

Grades 9–10 Playlist: Evidence and Inferences

Aligns with *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1*:

- Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Welcome

Sometimes authors will speak plainly about their meaning and main point, but other times readers must make inferences from the text in order to arrive at their conclusion. Inferences are assumptions that can be made based off the information in the text, meaning readers must understand what the text is directly or plainly stating, and then think about what those statements imply. Doing this allows readers to have a deeper understanding of the text through a more detailed analysis using clear and implied evidence from the text to support such an understanding.

Objectives

In this playlist, students will learn how to:

- draw inferences from literary text to make and support an analysis.
- synthesize evidence collected from the text to best support conclusions with explicit and implicit textual evidence.

Review

Key Terms

- **Explicit** evidence refers to statements that are clear and detailed that leave no room for doubt or confusion.
- On the other hand, **implicit** evidence refers to statements that are understood through implication and not directly expressed.
- Making an **inference** refers to reaching an assumption based on evidence and reasoning.
- To **synthesize** information is to bring together separate and/or multiple parts of a text to arrive at a solid conclusion.
- **Textual evidence** refers to information that supports a position derived from the text itself, mainly through the use of quotations, paraphrase, and summary.



Exploring the Standard

Many creative writers, including authors and poets, use various techniques to express an idea that may not be explicitly stated, such as using figurative language and imagery. That said, it is up to the reader to make inferences using the text itself in order to support a reader's interpretation of the literature.

Watch!

Watch this short video about textual evidence and inferences:

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p_YtrU2TLzM

Example 1: Poetry

The following is a sonnet poem written by Edna St. Vincent Millay, published in 1922. Consider what this sonnet reveals about societal expectations of that time period. Use both explicit and implicit evidence from the text as a means of support.

Oh, oh, you will be sorry for that word!
Give back my book and take my kiss instead.
Was it my enemy or my friend I heard?—
“What a big book for such a little head!”
Come, I will show you now my newest hat,⁵
And you may watch me purse my mouth and prink.
Oh, I shall love you still and all of that.
I never again shall tell you what I think.

I shall be sweet and crafty, soft and sly;
You will not catch me reading any more,¹⁰
I shall be called a wife to pattern by;
And some day when you knock and push the door,
Some sane day, not too bright and not too stormy,
I shall be gone, and you may whistle for me.

After a close reading of the poem, readers should then ask themselves key questions that may help determine how Millay shows society's expectations: Who is speaking? To whom are they speaking? What is the dynamic of the relationship between these characters? How do these characters interact? How do these characters relay social expectations?

First, readers can infer that the poem is written from a woman's perspective given the first-person narrative discussing how she “shall be called a wife,” and that she is speaking to a male partner with words such “kiss” and “love.” But what about their expectations for each other? The woman seems to care about reading and knowledge (“Give back my book”), but her partner does not seem to agree with such an interest, as he condescendingly states, “What a big book for such a little head!” The woman speaker then seems to comply with her partner's wishes to be “called a wife to pattern by” and states that she will “never again” tell him what she thinks, but rather concern herself with material things, such as showing him a new hat as he admires her beauty.

