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Reading Comprehension Lesson Plan:
Inferring (with text-to-self)

Grade: 4th Grade
Objective: Students will learn the concept of inferring—"reading between the lines" for implied meaning that is not directly stated, with special attention to character traits and mood.

Materials needed: *The Legend of the Hidden Paintbrush* by Tommy dePaola, pencil, graphic organizer, independent practice activity

Explicit Instruction/Think-Aloud: "Today we will be focusing on Inferring, or 'reading between the lies' to try to understand meaning that the author does not state directly. Often in history and other subjects, you are asked a direct question and can find the exact answer in the text. For example, for the question, 'What date was the Declaration of Independence signed?' the text will state the answer '1776' explicitly, which is the known correct answer. This makes it easier for you as a student to find exactly where that answer is stated in the text and copy it down. However, in some situations, especially in stories and novels, the author will not give you an exact answer to copy down. Instead, he or she will instead imply—suggest, or strongly hint— their meaning through description of the setting, mood, language, or behavior of characters in the text. Today we will focus on inferring meaning by finding and analyzing clues in the text." Before we do this, it is important to recognize the different between a direct statement and an implied statement. For example, a direct statement would be: "Alexis felt happy today." However, an implied statement would be "Alexis could not stop smiling and laughing." Although the author does not state directly how she feels, the reader can surmise or infer that Alexis felt happy. We are now going to read *The Legend of the Hidden Paintbrush* to practice our inferring skills. By the end of the lesson, you should be able to see how background and context clues in a story can help a reader to find answers that are not directly stated."

Develop the concept (Think-Aloud): "I will give you an example on how to infer as we read the first page, then we will practice this skill together. Please record your responses in your graphic organizer. The first page of the book states:
There was a boy who was smaller than the rest of the children in the tribe. No matter how hard he tried, he couldn't keep up with the other boys who were always riding, running, shooting their bows, and wrestling to prove their strength.
Based on what we just read, I can infer how the boy is feeling, even though the author does not explicitly state how he feels. Based on my background knowledge about young boys (frontloading file-drawer analogy), I know that boys who are smaller and cannot run as fast would be frustrated, sad, embarrassed or upset. I infer that this boy was *sad* or *defeated* that he could not keep up with the other boys. Clues from the text that helped me surmise how the boy feels were the phrase "no matter how hard he tried" the fact that he was "small," and "he couldn't keep up with the other boys." When I wasn't sure at first how the boy felt, I tried to put myself in his shoes. Imagine how you would feel if you were much smaller than everyone else and you tried your hardest but still could not achieve the same things they did. How would you feel? Now, we will continue to read the book. In your graphic organizer, I would like you to circle the words or phrases in the sections of text I have provided that help you infer how the

character feels or what the mood of the setting is. We will do this a few times together, and then you will continue working on this in partners and then on your own."

Practice the Concept: (Guided)
"Read along in this section of the text in your graphic organizer:
But even as he painted, Little Gopher sometimes longed to put aside his bushes and ride out with the warriors. But always he remembered his Dream-Vision and he did not go with them.
"What can we infer about Little Gopher's character from this text? Please circle the words that help make inferences about this character in your graphic organizer, copy them under the "key words" section, write your inference under the "inference" section, and then briefly describe why you chose this inference. (*After a couple of minutes.*) What did you infer about Little Gopher's character. (Allow for student response.) Yes, these are all good answers. Even though the boy wants to ride with the other warriors, maybe he is *patient*, *responsible*, and *loyal* to his duty. He knows the right thing to do, even if it is hard sometimes. Even though the author does not directly describe his personality, we can infer that Little Gopher has these personality and character traits. (Could extend to text-to-self.) Have you ever had a time where you chose to do the right thing, even if it was hard, or even if it was not what you wanted to do?"

Apply the Concept:

Partner and Whole Group Work:

"Now, when I read this next section, I want you to make an inference on your own without my help. Please fill in the graphic organizer the same way you have with the other examples. When you have finished, turn to a partner and compare inferences. The part of the text I would like you to focus on is:

The next day, when the People awoke, the hill was ablaze with color, for the brushes had taken root in the earth and multiplied into plants of brilliant reds, oranges and yellows.

"What can you INFER about how the People felt when they saw the hill full of color? And What are clues from the text that suggest that the people would feel a certain way? Compare your answers with a partner. Then we will write down all of your inferred adjectives on the board."

(After partner work)

"Our general consensus was that the people felt 'happily surprised,' 'awestruck,' 'impressed,' 'inspired' or happy. The parts of the text that you decided helped you make these inferences were the descriptions of the setting as being "ablaze with color" with "brilliant reds, oranges, and yellows," which you associated as being 'happy colors,' from background knowledge. Now think of a time when you have felt happy, impressed, or inspired. This will help you understand how these people felt."

Independent Work:

"I will now have you practice inferring on your own. Some of the textual examples that I give you will be from *The Legend of the Hidden Paintbrush*, but others will be excerpts from other texts. Know that you can use the inferring skills that you have learned on any kind of text. Please fill the graphic organizers and worksheet out in the same way that went through it together, and turn it in at the end of class."

Closure: "Remember that part of being a good reader is looking for answers that are not directly stated. Inferring meaning means that you must use the setting, mood, character traits to attempt to 'get into the author's head' to surmise what is happening in the text. Know that you may never have an exact or direct answer, and that people can infer meaning differently. As long as you carefully analyze the text, it is ok to have different interpretations of texts. Remember that character traits and mood are rarely stated directly but are instead implied by describing the physical environment or behavior of the characters. I encourage you to try to INFER meaning from the books you read. This skill helps makes stories way more interesting and fun, helps you get to know the characters better."

Formative: Gauging student responses during guided instruction and partner work.
Summative: Students will turn in the graphic organizer and extension worksheet.

Name: _____

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Graphic Organizer: Practice with Inferring
(more in-depth T-model)

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Directions: As your teacher reads these sections of the text aloud, circle or underline the words in the text that help you infer meaning from it. Write these words or phrases in the "key words" section. Then write your inference and a brief description as to why you feel this way. The first one is modeled for you.

Text	Key Words	Inference	Why?
"There was a boy who was ***smaller*** than the rest of the children in the tribe. ***No matter how hard he tried***, he ***couldn't keep up*** with the other boys who were always riding, running, shooting their bows, and wrestling to prove their strength."	-smaller -no matter how hard he tried -he couldn't keep up	-the boy is sad, defeated, embarrassed	-he tried as hard as the other boys but could not keep up with them -if that happened to me, I would be upset and sad, maybe even embarrassed
"But even as he painted, Little Gopher ***sometimes longed to put aside his brushes and ride out with the warriors***. But ***he always remembered his Dream-Vision*** and he ***did not go*** with them."			
"The next day, when the People awoke, the hill was ***ablaze*** with color, for the brushes had taken root in the earth and multiplied into plants of ***brilliant*** reds, oranges and yellows."			

Name: _____ Date: _____

Inferring Small Passages
(taken from Duffy, p. 122)

1. "The sky was dark and the fog blacked out everything. I couldn't see three feet in front of me. I didn't know which way to turn. I was frozen to the spot."

Although there is nothing directly stated about how this person is feeling, what can you infer about how they feel right now?

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Underline the words or phrases that influenced your inference.

2. "When the teacher praised her for the good job she did, Mildred lowered her   eyes and blushed. She said, "Oh, it was nothing. Anybody could have done it." When the teacher continued to praise her, Mildred got even more red in the face."

Although there is nothing directly stated about how Mildred feels, what can you infer about how she feels at this moment and WHY?

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3. "The team boarded the school bus and started out for the big game. If they won this game, they would be champions! Suddenly, 15 miles from the site of the game, the bus broke down. There they sat, waiting. Nobody seemed to know what to do, and it was getting closer and closer to game time."

Although there is no direct statement describing how the players are feeling, the author is *implying* how they feel to the reader.

Record what you think the author is implying in the above text.

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