Reading Mini Lesson: Inferencing

**Grade:** 5th

**Common Core State Standard:** Reading Standards for Literature K-5, Key Ideas and Details, 1

Grade 5 #1 Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

**Objective:** Students will combine text clues from book, during close reading, with background knowledge in order to make inferences about what the author is trying to express throughout the book.

**Materials:**

*Out of My Mind*, one worksheet for every student, projector

**Procedure:**

1. **Lesson Introduction/ Objective and Purpose**
   1. “As a class, we have been reading *Out of My Mind,* which we will continue to do today. However, before we do that, I want to teach you a new strategy. I have noticed that we need some help figuring what the author is meaning to say when it is not directly stated in the text. I am going to be teaching you a new strategy to help you ‘read between the lines’ as you read. This will help you deepen your understanding of the text you are reading. After I teach the strategy, we will have a chance to use it today. I want you to pay attention to how I combine my own background knowledge with the text clues the author provides in order to figure out what he/she is implying in the book.”
2. **Teach and Model (Modeling and Thinking):**
   1. “Let me show you how I use my own experiences combined with text clues to help me understand what the author is trying to state. I am going to use an example from our literature circle book *Out Of My Mind*. While doing this, I will also be filling out this graphic organizer that I will also handout to you. What this handout does is allow me to organize my thoughts. I will put text clues in this box and my own background knowledge in this box. The last box is where I will out the inference I made based off of the text clues and my own knowledge. An easy way to remember this is TC+BK=Inference (draw on board or chart paper). This stands for text clue plus background knowledge equals an inference. Now, let me show you how to make an inference.”

**By the time I was two, all my memories had words, and all my words had meanings. But only in my head. I have never spoken one single word. I am almost eleven years old.**

“In this example, from the first chapter, the author is just introducing the main character, and narrator, to us. I do not know his or her name yet, but I do know that they have many thoughts inside their head and that they have never spoken one word even though they are eleven years old. These are text clues that the author has left us. So what I am going to do is put these two text clues in the text clue box on the handout. I am going to write ‘has many thoughts in his/her head’ and ‘has never spoken a word and they are eleven’. Next, I need to use my own background knowledge to figure out what the author is implying. Now, I know that by eleven years old, humans have a pretty good vocabulary and are able to hold conversations with each other. I know that if a person cannot speak at age eleven then they must have some sort of disorder that is preventing them from doing so. I have just used my own background knowledge about what I know about speaking. I will write this down in the ‘what I know about the clue’ box. After using the text clues and combining them with my background knowledge, I was able to discover that the author is trying to imply that the narrator has some sort of disorder that prevents her from speaking. I have figured this out even before the author has even stated it. What I did was make an inference.”

1. **Guided Practice (Example 1: Extensive Teacher Help):**
   1. After modeling, I will provide another example. This time students will assist me as I continue to take the lead in teaching. The second example is:

**But I loved the soft coolness of the little cat’s fur. Then it fell on the floor. Dad placed it in my hands the second time. I really wanted to hold it and hug it. But it fell on the floor once more. I remember I got mad and started to cry.”**

“Let’s take a look at this example together. The author is trying to imply why Melody got upset without actually stating why. How are we going to figure out what the author is trying to imply here? Does the author leave us any text clues? Yes, the author says, “ I remember I got mad and started to cry”. In what box am I going to record this in on my handout? Yes, that’s correct. It will go in the text clues box. Now, using your background knowledge, what do we know about someone when they are crying? Yes, that they are upset. We know that melody is mad since she isn’t able to pick up the stuffed cat. What else do we know about Melody? Yes, that she has disorder, which prevents her from being able to speak and move her arms very much. How would you feel if you were upset and were not able to talk about it? Instead, you had to keep all your thoughts locked up in your head. How would that make you feel? It wouldn’t make me feel good either. Since Melody can’t move her arms a lot what do you think that prevents her from being able to do? Yes, it prevents her from being able to pick up the cat herself. If Melody is not ever going to be able to move her arms then that means she will never be able to pick up the cat, or anything for that matter. How would that make you feel? Where are we going to record this? Yes, that’s correct, in the background knowledge box on the handout. We just used our own background knowledge combined with the text clues that were given to us to make an inference. Now, would you feel frustrated if you were in Melody’s position? That’s how Melody is feeling as well. We just made an inference that Melody is crying because she is sad that she cannot pick up the stuffed cat. The author is also implying a deeper message here, that she is crying because she cannot pick the cat up, and also that Melody knows that she will most likely never be able to pick the cat up because of her disorder and this makes her both angry and sad. Now, where are we going to record our inference on the handout? That’s correct. In the last box.”

(Example 2: Less Teacher Help)

“Now let’s try another example. This example is from chapter 3, when Melody is talking about when she would tumble onto the shag rug and her parents would prop her up between pillows, but she would still fall over. This time I will not give you as much help. You must think for yourselves more. I will only ask you questions that will guide you in the right direction. Remember the strategy to doing this: first, look for clues in the text then combine those with your own background knowledge and experiences.”

**And I’d fall over again. I didn’t want to fall or even mean to. I couldn’t help it. I had no balance at all. None. I didn’t understand at the time, but my father did. He would sigh and pull me up onto his lap.**

“In this example, the author does not tell us what Melody’s dad is thinking yet. What can we do to figure that out on our own? Are there any clues? Where are we going to record these clues? Can you think of your own experiences that relate to this example to combine with your clues? What does it mean to sigh? What does it normally mean when people sigh? Where are we going to record our background knowledge? Based off of the clues and your own background knowledge, can you tell what the author wants us to know in this example?”

1. **Independent Practice (Example 3: No Teacher Help):**
   1. Once students are comfortable with inferencing on their own, they will practice this strategy on there own with no help with me at all. They will continue to use *Out Of My Mind* in addition with the handout to guide them.

“Now lets find another example in the story we are reading for literature circles. Turn to page sixteen. This is the end of chapter three when Melody sees the toys that were recalled because they were painted with lead paint in the store with her mother. The author doesn’t tell us directly what Melody is thinking at that moment, but she gave us clues to help us figure it out for ourselves. I want you to look for those clues and use your own experiences to know exactly what Melody was thinking. I am going to ask you to tell me how you came up with your answer, so be aware of your thought process. You will be using the handout I gave you to help you organize your thoughts and guide you. Remember, you can use this graphic organizer for any book you are reading independently to also help you practice making inferences in those books you are reading as well. Once you get used to making inferences, you will find yourself making them on your own without the help of the organizer.”

1. **Assessment (How will I know the lesson was successful?):**
   1. I will be able to determine that the lesson was successful if, after reading or listening to a story, students are able to answer questions that require comprehension of what the author has implied without it being directly stated. Students will also be able to describe the thinking of how they made inferences both orally and through the graphic organizer.

