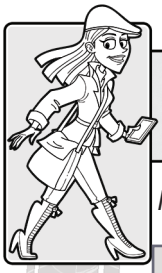


Unit 1 – Storytelling Across Cultures
Lesson 1.1B – Making Inferences

Note: Words in bold are said aloud by the teacher.

30–45 minutes

Teach: Activate Prior Knowledge

Students will define the terms *literal meaning*, *deeper meaning*, and *making inferences*. Students will practice making inferences, using Student Sheet 1.

Begin by writing on the board for students to see the following quote by Robert McAfee Brown: *Storytelling is the most powerful way to put ideas into the world today.* You may also project Projector Page 1.

> ***"Storytelling is the most powerful way to put ideas into the world today."***
>
> ***—Robert McAfee Brown***

Say, **One thing we're going to find out by studying the world's stories is that they often have more than one meaning. When we read, it's like being on two levels. The first level, or the surface, contains the most obvious, or the literal, meaning of the text. But beneath the surface, many stories have a deeper meaning or message to share with the world.**

Say, **Take a look at this quote by Robert McAfee Brown: *Storytelling is the most powerful way to put ideas into the world today.* Take a few minutes now to read the quote and think about it.**

Give students a few minutes to think about the proverb before continuing.

Ask students to take out their reading journals. Be sure that each student has a reading journal and a pencil before moving on.

Note: If this is the students' first experience with the Skills and Strategies section of their reading journals, you will need to explain the procedures for creating and using this section. If students have already created this section in their reading journals, you may skip to Lesson Page 3.

istation
Technology Transforming Education
Copyright © 2011 istation® All rights reserved.

Teach: Activate Prior Knowledge (cont.)

Skills and Strategies Procedures

Say, **Open your reading journals. Your journal should have three sections. The first section is where we are going to keep track of vocabulary related to critical thinking skills and strategies we use when we read. We are going to label this section *Skills and Strategies*. We will talk about the other two sections later. For now, open to the first page in the first section, and make a title page for the Skills and Strategies section.**

Ideally, you will also have a three-section spiral notebook to use to create a model reading journal for students. You may also choose to write an example on the board or project Projector Page 2 for students to see.

SKILLS AND STRATEGIES

Ask, **Have you made a title page on the first page of the first section in your reading journal for Skills and Strategies?**

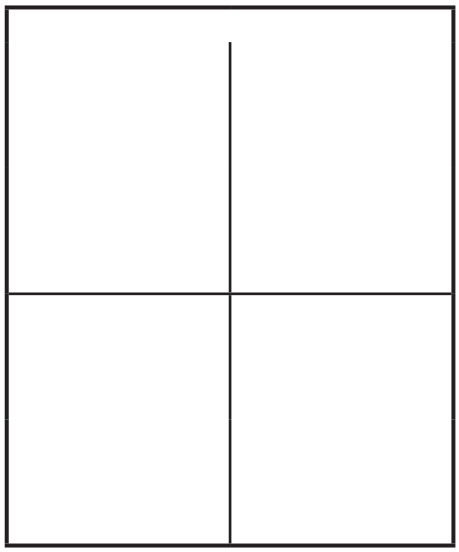
Allow appropriate wait time for all students to label the first page of the first section in their reading journals. Once all students have labeled this page, continue.

istation
Technology Transforming Education
Copyright © 2011 istation® All rights reserved.

Teach: Activate Prior Knowledge (cont.)

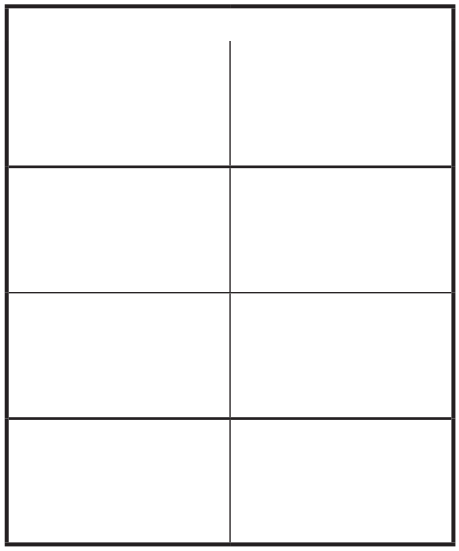
Say, **Turn to the next blank page in your Skills and Strategies section. Draw one line down the middle of the page and one line across the middle of the page, like this. This time make sure to leave about an inch of space at the top of the page.**

Draw the following in the model journal, making sure to leave about an inch of space at the top of the page. You may also draw on the board for students to see or project Projector Page 3.



Say, **Now draw two more lines to make a grid like this.**

Draw the following in the model journal, or draw on the board for students to see. You may also project Projector Page 4.



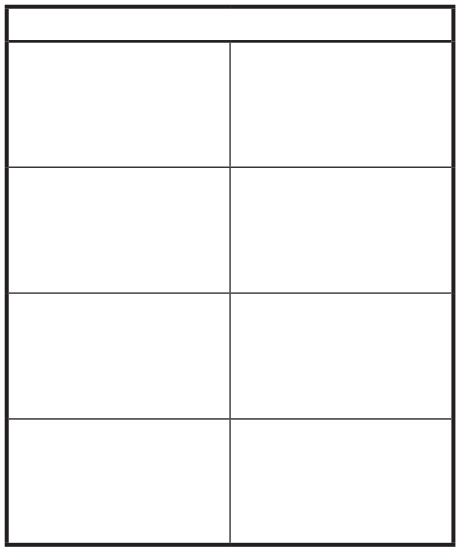
Allow appropriate wait time for all students to create the grid. Once all students have created the grid, continue.

istation
Technology Transforming Education
Copyright © 2011 istation® All rights reserved.

Teach: Activate Prior Knowledge (cont.)

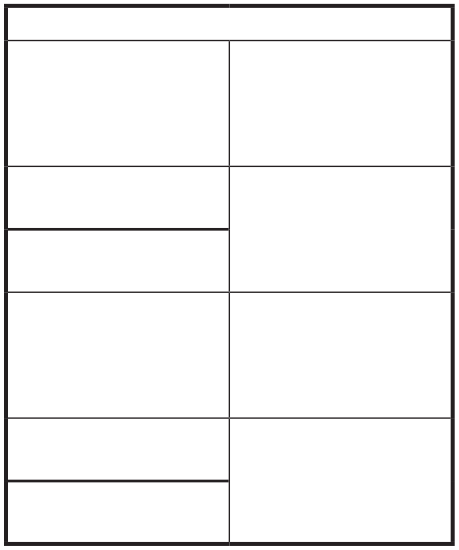
Say, **This time, you'll also need to draw a line across the top of the grid, like this.**

Draw the following in the model journal, or draw on the board for students to see. You may also project Projector Page 5.



Say, **We will be using this line at the top to write an example. This example will help us better understand the meaning of the term. Finally, add two more sections to your grid by dividing the second and fourth sections on the left in half, like this.**

Draw the following in the model journal, or draw on the board for students to see. You may also project Projector Page 6.



Allow appropriate wait time for all students to create the grid. Once all students have created the grid, continue.

Copyright © 2011 istation® All rights reserved.

Teach: Activate Prior Knowledge (cont.)

Say, **Now that we've got our grids all set, let's define *literal meaning*.**

Write the following in the model journal, or write on the board for students to see. You may also project Projector Page 7, making sure to cover any information not yet presented.

literal meaning	**the primary or exact meaning**

Say, **The literal meaning is the surface meaning. To understand the literal meaning of a text, all you have to do is understand what the words mean. It's exactly like you see it. The literal meaning doesn't go deeper. It's not the secret, hidden message. It's just exactly what the words mean. Let's write an example at the top of the grid.**

Write the following in the model journal, or write on the board for students to see. You may also project Projector Page 7, making sure to cover any information not yet presented.

A Dog's Life	
literal meaning	the primary or exact meaning

istation
Technology Transforming Education
Copyright © 2011 istation® All rights reserved.

Teach: Activate Prior Knowledge (cont.)

Say, **This time, I'm going to define the example, write a sentence, and draw a visual to help me remember the concept of *literal meaning*.**

Draw and write the following in the model journal, or draw and write on the board for students to see. You may also project Projector Page 7, making sure to cover any information not yet presented.

A Dog's Life	
literal meaning	the primary or exact meaning
The literal meaning is exactly what it says. **The life of a dog**	

Say, **I chose to draw a boat on top of the water because that helps me remember that the literal meaning can also be described as the surface meaning of a text. As for my sentence, I wrote, *The literal meaning is exactly what it says*. I wanted to write a sentence that explains the definition in another way, just to make sure I really get it.**

Say, **Think about our example, *A Dog's Life*. The literal meaning is, well, exactly what it says. A dog's life is the life of a dog. We're not looking for a hidden message at this point. We're simply trying to understand what the words mean.**

Say, **You may write or draw whatever visual and sentence that best helps you remember the term *literal meaning*, or you may write and draw the same things I did.**

Allow appropriate wait time for all students to complete their grids. Once all students have completed their grids, continue.

Say, **Of course, if all the stories we ever heard had no more than a literal meaning, they probably wouldn't stick with us the way they do. The reason stories matter to people is because they often have a deeper meaning, too. So what does that mean**?

istation
Technology Transforming Education
Copyright © 2011 istation® All rights reserved.

Teach: Activate Prior Knowledge (cont.)

Draw and write the following on the next available section in the model journal, or draw and write on the board for students to see. You may also project Projector Page 7.

A Dog's Life	
literal meaning	the primary or exact meaning
The literal meaning is exactly what it says. The life of a dog	
deeper meaning	**the complex or profound meaning beneath the surface**
To understand the deeper meaning, dive in and think. **A lazy, easy life; could be a human life**	

Say, **I defined *deeper meaning* as "the complex or profound meaning beneath the surface." For my visual, I chose to draw a diving board with someone diving into a book. To help me remember that sometimes you really have to dive into a text and think hard to find the deeper meaning, I used the sentence *To understand the deeper meaning, dive in and think*.**

Say, **As for our example, when I think about the deeper meaning of a dog's life, I think about a dog, lying around on the floor or the couch while his owner is out working or running errands or spending time with friends. A dog has it pretty easy. If I want to find the deeper meaning of this phrase, I could say that a dog's life is lazy and easy. If I really think about it, a person could also have a life like this. The deeper meaning of the phrase, used to describe a person, would be that the person has a lazy, easy life. The way I just thought through that phrase is an example of how you'll need to really think to find the deeper meaning beyond the literal meaning of a text.**

Say, **You may write or draw whatever visual and sentence that best helps you remember the term *deeper meaning*, or you may write and draw the same things I did.**

Allow appropriate wait time for all students to complete their grids. Once all students have completed their grids, continue.

Say, **Now that we have defined *literal meaning* and *deeper meaning*, we need to define the strategy that good readers use to determine the deeper meaning of a text. Once we've got that down, we can discuss Brown's quote.**

Say, **Obviously, we aren't literally diving into a text to find the deeper meaning. What we are doing,**

istation
Technology Transforming Education
Copyright © 2011 istation® All rights reserved.

Teach: Activate Prior Knowledge (cont.)

though, is making inferences. You may have heard this term before. Let's define *making inferences*. Remember to create the grid on your page before you begin.

Say, **Do not draw a line across the top or divide the second and fourth sections on the left like we did for *literal meaning* and *deeper meaning*. We're going to need more than one example to really explain what it means to make inferences. Just make the regular grid with eight spaces.**

Allow appropriate wait time for all students to complete their grids. Once all students have completed their grids, continue.

Draw and write the following on the next available page in the model journal, or draw and write on the board for students to see. You may also project Projector Page 8.

making inferences	**interpreting or drawing conclusions based on evidence and reasoning**
To make inferences, I have to really think about the text and what I already know.	**The "AHA!" Moment**

Say, **I defined *making inferences* as "interpreting or drawing conclusions based on evidence and reasoning." For my visual, I just wrote, *The "AHA!" Moment*. I chose this phrase because it describes exactly how I feel when I make a good inference. I feel like I am getting something right, and it makes me feel smart. For my sentence, I wrote, *To make inferences, I have to really think about the text and what I already know.***

Say, **You may write or draw whatever visual and sentence that best helps you remember the meaning of the term *making inferences*, or you may write the same things I did. Once you've defined all the terms, you can put away your reading journal.**

Allow appropriate wait time for all students to complete their grids. Once all students have completed their grids, continue.

istation
Technology Transforming Education
Copyright © 2011 istation® All rights reserved.

Teach: Activate Prior Knowledge (cont.)

Distribute Student Sheet 1 to students.

Say, **Making inferences is not easy. It means that we have to use what we already know, what we can find in the text, and our reasoning and thinking skills to figure out the deeper meaning of what we read. It's one of the most important reading skills there is, and it's also one of the toughest. When you are an expert at making inferences, you are truly an expert reader.**

Say, **The good thing about making inferences is that you already do it in real life. Let's look at some real-life examples to practice making inferences together. Take a look at Student Sheet 1.**

You may project Projector Page 9, making sure to cover the inferences on the right.

Making Inferences Practice

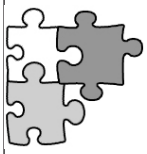
WHAT YOU SEE	WHAT YOU CAN INFER
A man walks into a room all soaking wet, holding a newspaper over his head.	
You walk into a classroom and find the teacher sitting at the desk with red, puffy eyes and a drippy nose. She is coughing and clutching a box of tissues. She is wearing a blanket and shivering even though it's at least seventy degrees in the room.	
Every day when you walk by, the same guy is hanging out around the same girl's locker. While she gets her stuff out of her locker, she giggles a lot. He never looks directly at her, and he mutters a lot when he talks to her.	

istation
Technology Transforming Education
Copyright © 2011 istation® All rights reserved.

Teach: Activate Prior Knowledge (cont.)

Say, **We make inferences in our daily lives all the time. Making inferences is an important reading skill, but it's also a life skill you already use every day! On the left side of Student Sheet 1, there are some descriptions of things you may see. On the right side, we're going to fill in the inferences we can make by seeing those things and thinking about them. Remember, making inferences means that you have to think about the information given and what you already know.**

Say, **Let's look at the first one. *A man walks into a room all soaking wet, holding a newspaper over his head.* What inferences can you make based on this information? Write your inferences in the right column on the page.**

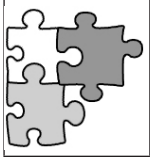
GAUGE COMPREHENSION AND RESPOND		
	Sample Student Responses	*Instructional Strategy*
	Students may offer no inferences, or they may simply restate the given information.	Say, **Remember, in order to make inferences, we must think about the information we have AND consider what we already know. The man is soaking wet. What guesses could we make about why he is all wet?** *(Sample Responses: Maybe he took a bath. Maybe he's sweaty. Maybe somebody poured water on him. Maybe he fell into a puddle or a pond.)*
	Students may offer some basic inferences which do not address all the information provided.	Say, **Okay, so we know the man is all wet. We could make lots of guesses about how he got that way, but there is one more clue that could help us. He is holding a newspaper over his head. What does that tell us about how he got all wet?** *(Sample Responses: Maybe whatever got him all wet was coming from the sky. Maybe it's raining!)* Guide students to infer that the man is likely wet because it is raining outside.
	Students offer the inference that the man is soaking wet with a newspaper over his head because it's raining outside.	Say, **That's it! You were able to use the text and what you already know to make a strong inference about this man. Your guess that it's raining outside is probably right. What clues did you use?**

Say, **If we had more information, we could check our inference to be sure we are correct in guessing that it's raining outside. Since we don't have any more information here, we can only guess. We may be right. We may be wrong. But either way, the guess that it's raining outside is a good inference from the information we are given**.

istation
Technology Transforming Education
Copyright © 2011 istation® All rights reserved.

Teach: Activate Prior Knowledge (cont.)

Say, **Let's look at the second practice example.** ***You walk into a classroom and find the teacher sitting at the desk with red, puffy eyes and a drippy nose. She is coughing and clutching a box of tissues. She is wearing a blanket and shivering even though it's at least seventy degrees in the room.*** **We've got lots of good clues in this text. What inferences can you make? Write your inferences in the right column on the page.**

GAUGE COMPREHENSION AND RESPOND		
	Sample Student Responses	*Instructional Strategy*
	Students may offer no inferences, or they may simply restate the given information.	Say, **Let's start with some of the clues we are given. The teacher has red, puffy eyes and a drippy nose. She is coughing and clutching a box of tissues. Also, this poor teacher is shivering inside a blanket even though it's warm enough. What kind of shape is this teacher in?** *(Sample Responses: Maybe the teacher is sad. Maybe the teacher has been crying. Maybe the teacher has a fever. Maybe the teacher is sick.)*
	Students may offer some basic inferences which do not address all the information provided.	Say, **If we take the clues separately, we could come up with lots of reasons for red, puffy eyes or coughing. But when we put all the clues together and think about what we already know about why someone would look and act this way, it helps us to make a better guess.** Guide students to infer that the teacher is probably sick and that she should probably go home!
	Students offer the inference that the teacher is sick.	Say, **Yes! By using what you already know about sick people and by paying attention to the information in the text, you were able to make a pretty good inference that this teacher is probably sick! What clues gave it away?**

Say, **Again, we don't have any more information than what is given in this example. We can't really be 100% sure that this teacher is sick. We don't see any doctor's statement. We don't know for sure whether the teacher has a fever. But we can be pretty sure this teacher doesn't feel good, and our guess that the teacher is sick is a very reasonable, very likely guess. It's a good inference.**

Say, **This particular example is a good one for making even more inferences about the teacher. Why would a teacher come to school if he or she was as sick as this teacher seems to be?**

Guide students to make additional inferences about the teacher's personality or situation that could lead him or her to come to school sick.

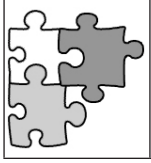
(Sample Responses: Maybe there is an important test that the teacher cannot miss. Maybe there were no

Copyright © 2011 istation® All rights reserved.

Teach: Activate Prior Knowledge (cont.)

substitutes available. Maybe the teacher has used up all of her sick days. Maybe the teacher didn't realize how sick she was that morning.)

Say, **Okay. We've got one more example. This one is fun. *Every day when you walk by, the same guy is hanging out around the same girl's locker. While she gets her stuff out of her locker, she giggles a lot. He never looks directly at her, and he mutters a lot when he talks to her.* Well, there is obviously something going on with this guy and this girl. Can you guess what it is? Write your inferences in the right column on the page.**

GAUGE COMPREHENSION AND RESPOND		
	Sample Student Responses	*Instructional Strategy*
	Students may offer no inferences, or they may simply restate the given information.	Say, **We've got a lot of clues here, too. The guy is always hanging around the girl's locker. Why?** *(Sample Responses: Maybe she is driving him home. Maybe she's his friend. Maybe she's his sister. Maybe he likes her.)* Say, **Okay. So why is this girl always giggling when the guy is around?** *(Sample Responses: Maybe he says funny things. Maybe she just giggles all the time. Maybe she likes him.)*
	Students may offer some basic inferences which do not address all the information provided.	Say, **I think this clue really gives it away. *He never looks directly at her, and he mutters a lot when he talks to her.* Why is this guy having such a hard time making eye contact with this girl?** *(Sample Response: He likes her!)* Guide students to infer that the guy probably likes the girl, and she may like him, too. They may even be dating.
	Students offer the inference that the guy and the girl in the example probably like each other.	Say, **I think you're right! I think these two like each other! How did you know? What clues gave it away?**

Say, **There is no more information to tell us whether we're right that these two like each other, but if you saw two people acting like this in school, wouldn't you guess that they probably like each other? We don't know whether they're dating, or what they are feeling, but we can make a pretty good inference that something is going on between these two, and we're probably right!**

istation
Technology Transforming Education
Copyright © 2011 istation® All rights reserved.

Teach: Activate Prior Knowledge (cont.)

Say, **Of course, inferences like the one we made in the last example can be trouble, too. It's good to be able to make inferences from what we read, and it's even good to make inferences about other people's behavior. However, we've got to be careful when making inferences about people. If the teacher is really sick, we probably want to learn more so we'll know whether she is contagious! And even if our inferences are right, we shouldn't go around telling everyone we know that this guy and girl like each other! We wouldn't want to start a bunch of gossip, would we**?

Copyright © 2011 istation® All rights reserved.

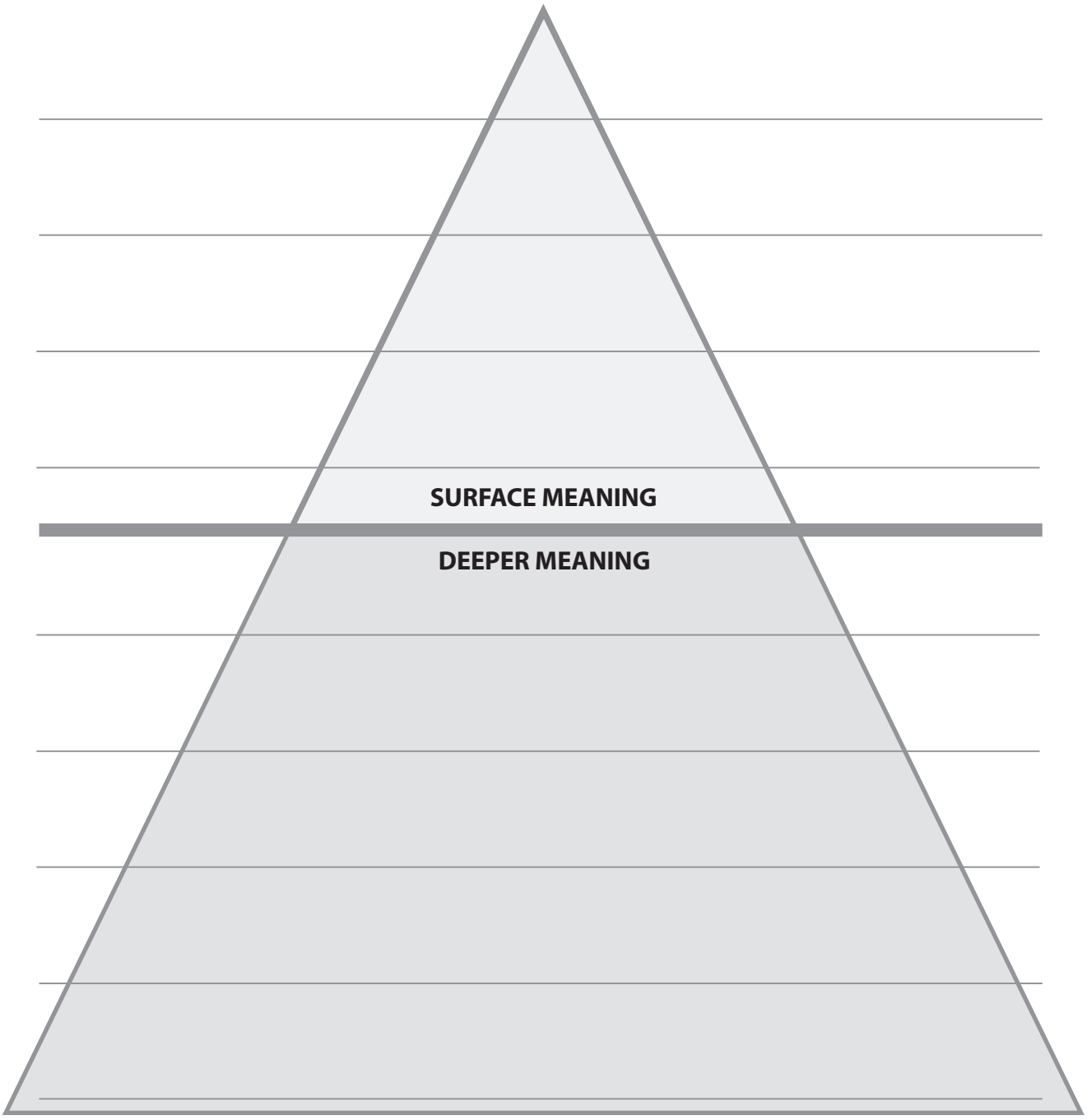
Name: _____ Date: _____

Making Inferences Practice

WHAT YOU SEE	WHAT YOU CAN INFER
A man walks into a room all soaking wet, holding a newspaper over his head.	
You walk into a classroom and find the teacher sitting at the desk with red, puffy eyes and a drippy nose. She is coughing and clutching a box of tissues. She is wearing a blanket and shivering even though it's at least seventy degrees in the room.	
Every day when you walk by, the same guy is hanging out around the same girl's locker. While she gets her stuff out of her locker, she giggles a lot. He never looks directly at her, and he mutters a lot when he talks to her.	

istation
Technology Transforming Education
Copyright © 2011 istation® All rights reserved.

Name: _____ Date: _____



ICEBERG ORGANIZER

Copyright © 2011 istation® All rights reserved.

Note to Teachers: If you are using an interactive whiteboard to project this page, try clicking on the optional links below to further extend the interactive learning experience.

Unit 1 – Storytelling Across Cultures
Lesson 1.1B – Making Inferences

"Storytelling is the most powerful way to put ideas into the world today."

—Robert McAfee Brown

For more information on the history and power of storytelling, click on the links below:

Smithsonian Institute Folklife Center
Buffalo Hide Painting Activity from the Smithsonian National Museum of American History
All the Stories Are True: African American Writers Speak from the Smithsonian Anacostia Community Museum

Projector Page 1

istation
Technology Transforming Education
Copyright © 2011 istation® All rights reserved.

Projector Page 1

SKILLS AND STRATEGIES

Projector Page 2

istation
Technology Transforming Education
Copyright © 2011 istation® All rights reserved.

Projector Page 2

Unit 1 – Storytelling Across Cultures
Lesson 1.1B – Making Inferences

Projector Page 3

istation
Technology Transforming Education
Copyright © 2011 istation® All rights reserved.

Projector Page 3

Unit 1 – Storytelling Across Cultures
Lesson 1.1B – Making Inferences

Projector Page 4

Copyright © 2011 istation® All rights reserved.

Projector Page 4

Unit 1 – Storytelling Across Cultures
Lesson 1.1B – Making Inferences

Projector Page 5

Copyright © 2011 istation® All rights reserved.

Projector Page 5

Unit 1 – Storytelling Across Cultures
Lesson 1.1B – Making Inferences

Projector Page 6

Copyright © 2011 istation® All rights reserved.

Projector Page 6

Unit 1 – Storytelling Across Cultures
Lesson 1.1B – Making Inferences

A Dog's Life	
literal meaning	the primary or exact meaning
The literal meaning is exactly what it says.	
The life of a dog	
deeper meaning	the complex or profound meaning beneath the surface
To understand the deeper meaning, dive in and think.	
A lazy, easy life; could be a human life	

Projector Page 7

istation
Technology Transforming Education
Copyright © 2011 istation® All rights reserved.

Projector Page 7

Unit 1 – Storytelling Across Cultures
Lesson 1.1B – Making Inferences

making inferences	interpreting or drawing conclusions based on evidence and reasoning
To make inferences, I have to really think about the text and what I already know.	The "AHA!" Moment

Projector Page 8

istation
Technology Transforming Education
Copyright © 2011 istation® All rights reserved.

Projector Page 8

Unit 1 – Storytelling Across Cultures
Lesson 1.1B – Making Inferences

Making Inferences Practice

WHAT YOU SEE	WHAT YOU CAN INFER
A man walks into a room all soaking wet, holding a newspaper over his head.	It's raining outside.
You walk into a classroom and find the teacher sitting at the desk with red, puffy eyes and a drippy nose. She is coughing and clutching a box of tissues. She is wearing a blanket and shivering even though it's at least seventy degrees in the room.	The teacher is sick.
Every day when you walk by, the same guy is hanging out around the same girl's locker. While she gets her stuff out of her locker, she giggles a lot. He never looks directly at her, and he mutters a lot when he talks to her.	This boy and girl probably like each other.

Projector Page 9

istation
Technology Transforming Education
Copyright © 2011 istation® All rights reserved.

Projector Page 9

Unit 1 – Storytelling Across Cultures
Lesson 1.1B – Making Inferences

Storytelling is the strongest way to share ideas today.

SURFACE MEANING

DEEPER MEANING

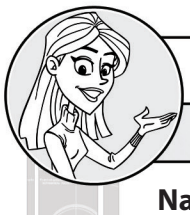
- Storytelling is more powerful than just telling someone your idea.
- Stories communicate ideas.
- Good ideas in a story can inspire people.
- Bad ideas in a story can lead people astray.
- Storytelling isn't just for the past. Storytelling matters today, too.
- People are influenced by stories.
- If you have an idea to share, creating a story is a good way to share that idea.

ICEBERG ORGANIZER – STORYTELLING

Projector Page 10

istation
Technology Transforming Education
Copyright © 2011 istation® All rights reserved.

Projector Page 10



1.1B

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

"Storytelling is the most powerful way to put ideas into the world today."

—Robert McAfee Brown

Copyright © 2011 istation® All rights reserved.

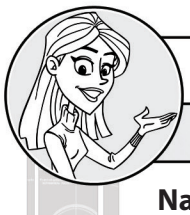
Name: _____ Date: _____

Skills and Strategies

Copyright © 2011 istation® All rights reserved.

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

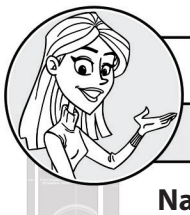
Copyright © 2011 istation® All rights reserved.



1.1B

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

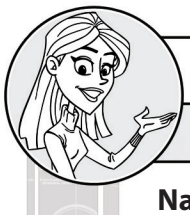
Copyright © 2011 istation® All rights reserved.



1.1B

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Copyright © 2011 istation® All rights reserved.



1.1B

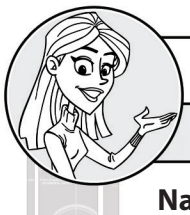
Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Copyright © 2011 istation® All rights reserved.

Name: _____ Date: _____

A Dog's Life	
literal meaning	the primary or exact meaning
The literal meaning is exactly what it says.	
The life of a dog	
deeper meaning	the complex or profound meaning beneath the surface
To understand the deeper meaning, dive in and think.	
A lazy, easy life; could be a human life	

istation
Technology Transforming Education
Copyright © 2011 istation® All rights reserved.



1.1B

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

making inferences	interpreting or drawing conclusions based on evidence and reasoning
To make inferences, I have to really think about the text and what I already know.	The "AHA!" Moment

istation
Technology Transforming Education
Copyright © 2011 istation® All rights reserved.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Making Inferences Practice

WHAT YOU SEE	WHAT YOU CAN INFER
A man walks into a room all soaking wet, holding a newspaper over his head.	It's raining outside.
You walk into a classroom and find the teacher sitting at the desk with red, puffy eyes and a drippy nose. She is coughing and clutching a box of tissues. She is wearing a blanket and shivering even though it's at least seventy degrees in the room.	The teacher is sick.
Every day when you walk by, the same guy is hanging out around the same girl's locker. While she gets her stuff out of her locker, she giggles a lot. He never looks directly at her, and he mutters a lot when he talks to her.	This boy and girl probably like each other.

istation
Technology Transforming Education
Copyright © 2011 istation® All rights reserved.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Storytelling is the strongest way to share ideas today.

SURFACE MEANING

DEEPER MEANING

- Storytelling is more powerful than just telling someone your idea.
- Stories communicate ideas.
- Good ideas in a story can inspire people.
- Bad ideas in a story can lead people astray.
- Storytelling isn't just for the past. Storytelling matters today, too.
- People are influenced by stories.
- If you have an idea to share, creating a story is a good way to share that idea.

ICEBERG ORGANIZER – STORYTELLING

istation
Technology Transforming Education
Copyright © 2011 istation® All rights reserved.