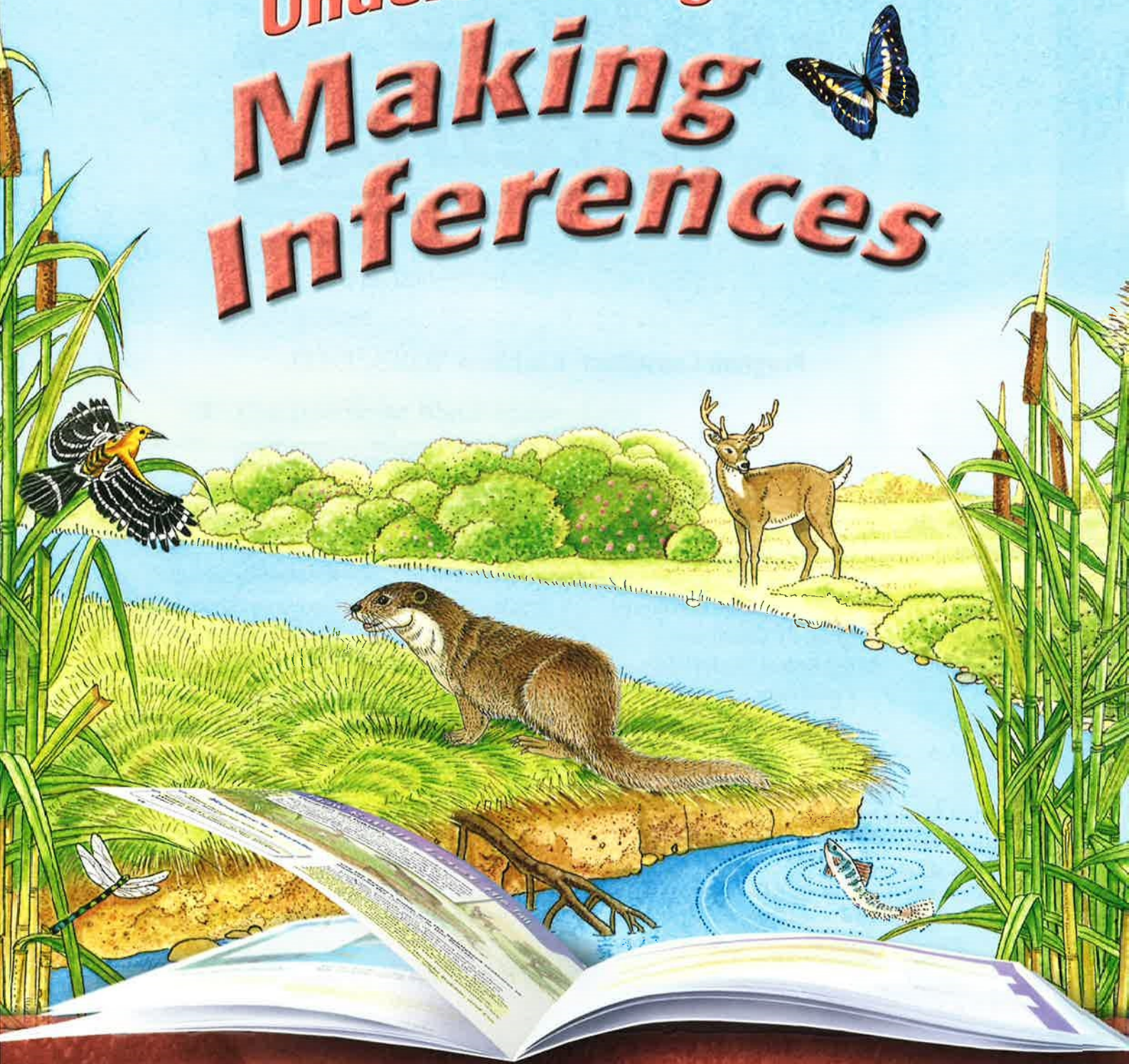




Critical Reading

Differentiated Instruction Across Genres

Understanding Making Inferences



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Use Strategies to Understand What You Read

Sometimes you read to enjoy a good story. At other times you read to learn something new. No matter why you read, you need to **understand what you read**.

Using **reading strategies** will deepen your understanding of what you read. Use the strategies below to understand the reading selections in this book.

Before You Read

- ◆ Think about **why** you will read the selection.
- ◆ **Preview** the selection.
- ◆ Think about how the selection is **organized**.
- ◆ Think about what you **already know**.
- ◆ For a fiction selection, **predict** what the story is about and what will happen. For a nonfiction selection, **predict** what the selection is about and what information you will find.
- ◆ **Plan** how you will read the selection.

While You Read

- ◆ Make sure you **understand** what you are reading. If not, make some changes. For example, reread what doesn't make sense.
- ◆ **Ask yourself questions** about what you are reading.
- ◆ **Make connections** between what is in the selection and what you already know.
- ◆ Pay attention to **different kinds of type**, such as dark, or bold, type. Think about why it's different.
- ◆ Study any **pictures, photos, captions, charts, or graphs**.
- ◆ Create a **mental picture** of important details in the selection.

After You Read

- ◆ Think about **your predictions**. Were your predictions right?
- ◆ **Answer questions** about what you read.
- ◆ **Organize** important parts or details from the selection.
- ◆ **Summarize** the selection.

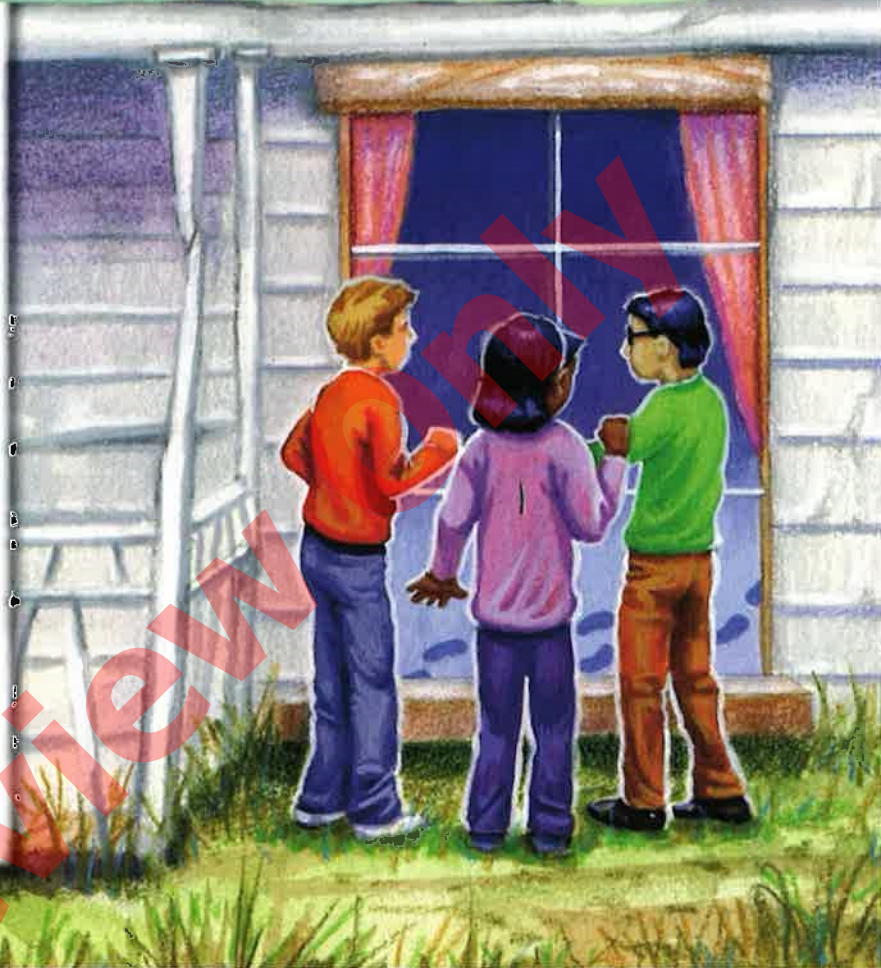
Lesson 2

The House on Blackwillow Lane

Making Inferences and Mysteries

When readers **make inferences**, they connect pieces of stated information to figure out something else. Sometimes readers must also use their **prior knowledge**, or what they already know. A reader's prior knowledge includes things the reader has seen, done, or learned.

A **mystery** is a fiction story with a puzzle or unusual problem to solve, such as *What happened?* *Who did it?* or *Where is it?* Story characters use clues to make inferences just as readers do. To **understand** a mystery, readers can make inferences to learn more about the characters and events or to solve the mystery on their own.



Reader's Guide

What do you already know that helps you understand where the ball is?

exasperated annoyed

Use the Reader's Guide and the highlighted sentences to make inferences as you read this mystery story.

"Where did it go?" yelled Justin.

"I think it bounced onto the porch," said Toya. "I heard a floorboard creak."

"Grab it, Toya," said Justin, stepping back.

"Not me," said Toya, her eyes darting nervously toward the porch.

"You two!" sighed an **exasperated** Perry. "You don't honestly believe that old house is haunted, do you? That's just a story made up to scare people. But if you're afraid, then I suppose I'll have to get the ball."

Perry marched toward the house in a confident manner even though he shivered inside. He lived farther down on Blackwillow Lane, so he passed the house almost every day, but he had never been this close to the house before. It looked much more **sinister** up close.

Perry stepped onto the cracked and rotting boards of the front porch, which creaked loudly. He spotted the basketball, which had rolled behind scattered pieces of old firewood near the front door. As he picked up the ball, he glanced through a front window, expecting to see a dusty floor, spider webs, and maybe an old lamp or two. Instead he saw something unusual. He blinked to make sure he wasn't dreaming. Then he called excitedly for the others to join him.

Justin and Toya slowly approached the house and stepped cautiously in front of the window. Justin squinted through the glass, and Toya peered over his shoulder. Inside they saw fresh footprints tracked across the dusty floor, a black-and-white photograph in a corner, and strangest of all, numbers traced in the other grimy windows.

"Maybe someone lives here now," said Justin as he and the others stepped off the porch and headed home.

● The next day, the children hid themselves in the bushes across the street and watched the house until nightfall without seeing anything. They returned to the house the following morning and saw freshly made footprints on another part of the floor.

"It's a big man—just look at the size of those footprints!" said Perry. "Maybe he's hiding. Maybe he doesn't want anyone to see him."

"I have an idea," said Toya. "Let's come here after dark. Meet me here tonight at eight."

That night, the three friends waited in the bushes next to the house as mosquitoes hovered around them in the sticky night air.

sinister threatening; evil

● What **inference** can you make about the house?

● Based on your **prior knowledge**, do you think someone lives in the house? Why or why not?

Using your **prior knowledge**, make an **inference** about why Justin, Toya, and Perry run away.

irritably bothered

What **inference** can you make about the photograph?

“Look!” whispered Toya as a shadowy figure stepped out of the house and turned toward them.

“Run!” shouted Justin.

The children burst from the bushes and sprinted to Perry’s house as gravel crunched and steps pounded behind them. ●

The next day, though, Justin, Toya, and Perry had to return to the old house and retrace their steps.

“Where did you last see them?” asked Toya **irritably**.

“If I could see, I’d tell you,” said Justin **glumly**, “but without them, everything’s a big blur.”

“Hello!” a young man called from the front porch. “Don’t run! It’s okay.” The children remained glued in place.

“I’m Ben Stern,” he said. “I know you’re probably wondering what I’m doing in this house. I found out last week that I’m the last living relative of the owners, so the house is mine.”

“Why do you sneak around at night?” asked Toya. Ben laughed. “I go to work during the day.”

“What about the numbers in the dust on the windows?” asked Justin.

“I took some measurements but didn’t have a pen,” said Ben. “I’m trying to decide whether to rebuild the house or tear it down. Here’s a picture of the house about seventy years ago.”

“Wow!” said Toya. “I vote you rebuild so the house looks as beautiful as it does in that picture.”

Ben smiled and said, “I think I just might—hey, do these belong to any of you?” He held a pair of glasses.

“They’re mine!” said Justin.

“All mysteries solved!” said Perry.



● **Read Fluently** ● Reread the fluency section silently, then aloud to a partner.

Check Your Understanding

Circle the letter for the best answer to each question.

- Which is the best **inference** about the house's location?
 - It is far away from all other houses.
 - It is near Perry's house.
 - It is near a busy road.
 - It is near a grocery store.
- Why does Perry say that the person from the house "doesn't want anyone to see him"?
 - The person hides in the bushes.
 - The person refuses to answer the door.
 - The person runs from them.
 - He and his friends don't see the person during the day.
- Which **inference** can you make about Ben?
 - He has begun to fix up and live in the old house.
 - He visits the old house after work but doesn't sleep there.
 - He doesn't like to see children snooping around his house.
 - He will probably tear down the house.

Deepen Your Understanding

Write your answers on the lines.

- How might this story be different if Ben told it?

- Should Ben fix up the house or tear it down? Explain your answer.

Get Organized

This organizer shows **inferences** that you can make from the story. It has spaces for details from the story, your **prior knowledge**, and the inference that can be made by adding both together in your mind. Complete the organizer.

Detail from Story	+ My Prior Knowledge	→ Inference
The children hide themselves in the bushes across the street and watch the house until nightfall.	People hide when they don't want to be seen.	
Mosquitos hover around the children in the sticky night air.		It's spring or summer.
	People make noise when they're running or walking.	Someone is chasing them.
"Where did you last see them?" asked Toya.		
"If I could see, I'd tell you," said Justin.		

From Reading to Writing

On separate paper, explain a character trait of two story characters. To support what you say, give evidence from the story, along with your **prior knowledge** about people. Write a paragraph about each character.

Plan Your Writing Use the chart below to connect actions and words of the characters with your prior knowledge.

Character	Words or Actions	My Prior Knowledge About People	Inferences

For the Best Score

- I explain a character trait of two story characters.
- I **make inferences** from story details and my **prior knowledge**.
- I write a paragraph about each character.