

CAMBRIDGE

Inference in 10 Minutes a Day Game™

*Train your brain to see hidden meaning, not just
the surface*



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HOW TO PLAY (PARENT OR SELF-RUN)

Every day (about 10 minutes):

1. Read one tiny passage (out loud or silently).
2. Answer the 3 "what did they really mean?" questions.
3. Check answers + talk for 1–2 minutes about why.

Rules for kids:

- The answer is **not always written exactly** in the text.
- You must use **clues + common sense** to work out what's really going on.

DAY 1 - THE "I'M FINE" TEXT

Passage

Maya shut her locker a bit harder than usual.

"You okay?" her friend Leo asked.

"I'm fine," Maya said, staring at the floor. "Totally fine."

She walked off quickly before Leo could say anything else.

Questions

1. Is Maya really "fine"? How do you know?
2. Why do you think she walked off quickly?

3. If you were Leo, what would you guess might have happened to Maya?

DAY 2 - THE TEACHER'S SMILE

Passage

Mr Patel handed back the maths tests.

"Most of you improved," he said, smiling. "Some of you improved... a lot." He looked directly at Ella as he said the last word, then moved on without saying anything else.

Ella stared at her paper and tried not to grin.

Questions

1. What can we infer about Ella's mark compared to her last test?
2. Why did Mr Patel look specifically at Ella when he said "a lot"?

3. Why is Ella trying not to grin?

DAY 3 - THE LATE MESSAGE

Passage

The group chat was full of messages about the party on Saturday.

Sam typed, "Looks like everyone had fun," and added a smiley face.

He stared at the photo of his classmates, all standing together, then put his phone face-down on the bed. His invitation still hadn't arrived.

Questions

1. Was Sam at the party? How do you know?
2. Why does he type "Looks like everyone had fun" with a smiley face?

3. How do you think Sam is really feeling?

DAY 4 - THE "NOT BAD" RESULT

Passage

"How did you go in the science test?" Zoe asked.

"Not bad," said Amir, stuffing the paper quickly into his bag.

"What did you get?"

"It doesn't matter," he replied, but his ears were turning pink.

Questions

1. What can you infer about Amir's result? (high, average, low?)
2. Why does Amir say "It doesn't matter"?

3. What does his body language (stuffing paper away, pink ears) tell you?

DAY 5 - THE EMPTY CHAIR

Passage

At lunch, the usual table was crowded, but one chair stayed empty.

"Isn't that where Daniel sits?" Mia asked.

"Yeah," said Josh, staring at his sandwich. "He's... at home today."

No one said anything for a few seconds. Someone changed the subject to the soccer game.

Questions

1. Do you think Daniel is just "sick"? Why or why not?
2. Why did everyone go quiet after Josh spoke?

3. What might have happened to Daniel, based on the clues?

DAY 6 - THE UNOPENED PRESENT

Passage

The birthday cake was gone and the presents were opened – all except one.

A small, neatly wrapped box sat on the table. It had no tag.

"Who's this from?" Alex asked.

"Doesn't matter," his older brother muttered, staring out the window.

Questions

1. Who do you think the present is from? Why?
2. Why might the older brother not want to talk about it?

3. What does the no tag detail make you suspect?

DAY 7 - THE LUNCHBOX SWAP

Passage

At recess, Lina opened her lunchbox and frowned.

"Again?" she whispered. There was only a single sandwich, no fruit and no snack.

Tom, sitting next to her, quietly pushed half of his own sandwich onto her lid without saying anything.

Questions

1. What can we infer about Lina's lunches lately?
2. Why doesn't Tom say anything when he shares?
3. What might be going on in Lina's home life?

DAY 8 - THE "NICE" COMPLIMENT

Passage

After the performance, the judge smiled at the group.

"That was... nice," she said. "Very... nice."

She glanced at her watch. "Next group, please."

On the bus home, nobody looked very happy.

Questions

1. Did the judge really think the performance was amazing?
How do you know?
2. Why might the kids feel unhappy, even though she used a positive word?

3. What other word could "nice" secretly mean in this situation?

DAY 9 - THE "MAYBE NEXT TIME"

Passage

"Thanks for trying out," the coach said. "You worked hard."

"Did I make the team?" asked Noah.

The coach hesitated. "Maybe next time," he said, patting Noah on the shoulder. "Keep practising."

Noah nodded and stared at his shoelaces.

Questions

1. Did Noah make the team? How can you tell?
2. Why does the coach say "Maybe next time" instead of "No"?

3. What does Noah's reaction (nodding, staring at shoelaces) show you?

DAY 10 - THE "JUST JOKING"

Passage

*"Nice haircut," Liam said loudly as Mia walked into the room.
A few kids snickered.*

Mia touched her hair and looked down.

"Relax, I was just joking," Liam added, rolling his eyes.

Questions

1. Was Liam really just joking? How can you tell?
2. How did Mia feel about the comment? Which clues show this?

3. Why do you think Liam says "I was just joking" afterwards?

ANSWER KEY – WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON

These aren't the only acceptable answers, but this is the thinking pattern you want.

DAY 1 - Maya

1. No, she's not fine – she slams locker, stares at floor, repeats "totally fine" and walks off.
2. To avoid talking / crying / showing she's upset.
3. Something bad at home / friend problem / test result – the exact event doesn't matter; the point is she's upset and hiding it.

DAY 2 - Ella

1. She improved a lot; probably big jump or top mark.
2. Because she's one of the students who improved "a lot".

3. She's pleased/proud but trying not to show off.

DAY 3 - Sam

1. No – he wasn't at the party; he says "Looks like everyone had fun", looking at a photo.
2. To sound polite / hide hurt; the smiley face is a mask.
3. Left out, lonely, maybe jealous or sad.

DAY 4 - Amir

1. Likely a low or disappointing result.
2. He's embarrassed; wants to avoid admitting his mark.
3. Hiding paper, pink ears = shame / trying to hide.

DAY 5 - Daniel

1. Probably not just simple sickness; "at home today" + long silence suggests something serious (family issue, trouble, moved school, etc.).

2. They feel worried or awkward; don't know what to say.
3. Maybe serious illness, family problem, or trouble at school
 - inference is that it's not ordinary.

DAY 6 - Present

1. Likely from someone the older brother has feelings about (estranged parent, ex-friend, etc.).
2. It's painful / emotional; he doesn't want to discuss that person.
3. No tag + muttering = secret / uncomfortable sender; not a happy, open gift.

DAY 7 - Lina

1. Her lunches have been small / missing items "again"; suggests ongoing problem.
2. To avoid embarrassing her or drawing attention; kindness without making a scene.
3. Possibly money problems at home / stressed parent / food insecurity.

DAY 8 - Judge

1. No; "nice... very... nice" with pauses and quick move-on sounds polite but lukewarm.
2. They realise she's being polite, not genuinely impressed.
3. "Nice" here = average / not special.

DAY 9 - Noah

1. No, he didn't; "Maybe next time" + "keep practising" is a soft rejection.
2. To be kind; to encourage him to try again rather than crushing him.
3. Disappointed, embarrassed, sad – staring at shoelaces is a classic body-language clue.

DAY 10 - Liam

1. No; he's being mean / mocking, then hiding behind "just joking."
2. She feels hurt/embarrassed; she looks down and touches her hair.

3. To avoid getting in trouble / pretend it wasn't serious;
common for bullies to minimise their behaviour.

PARENT COACHING SCRIPT

(30 SECONDS)

When your child answers, ask:

- "Which words or actions gave you that clue?"
- "Could someone else think something different? Why / why not?"

You're training them to point to evidence + use real-world knowledge .

Do one passage a day for 10 days, and you've given them:

- 10 reps of reading tiny texts
- 30+ practice inference questions
- A habit of asking, *"What do they really mean here?"*

**That's exactly how the Inference in 10 Minutes a Day Game™
trains kids to see hidden meaning, not just the surface.**