

Inference Groups

Inference training is a group intervention for pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 who are able to decode but struggle to get full meaning and enjoyment from their reading.

Children who struggle with comprehension may:

- focus on individual words/sentences
- attach most importance to decoding each word
- read without taking all the meaning in
- not always expect that the text they read should make sense and don't know how to check understanding as they go along
- read fewer books and don't always understand story structure
- not use what they already know or have seen to help them understand
- have a less efficient working memory

Effective readers:

- know that understanding is the goal of reading
- use background knowledge, experiences and working memory as they read
- make inferences to get the gist of the text
- have high expectations of the text making sense
- make predictions, ask their own questions and watch out for "answers" as they read
- can picture what is happening in the story when appropriate
- monitor meaning, as they read and notice when the meaning is lost and use strategies to make the text make sense again
- read frequently and enjoy reading

Inference lessons demonstrate key comprehension strategies through "instructional conversations" in groups to help boost reading comprehension. Through reading and interactive discussions, the group:

- think about what they already know, apply it to their reading and use title cues to predict
- identify key words and elaborate on them to enhance meaning, and develop vocabulary
- generate their own questions and answer them
- generate inferences and build meaning into the text as they read to build a gist
- summarise a short text extract by picturing the scene or event, using quick pictures, picto-words and a 10 word or less headline
- retell an extract to emphasise the gist

Inference materials include short text extracts for KS2 pupils, many of which are from recent award winning titles which have been carefully chosen to contain rich opportunities for the pupils to discuss and enjoy. Further readings of the novels take place so that pupils can apply their skills to whole texts.

Intervention for groups consists of four pupils taught by teaching assistants or teachers for two sessions of 40 minutes a week for ten weeks.