. He had short, curly reddish hair and a brown backpack.

Max took a deep breath. He had spotted Agent Zeke. Now he had to make contact and get the important information.

Secret Agent Max Mission

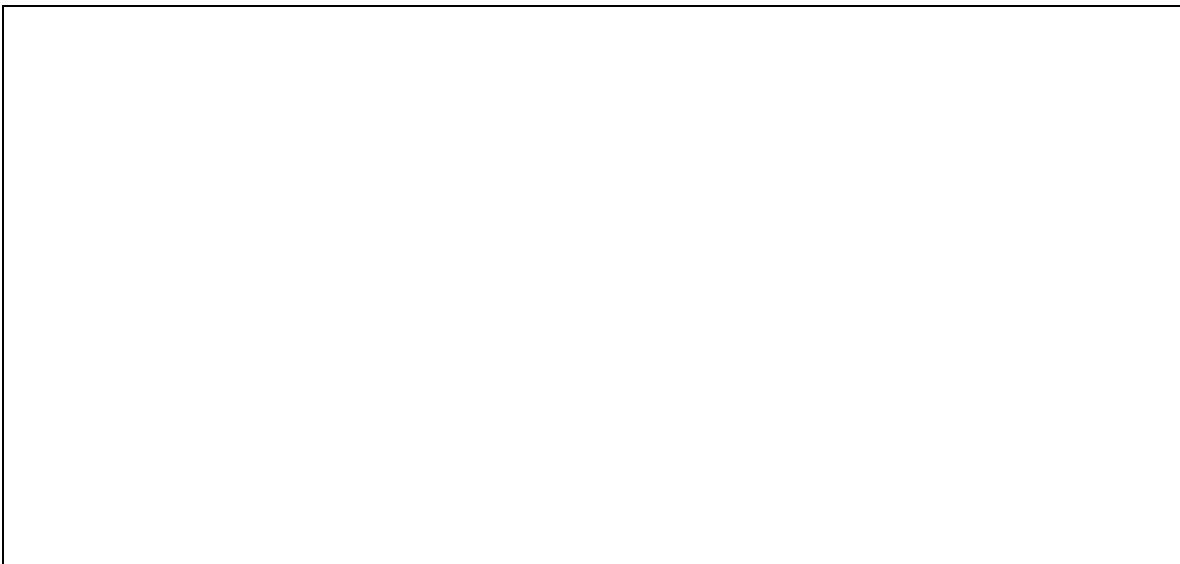
Mission 2: The Contact

Inference: Which man is Agent Zeke? _____

- Underline the text details that you used to help you make this inference.

Visualizing

Draw a picture to show how you visualized the park. Label specific details from the text.



Secret Agent Max Mission

Mission 3: The Gadget

Max Mission read over the packet of information that Agent Zeke put in front of him. "So the evil agents have set up a weather-changing device. They want to make it rain all the time!"

Agent Zeke nodded. "That's what I've learned, yes." He frowned. "The device is waterproof and shockproof. It will be hard to destroy. But I've found a weakness: It can't stand heat." Agent Zeke stood up and picked up his backpack. "I have to go. Good luck, Max."

Max sat at the picnic table. He had to figure out how he could destroy the weather device. Which gadget could he use?

He walked back to the Boulder 99 and pulled out his bag of gadgets.

"This one is a water blaster," he said to himself. He pulled out a long silver tube. "It can shoot a jet of water with incredible force. Maybe it would work."

He thought some more. "Or I could use this," he said. "Gabby said that this is a heat ray. It can create waves of sudden heat." He held up a bright red cylinder with buttons and wires along the side.

There was one more gadget in the bag—a force shocker. The force shocker was a black box with a yellow button. "This one will create a force field that can shatter anything in its path," he said. "Wow. What great gadgets. But which one?"

Then he smiled. He remembered what Zeke had told him. He knew which gadget to use.

Secret Agent Max Mission

Mission 3: The Gadget

Inference: Which gadget will Max choose? _____

- Underline the text details that you used to help you make this inference.

Visualizing

Draw a picture to show how you visualized the three gadgets. Label specific details from the text.

Water blaster	Heat ray	Force shocker

Secret Agent Max Mission

Mission 4: The Device

Max Mission took the Boulder 99 to the top of Pine Mountain. "I'm glad that I chose this car," he said, as he bumped along the dirt road.

He thought back to all that he knew about the device. The evil agents were going to use it to change the weather and make it rain all the time. "It's in a light brown shed," Agent Zeke had told him. "Destroy the shed, and you'll destroy the device."

He finally reached the top of the mountain. There were tall pine trees all around him. A clearing held three small sheds. He was there!

Max pulled over to the side of the road and hid his car in the bushes. "I'd better keep an eye out for evil agents," he thought. He jumped out of the car, grabbed the heat ray, and walked to the clearing.

In the clearing were three small buildings. One was a white shed with many windows. Inside the shed, he could just barely see a large machine with many blinking lights.

Next to it was a shed made of unpainted wood. It was a small building, very basic, with no windows. The last building was blue. It was made of shiny metal, and had narrow rectangular windows. The roof of the blue building was bright red.

"Which one?" thought Max. "My heat ray only has enough power for one blast. I have to get this right!"

Then he smiled. He raised the heat ray. He knew which shed to blast!

Secret Agent Max Mission

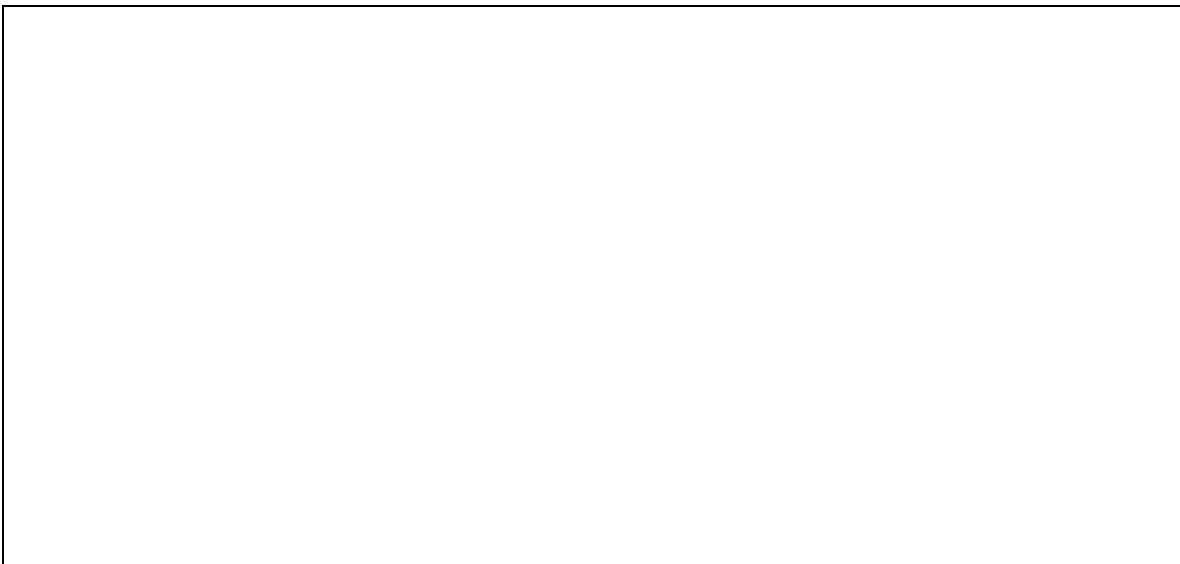
Mission 4: The Device

Inference: Which shed should Max destroy? _____

- Underline the text details that you used to help you make this inference.

Visualizing

Draw a picture to show how you visualized the three sheds. Label specific details from the text.



MISSION DEBRIEFING

Write a sentence to explain the events in each one of Max's missions.

Mission #1: The Car _____

Mission #2: The Agent _____

Mission #3: The Gadget _____

Mission #4: The Device _____
