About the Author

Lauren Kanefsky, MS, CCC-SLP, received her Bachelor's degree from the George Washington University in 2001 and her Master's degree in Speech/Language Pathology from Teacher's College, Columbia University in 2003. Lauren has spent the last 4 years working as a speech-language pathologist in the New York City public schools and is currently in New Jersey, where she provides services to children primarily in preschool through fifth grade. She is also involved in providing early intervention services for children under the age of three years.

Lauren currently resides in New Jersey with her husband, Matthew. She enjoys spending time with her friends and family. *Inference Card Games* is Lauren's first publication with LinguiSystems.

Introduction/Overview

Inferring is a skill that people use every day. During our daily lives, we use inferences to imply meaning, to guess, to suggest, or to suppose. Making inferences requires the use of deductive reasoning. It forces us to take what we already know or have learned and combine it with our previous experience in order to make an educated guess. Making inferences involves looking beyond what is explicitly stated in text or a message and filling in the missing information.

Students must use inferencing skills throughout the school day. Making an inference is a fundamental thinking process that is used in math and language arts, as well as in both reading and listening comprehension. Students also infer meaning from nonverbal communication tasks that are used every day.

In order to make inferences, a student must:
- recognize and understand all available information
- find patterns and similarities within prior knowledge and experience
- use appropriate language and vocabulary skills to explain the inference
- use input from others to verify that the inference was correct
  (*Test of Problem Solving 3: Elementary*, LinguiSystems, 2005).

Students who have difficulty making inferences may be unable to determine information that is necessary to comprehend reading material, answer math story problems, or take another's perspective while reading text. A student may also have difficulty making successful interpersonal relationships if he cannot interpret what others say or do.

It is my hope that by using *Inference Card Games*, students will learn ways to make inferences in problem solving and recognize that solutions can be made, even when crucial information is missing. By teaching children to interpret, we teach them how to seek meaning in what they read and how to make meaning in their lives (Calkins, *The Art of Teaching Reading*, 2001).

Inference Card Games is made up of 6 decks of cards. Each deck consists of 52 cards (26 pairs of complete inference riddles: 1 card in the pair represents the name or location and the other card provides the statement clue). There are three decks of *Who?* cards, which consist of occupations/people that require the student to infer who is making a statement. Three *Where?* decks contain locations that the student infers based on the statements provided.

The decks are arranged in a hierarchy of difficulty based on the vocabulary used. For example, a child in first grade may understand what a *doctor* or *birthday party* is, but may not have ever heard of an *electrician* or a *canyon*. The symbols on the back of each card correspond to the following grade levels:

○ *Who?* Deck 1: Grades 1-2   ● *Where?* Deck 1: Grades 1-2

□ *Who?* Deck 2: Grades 3-4   ■ *Where?* Deck 2: Grades 3-4

◇ *Who?* Deck 3: Grades 5-6   ◆ *Where?* Deck 3: Grades 5-6

As students begin to master the easier words from earlier decks, you can mix the cards with terms from the other decks to make the games more challenging.

Preparation

Preteach the concepts prior to attempting any of the card games in this manual. Use the name and location cards alone and have students describe the occupations and places as well as associated attributes and vocabulary. Make sure your students are familiar with all of the names and locations before playing the games.

— Lauren

Game 1: Memory Match

- *Players:* 2-5

- *Object:* Match pairs of cards

Setting Up

1. Depending on the age level or skill level of the students, select at least 12 pairs of cards. (Choose cards from either a *Where?* or *Who?* deck initially. As the students' skill levels increase, add more pairs to the game and/or mix items from the *Where?* and *Who?* decks.)

2. Arrange the cards facedown in a grid of rows and columns as if you were setting up to play Concentration or Memory Match.

Playing the Game

1. The first player turns over any two cards. If the student can read, he reads the cards aloud; otherwise, the instructor reads the cards to the student. If the student has a matching pair, he takes the match and puts it in front of him. If the student doesn't find a match, he turns both cards facedown. The player's turn ends.

2. Play continues with players turning over two cards on each turn and collecting any matches.

3. When all the matches have been made, players count their cards. The player who has collected the most matches is the winner.

Game 2: Who Am I?

- *Players:* 2-5

- *Object:* Listen to a statement and infer *who* said it

Setting Up

1. Select a deck of *Who?* cards and choose several matching name and statement pairs of cards. Distribute all the name cards evenly to the players.

2. Shuffle all the statement cards and place them in a pile.

Playing the Game

1. The caller (either the instructor or a student who can read) chooses the top card from the pile of statement cards and reads the card aloud to the rest of the players.

2. Each player looks at the cards in her hand and determines whether she has the name card that matches the statement. For example, the caller reads, "Please stay seated while we are moving between stops. Who am I?" The player holding the Bus Driver card would then state, "Bus Driver."

3. The player who has the match takes both the name card and the statement card and places the pair facedown on the table in front of her. If a player provides an incorrect response, there is no penalty. The person who has the correct name card then identifies the match and takes the statement card.

4. Play continues until a player has found a match for each of her cards. That player is the winner.

Game 3: Where Am I?

- *Players:* 2-5

- *Object:* Listen to statements made by a person and infer *where* he or she is

Setting Up

1. Select a deck of *Where?* cards and choose several matching location and statement pairs of cards. Distribute all the location cards evenly to the players.

2. Shuffle all the statement cards and place them in a pile.

Playing the Game

1. The caller (either the instructor or a student who can read) takes the top card from the pile of statement cards and reads the card aloud to the rest of the players.

2. Each player looks at the cards in his hand and determines whether he has the location card that matches the statement the caller read. For example, the caller reads, "My puppy looks nervous. I hope it doesn't hurt him when he gets his shot. Where am I?" The player holding the Veterinarian's Office card would then state, "Veterinarian's Office."

3. The player who has the match takes both the location card and the statement card and places the pair facedown on the table in front of him. If a player provides an incorrect response, there is no penalty. The person who has the correct name card then identifies the match and takes the statement card.

4. Play continues until a player has found a match for each of his cards. That player is the winner.

Game 4: Magic Word

- *Players:* 2-6

- *Object:* To infer the name or place that is written on the card based on associated clues

Setting Up

1. Choose one deck of either *Who?* or *Where?* cards and use only the name/location cards. The statement cards aren't needed. Place the cards facedown in a single pile.

Playing the Game

1. This game is similar to the TV game show "Password."

2. Split up students into two teams. If there are only two students playing, the instructor acts as the clue giver for both students, who compete against one another.

3. One player on each team provides the clues and the other team members infer the person or location the clue giver is describing. The clue giver on Team 1 draws a card and reads it silently. The clue giver then states a one-word clue. For example, if the clue giver has drawn the Cave card, she might say, "Dark." If someone on the clue giver's team infers the answer correctly, Team 1 keeps the card and play moves to Team 2. If Team 1 does not infer correctly, the clue giver on Team 1 passes the card to Team 2's clue giver, who then states a one-word clue for his team. If Team 2 provides a correct response, it keeps the card. If Team 2 doesn't infer correctly, the teams continue trading turns with the same card until one team correctly infers the person or place shown on the card.

4. Once a card has been guessed, a new card is drawn by the other team, and the game continues as above (team members may alternate being the clue giver). The first team to collect a predetermined number of cards (5, for example) or the most cards within a designated time period (15 minutes) wins the game.

Skill Variation

For those students who have trouble remembering previously presented clues, the instructor can write each clue that has been provided on the board. As the students' skill level increases, the visual cueing is gradually removed.

The instructor may also provide visual cues by presenting a list of the type of words they wish their students to use when providing clues. For example, the instructor may show clue words such as *function* (what they do), *location* (where he or she is found), *objects used* (what kind of tools are used or what kind of objects may be found in that location).

Extension Activity

Beyond playing competitive inferencing games, the cards can also be used to work on expressive and written language skills. The instructor provides the name or place cards to students who generate their own statement sentences. After students have made up a few of their own inferencing riddles, they can share them with others and create their own games. Another option is to have students generate names and places that aren't included in the game decks, along with accompanying statements, and create new content for inferencing games.

19-10-9876543