

# Reading Skills

## Section 5.2

### Inference and Drawing Conclusions



#### Key Terms

- **Inference** – a logical guess or opinion based on the information that is given
- **Drawing a conclusion** – using logic to make a guess based on the information that is given
- **Justification** – a reason for believing that something is true

Writers do not usually include every detail when they write about a subject. Readers are expected to “read between the lines” to determine some things. The process of “reading between the lines” is called making an inference. An **inference** is a logical guess or an opinion that is based on your own knowledge and other given information. In other words, to infer is to determine something that is unknown based on reasoning and facts. For example, determining an implied main idea as you practiced in Section 5.1 required you to make inferences. Even when the main idea is not specifically stated, you can identify it based on the information that is given.

**Drawing a conclusion** means the same thing as making an inference. In reading, you draw a conclusion when you use hints or clues to determine what the writer is saying. Making an inference or drawing a conclusion works like being a detective; you use clues to discover what has happened or what is true. You make inferences and draw conclusions every day in the materials you read and the events you experience.

Justifying a conclusion means supporting your conclusion with reasons. The **justification**, or reason for believing that something is true, comes from the details that provide the clues. A justification is your evidence.

**Example 1:** You overhear the man in line behind you at the restaurant talking with his friend.  
“I guess I’m going to order the grilled chicken this time.”  
“Whether you want to or not, huh?” his friend replies.  
“Well, I can’t take any chances. After what happened the last time I ate fish, I don’t think it’s worth it. Chicken is fine.”

#### What conclusion can the reader draw about the man’s diet?

You can probably conclude that the man is allergic to fish and had a recent allergy attack after eating fish. It’s a pretty safe bet that he is not allergic to chicken since that’s what he decided to order rather than take a chance on the fish. You might also conclude that the man liked fish much better than chicken since his friend indicated that the man didn’t want to eat chicken.

**Example 2:** As Carlos reaches the intersection, a street sweeper arrives and begins sweeping up the glass shards that are scattered all over the street. The couple sitting in a white car parked on the shoulder of the road seem visibly upset. Their driver’s door has a huge dent and a blue paint smear.

#### Based on the passage, what can the reader infer?

You should be able to infer that Carlos is at an intersection where there has been a recent automobile accident. You can infer the white car with the upset couple was involved in the accident.

#### What justification can you provide that the car sitting on the shoulder of the road has been hit recently by another vehicle?

Glass on roadways is normally swept up as soon as possible for safety reasons, so the street sweeper’s sweeping up shards of glass indicates a recent accident. The white car on the shoulder of the road has a dented door with a blue paint smear, so you can infer that the dent was caused by another vehicle that is blue in color.

# Story Elements

## Section 11.2

### Characters and Character Traits



#### Key Terms

- **Character traits** – a person’s or a character’s personality or unique attributes
- **Characterization** – the way an author reveals a character’s personality or nature

### Character Traits

All people, including characters in a story, have their own personalities and unique attributes, which are called **character traits**. These traits can be positive, negative, or neutral. Positive character traits might be described by words like *kind*, *considerate*, and *honest*. Negative character traits might be described as *greedy*, *violent*, or *stubborn*. Other possible character traits are given in the chart below. Do you know what each of these traits means? These are vocabulary words that you should know, so look up any that you are unsure of.

**Chart 1:**  
**Character Trait Vocabulary Words**

admirable	corrupt	evasive	juvenile	prosperous
aloof	disciplined	fanatical	logical	respectable
amiable	disrespectful	genial	offensive	ruthless
attentive	emotional	haughty	persistent	sinister
brave	energetic	indifferent	pious	spiritual
competent	envious	jovial	prim	steadfast

### Direct Characterization

**Characterization** is the way the author reveals a character’s personality or nature. In **direct characterization**, the author describes the character or makes statements about him or her. The author may use specific words like the ones in chart 1 above to characterize a person in a story.

**Example 1:** Christina was an admirable teenager. She had earned the respect of her peers and even influenced their behavior for the better. She was always amiable, polite, and considerate, so her other classmates and friends enjoyed being with her.

This is an example of direct characterization because the author describes the girl as admirable and amiable. In this excerpt, the author has not shown the girl’s character traits through the girl’s actions, words, or thoughts.

Do you know what *admirable* and *amiable* mean? *Admirable* means being admired or looked up to by others. *Amiable* means being likeable and friendly.