

Inference Investigator: Case Files

6 complete activities from Inference Investigator, each with a worked answer.

Read

Read the passage closely.

Find

Underline the words that prove it.

Explain

Tell how the clues fit together.

HOW TO USE

1. Read the situation and the evidence first.
2. Show your thinking in the work boxes, not only an answer.
3. Explain how you know your answer makes sense.
4. Try the new problem at the bottom of the page.

6 activities • 3 answer pages • From the 24-activity collection

10 US Letter pages • Print at 100% / Actual Size

Original Bobotemp educational printable • Fictional names, places and prices

Name _____ Date _____

The Missing Lunch Bag

LEVEL 1



Read the numbered lines. Sort each card as Stated in Text or Background Knowledge. Then choose the inference that the clues support.

(1) Theo patted his backpack at the lunch table, looking for his lunch. (2) "It was in here this morning," he said. (3) On the bus, he had set his green lunch bag on the seat to tie his shoe. (4) Then the bus stopped, and everyone hurried off. (5) At noon, the bus driver, Ms. Ruiz, stepped into the cafeteria. (6) She was holding something green and looking around. Which inference do the clues support? A) Theo forgot to pack lunch at home. B) Theo left his lunch bag on the bus. C) A classmate took the bag from his backpack. D) Theo ate his lunch early.

CLUE CARDS

Card 1

Theo set his green bag on the bus seat.

Card 2

People can forget things when they rush.

Card 3

Ms. Ruiz held something green.

Card 4

Things left on a bus can be found by the driver.

Card 5

Everyone hurried off the bus.

Card 6

A lunch bag is used to carry food.

SORT THE CARDS

Stated in Text**Background Knowledge**

1. Sort Cards 1-6 into Stated in Text or Background Knowledge.

2. Circle the supported inference: A, B, C, or D.

3. Write the background fact that links lines 3-4 to your inference.

TRY IT • (1) Zoe searched her desk for her library book. (2) Last night she read it at the kitchen table. (3) Her dad walked into the classroom holding a book. Write one stated clue, one background fact, and the inference.

Name _____ Date _____

The Vanishing Chalk Map

LEVEL 1



Read the case. The text shows an effect but never names the cause. Use the clues to find the hidden cause and rule out the others.

(1) On Friday after school, Ana and Ben drew a chalk map on the school sidewalk. (2) They colored a blue river and a bright yellow sun. (3) The school was closed and empty all weekend. (4) Gray clouds covered the sky on Saturday and Sunday. (5) On Monday morning, puddles dotted the playground, and the grass was soggy. (6) When Ana reached the sidewalk, only faint smudges of color were left. What most likely happened to the map? A) Rain washed the chalk away. B) Students rubbed it out at recess. C) Strong sunshine faded the colors.

CHECK EACH CHOICE

Choice	Keep or rule out?	Line #
A		
B		
C		

EVIDENCE TO USE

- Effect (line 6): only faint smudges were left.
- Hidden step: something happened over the weekend.
- Background: puddles and soggy grass usually mean it rained.
- Background: water can wash chalk off pavement.

1. Circle the hidden cause: A, B, or C.

2. For each wrong choice, write the line number that rules it out.

3. Finish the chain: Line 5 shows ____, so ____, which caused ____.

TRY IT • (1) Leo left his paper boat on the porch step. (2) The wind howled all night. (3) In the morning, the boat lay upside down in the yard. What was the hidden cause, and which line proves it?

Name _____ Date _____

Backstage Hands

LEVEL 2



Read the story. The feeling word is never stated. Use clues from different lines to infer how Ravi feels.

(1) The class play would start in five minutes. (2) Ravi peeked through the curtain at the rows of chairs. (3) He bounced on his toes and grinned at his friend Dee. (4) "My grandma is in the front row!" he whispered. (5) Then he wiped his hands on his pants for the third time. (6) He mouthed his first line again, and then again. (7) When the lights dimmed, he took a deep breath and stepped forward.

Which choice best tells how Ravi feels?

- A) calm and bored B) excited with no worries
C) nervous but excited D) nervous and wishing to quit

CLUE CARDS**Line 3**

bounced on his
toes and grinned

Line 4

"My grandma is in
the front row!"

Line 5

wiped his hands
for the third time

Line 6

mouthed his first
line again, and
then again

Line 7

took a deep
breath and
stepped forward

1. Circle the best choice and write its letter.

2. Cite one line that shows excitement and one line that shows worry.

3. Write a chain: Clue + Clue + Background Knowledge = Inference.

TRY IT • Read: Mia held her new library card tightly and smiled. Her eyes kept darting to the long line at the desk, and she tapped her foot. Name Mia's two feelings and give one clue for each.

Name _____ Date _____

The Seed That Waited

LEVEL 2



Read the passage. Use a contrast clue and situation clues to figure out what the word dormant means.

- 1 Some seeds can wait a long time before they grow.
- 2 A seed in a dry paper packet may sit for months.
- 3 Unlike sprouting seeds, dormant seeds show no roots or leaves.
- 4 They look as if nothing is happening inside them.
- 5 But a dormant seed is still alive.
- 6 A bean seed that sat in a dry jar all winter sprouted soon after it was planted in damp soil.
- 7 Water and warmth can wake many seeds from this resting time.

What does dormant most likely mean?

- A) broken and unable to grow
- B) resting and not growing for now
- C) growing very fast
- D) planted in soil

CLUE CARDS

Line 3 (contrast)

Unlike sprouting seeds...
no roots or leaves

Line 5

still alive

Line 6

sat in a dry jar all
winter, then sprouted

Line 7

wake... from this resting
time

1. Write the letter of the best meaning.

2. Copy the contrast clue word from line 3 and explain what it tells you.

3. Explain which line rules out choice A.

TRY IT • Read: The volcano had been dormant for hundreds of years, so tall trees had grown on its quiet slopes. What does dormant mean here, and which words are your clues?

Name _____ Date _____

The Blinking Lights Case

LEVEL 3



Read the numbered story. Use clues to infer both the place and the time of day. Watch for one line that points the wrong way.

(1) Maya slid the last book onto the shelf, right between two spines marked GAR. (2) The carpet swallowed the sound of her sneakers. (3) At the front desk, Mr. Patel yawned and stretched. (4) 'Long day?' Maya whispered. (5) He nodded toward the tall windows. (6) Outside, the streetlights were blinking on, one by one. (7) The overhead lights dimmed twice. (8) 'Five minutes, friends,' he said softly. 'Bring any books you are borrowing to the desk.' Where is Maya, and what time of day is it?

CASE QUESTION: WHERE AND WHEN?

Suspect	Place clue	Time clue
A: Library in the evening		
B: Library in the morning		
C: Grocery store in the evening		
D: School gym in the morning		

Warning

One line points the wrong way.

1. Cite two lines that show the place. Cross out the suspects they rule out.

2. Cite the lines that show the time of day. Cross out the suspects they rule out.

3. Explain why the yawn in line 3 does not prove it is morning.

TRY IT • (1) Jamal set his tray on a long table beside his classmates. (2) Warm rolls steamed in a basket by the kitchen window. (3) Through the glass, he could see the empty swings on the playground. (4) A bell rang. 'Ten minutes until first class!' called Ms. Reyes. Where is Jamal, and when is it? Cite two clues.

Name _____ Date _____

Rosa's Saturday Plan

LEVEL 3



Read the numbered story. Predict what Rosa will make next. Then show which clues make your prediction reasonable and which detail is a distractor.

(1) Rosa spread an old towel across the kitchen table. (2) On the phone that morning, her cousin Benny had asked, 'Is Saturday's show still on?' (3) 'I promise,' Rosa had said. (4) Now Mom glanced at the seed packets on the windowsill. 'Garden time today?' (5) 'Maybe later,' Rosa said. (6) She lined up six brown paper lunch bags. (7) Then she dumped out a jar of buttons and a tangle of yarn. (8) She counted the buttons in pairs: 'Two, four, six, eight, ten, twelve.' (9) She stopped, smiled, and reached for the glue. Predict what Rosa will make next.

SUSPECTS

Suspect	Benny clue	Button clue
A: Paper-bag puppets		
B: A poster for the show		
C: Stuffed animals		
D: A seed garden		

Math clue

12 buttons, counted in pairs

1. Which lines about Benny narrow the choices? Which suspects survive them?

2. Why might Rosa count exactly 12 buttons for 6 bags? Which suspects survive this clue?

3. Line 4 mentions seed packets. Explain why that clue does not support your prediction.

TRY IT • (1) Dev's team photo is tomorrow. (2) His jersey has a grass stain on the sleeve. (3) He carries it to the laundry room and reads the tag. (4) His sister calls, 'Want to play a game?' (5) 'In a minute,' Dev says, holding the sleeve under the running faucet. Predict what Dev will do next and name the deciding clue.

1. The Missing Lunch Bag

LEVEL 1

B) Theo left his lunch bag on the bus. Stated in Text: Cards 1, 3, and 5. Background Knowledge: Cards 2, 4, and 6. Key background: People can forget things when they rush.

WORKED REASONING • Line 2 rules out A because the bag was there this morning. Line 1 rules out D because Theo is still looking for his lunch at the lunch table. Lines 5–6 rule out C because the green item is with the bus driver, not a classmate. Chain: Theo set the bag on the bus seat (line 3) + everyone hurried off (line 4) + background: people forget things when they rush = Theo left his lunch bag on the bus, and Ms. Ruiz is bringing it back. You can point to Cards 1, 3, and 5 in the lines. Cards 2, 4, and 6 come from the reader.

WATCH FOR • Some students sort ‘Theo left his bag on the bus’ as stated. No line says that. Line 3 says only that he set the bag down. The reader infers that he forgot it. If you cannot point to the exact words, the idea is not stated.

TRANSFER • Stated: Zoe read the book at the kitchen table (line 2), and her dad is holding a book (line 3). Background: something you set down at home stays there until someone picks it up. Inference: Zoe left the library book at home, and her dad is bringing it to her.

2. The Vanishing Chalk Map

LEVEL 1

A) Rain washed the chalk away. Line 3 rules out B, line 4 rules out C, and line 5 shows that it rained.

WORKED REASONING • Step 1: Line 5 says there were puddles and soggy grass. Background: puddles form after rain, so it rained over the weekend. Step 2: Background: water washes chalk off pavement, so the rain washed the map away and left smudges (line 6). Check the other causes. B fails because line 3 says the school was empty all weekend, so no recess happened. C fails because line 4 says clouds covered the sky on both days. The text never uses the word rain. The reader builds that idea from the puddles.

WATCH FOR • Some students pick C because chalk can fade in the sun. That is real background knowledge, but line 4 contradicts it in this story. A background fact must fit the clues in this text.

TRANSFER • The wind blew the boat off the step and into the yard. Line 2 shows strong wind. Background: strong wind can push light objects. Line 3 shows the effect.

9. Backstage Hands

LEVEL 2

C) nervous but excited. Lines 3–4 show excitement, lines 5–6 show worry, and line 7 shows he does not want to quit.

WORKED REASONING • Lines 3–4: Ravi bounces, grins, and whispers happily that his grandma came. People act this way when they are excited, so A (calm and bored) does not fit. Lines 5–6: he keeps wiping his hands and practicing his line. People often do this when they are nervous, so B (no worries) does not fit. Line 7: he takes a breath and steps forward, so he is not trying to quit, and D does not fit. Only C fits every clue. Model chain: Ravi grins and bounces (line 3), and he keeps wiping his hands and repeating his line (lines 5–6). I know people do both when something big is about to happen, so this shows Ravi feels nervous but excited. Accept: jittery and eager, excited but worried.

WATCH FOR • Many students choose B because the grin in line 3 is the first clue they see. They stop reading before lines 5–6. Other students choose D because nervous habits seem to mean he wants to quit, but line 7 contradicts D. A mixed feeling needs evidence for both parts.

TRANSFER • Mia feels excited (she smiles and holds her new card tightly) and impatient (she keeps looking at the long line and taps her foot). Accept: eager but tired of waiting.

10. The Seed That Waited

LEVEL 2

B) resting and not growing for now.

WORKED REASONING • Line 3 uses the contrast word Unlike, so dormant seeds are the opposite of sprouting seeds. They are not growing, and that rules out C. Lines 5–6 say the seed is still alive and later sprouts, so it is not broken. That rules out A. Line 6 describes a seed resting in a dry jar before planting, so D does not fit. Line 7 calls it a resting time, which confirms B. Model chain: Dormant seeds are unlike sprouting seeds (line 3), and a bean that sat in a dry jar all winter sprouted later (line 6). I know a living thing that is not growing yet can be waiting for the right conditions, so dormant means resting and not growing for now. Accept: inactive for a while, asleep-like, waiting to grow.

WATCH FOR • Some students choose A because line 4 says nothing seems to be happening. They miss line 5, which says the seed is still alive. Others choose D because soil appears in line 6. They match a nearby word instead of using the clues about the word dormant.

TRANSFER • Dormant means inactive or resting for now, not erupting. The clues are quiet slopes and tall trees had grown for hundreds of years, which shows nothing has disturbed the mountain for a long time.

17. The Blinking Lights Case

LEVEL 3

Library in the evening, near closing time.

WORKED REASONING • Place: In line 1, Maya shelves a book between spines marked GAR. In line 8, readers are told to bring books they are borrowing to the desk. Background: libraries sort books by letters on the spine and lend them out. This rules out the grocery store and the gym. Time: In line 6, the streetlights are blinking on, and lines 7–8 give a five-minute warning. Background: streetlights turn on as it gets dark, and buildings warn visitors before closing. This rules out both morning suspects. Only Library in the evening survives both clues. Line 4, 'Long day?', also fits evening.

WATCH FOR • Tempting wrong answer: Library in the morning (contradicted). Some students link the yawn in line 3 to waking up. People also yawn when they are tired after a long day, and line 4 asks 'Long day?' Line 6 contradicts morning, because streetlights come on as it gets dark.

TRANSFER • Jamal is in a school cafeteria before classes start, around breakfast time. Lines 1–3 (tray, long table, kitchen window, playground) show a school cafeteria. Line 4 ('Ten minutes until first class') shows the school day has not begun. The empty swings fit an early time, but they do not prove it alone.

18. Rosa's Saturday Plan

LEVEL 3

Paper-bag puppets for Saturday's show.

WORKED REASONING • Clue 1: Lines 2–3 show that Rosa promised Benny a show on Saturday. Background: a show needs something to perform or something to announce it. Survivors: Paper-bag puppets, A poster for the show. Clue 2: Lines 7–8 show buttons counted in pairs, plus yarn. Background: a pair of buttons can be eyes, and yarn can be hair on a face. Survivors: Paper-bag puppets, Stuffed animals. Only Paper-bag puppets survives both clues. Line 6 adds support: 12 buttons in pairs makes 6 sets of eyes, one set for each of the 6 bags. Chain: Rosa promised a show, and she counts eyes for six bags, so she will make six paper-bag puppets.

WATCH FOR • Tempting wrong answer: A seed garden (unsupported). Line 4 shows Mom's idea, not Rosa's plan, and line 5 ('Maybe later') sets it aside. A poster is reasonable if you use only the show clue, but it does not explain the buttons counted in pairs.

TRANSFER • Dev will wash or scrub the stain out of his jersey before the photo. The deciding clues are line 1 (the photo is tomorrow) and line 5 (the sleeve is under the faucet). Line 4 is a distractor, because 'In a minute' puts off the game.