

Inference

How to read like a detective!



Today we are going to be looking for clues.

Let's start by looking at some images.

- **Look at the picture** and try to **guess** the answer to the question.
- You don't need to write the answer down.

Question

How do you think
the astronauts
inside the
spacecraft feel?



Question

Do you think these people are brave?



Question

Why is the cat hiding?



Question

What time of year
was this photograph
taken?



Question

Why is he angry?

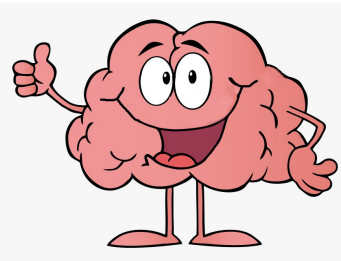


Inference

Were all of our answers the same for each picture?

Do we have an answer which is 100% correct or true?

No! Each question needed you to find some clues in the picture and use your big brains to guess the answer.



Today we will be learning all about:

How to *infer* new ideas, words and information from a text.

- to infer (v) - to make a guess or conclusion based on facts, observations and clues

Just like a detective, you need to

- Search for and find clues.
- Think about what facts you already know.
- Use this information to make a guess.



This can sound a little difficult to do but we **infer** or 'guess' new information all the time, just like the picture game at the beginning.

It's not only useful for English class, if you practice inferring it can make learning new topics or ideas:

- Quicker to understand.
- Easier to understand on your own.
- Easier to link to things you already know.
- **Less scary when you don't know something.**



Inferring new vocabulary.

One of the most useful ways to apply inferring is to help you guess the meaning of new vocabulary without help from your teacher or a dictionary.

When you *infer* a new word you need to look at the rest of the sentence or words around it for clues.

Then can use what you already know to help you make the best guess that you can.

Inferring new vocabulary.

Although lots of you already have great vocabulary, we will show you how to guess a new word before you check in a dictionary later.

Look at the sentence below

‘The hungry dog, quickly devoured the delicious meat’.

Can you guess what ‘devoured’ means?

Let’s break it down.

Find out the word class

A good place to start is by working out what kind of word (part of speech) your new word is.

Most of the new vocabulary that you will learn will either be:

- Nouns
- Adjectives
- Verbs
- Adverbs



Parts of speech: **nouns**.

Examples:

A **noun** – is the part of speech that names a person, place, thing, or idea.

Clues:

- Has an article (a/an/the) in front of it.
- Some proper nouns have capital letters.
- All sentences have a noun (or pronoun).
- A noun (or pronoun) will be the subject/object of the sentence.

A **pen**

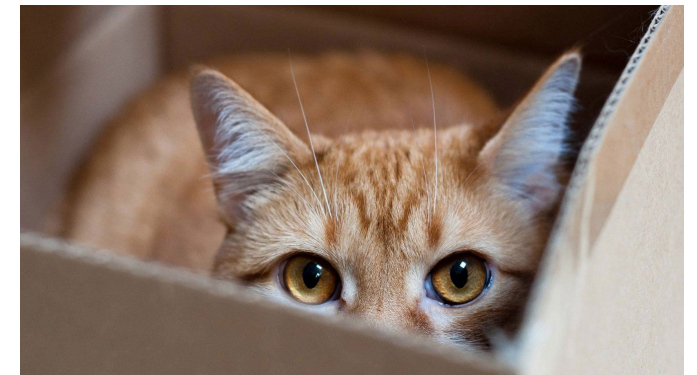
The **school**

English

hour

teacher

cat



Parts of speech: **adjectives**.

An **adjective**— is a part of speech that describes or changes a **noun**. **Adjectives** add more detail about the **noun**.

Clues:

- Often, the adjective is before the noun it describes.
- Sometimes an adjective is not followed by a noun.
- Adjectives too can have different word endings with different meanings
scared/scary.

Examples

A **useful** pen

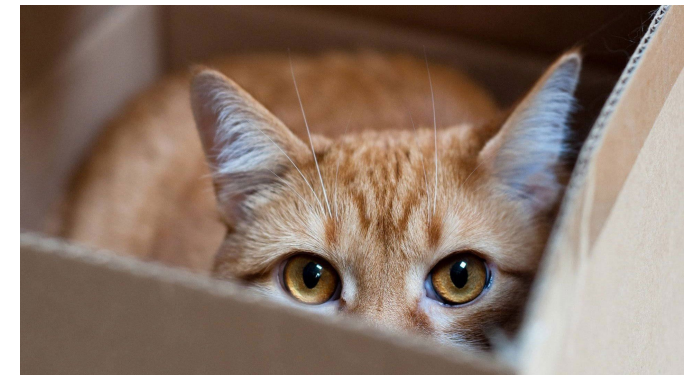
The **old** school

English is **interesting**.

An **amazing** hour

The **terrible** teacher

This **cat** is **scared**.



Parts of speech: **verbs**.

A verb – A verb is a part of speech that tells about an action or a state. It is the main part of a sentence: every sentence has a verb.

Clues:

- Verbs are the only kind of word that changes to show past or present tense.
- They have different forms: past, present, past participle and a gerund with -ing

Examples

play/played/played/playing

study/studied/studied/studying

go/went/gone/going

swim/swam/swum/swimming

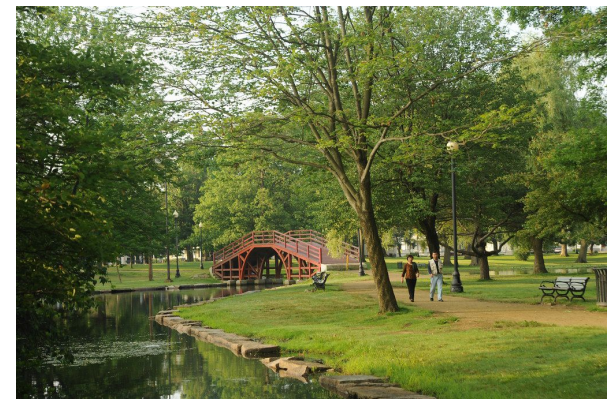


Parts of speech: **adverbs**.

An adverb— is a word used to change or describe a verb (sometimes adjectives and other adverbs too .)

Clues:

- Adverbs of time tell us when a verb happens; 'tomorrow', 'morning' .
- Adverbs of place tell us where a verb happens; 'here', 'there'.
- Adverbs of degree tell us how much an action has happened; 'very', 'almost'.
- Adverbs of manner tell us how the action is done; 'carefully', 'slowly'.



Examples

I'm **going** to the **park** **tomorrow**.

The **girl** **is playing** football **here**.

I **was** **very** **happy** with my **final** **exam** **score**.

Khang **carefully** **did** his **difficult** **homework**.

Activity time!

We are going to practice inference and learn to be better detectives to guess the meanings on our own.

1. Word class quiz.
2. Infer the new word.
3. Inferring ideas from a text and drawing activity.

1. Word class quiz.

1. Jeremy lifted the heavy rock above his head.
2. The monkey dashed through the dense jungle.
3. There was water everywhere.
4. The pirate was terrifying and ugly.
5. The modern motorbike is racing down the road.
6. Mai carefully completes her homework.
7. Andy shouted angrily at his brother.

Word class quiz.

Answers

1. Jeremy lifted the heavy rock above his head.

1. adjective

2. The monkey dashed through the dense jungle.

2. verb

3. There was water everywhere.

3. adverb

4. The pirate was terrifying and ugly.

4. noun

5. The modern motorbike is racing down the road.

5. adjective

6. Mai carefully completes her homework.

6. verb

7. Andy shouted angrily at his brother.

7. adverb

Inferring new vocabulary.

So let's look at our sentence again. Let's understand what parts of speech are in the sentence and then guess what part of speech 'devoured' is.

'The hungry dog, quickly devoured the delicious meat'.

Inferring new vocabulary.

‘The hungry dog, quickly devoured the delicious meat’.

Can you see which **word class** is missing?

We know that a sentence has to have which word?

Inferring new vocabulary.

‘The hungry dog, quickly devoured the delicious meat’.

Now that we know that ***devoured*** is a **verb** we need to infer what it means so we look at the other words in the sentence to help us guess the meaning. We know that:

- The dog is hungry.
- It did something quickly to the meat.
- The meat was delicious.

What verb do you think is a synonym for devoured?

Inferring new vocabulary.

‘The hungry dog, quickly devoured the delicious meat’.

What verb do you think is a synonym for devoured?

Make a guess, it could be....

- smelled
- licked
- ate

When we infer we are never 100% sure of the answer but we can make a good guess.

Inferring new vocabulary.

‘The hungry dog, quickly devoured the delicious meat’.

What verb do you think is a synonym for devoured?

When we check in the dictionary it says:

devour (v) - **to eat (food or prey) hungrily or quickly**



Many new words are **synonyms** (similar to others) of words you already know!

Other tips for inferring new words.

- Look at the words that you already know in the sentence and use that information to guess the new word.
- Think about the what the topic you are reading about or the genre of fiction. If the new word is from a horror story it could be something scary. If it's from a science book it could be a new process or scientific idea.
- Does it look or sound like a word you already know? Sometimes you might guess the meaning from a word you already know.

Inferring meaning from texts

We've looked at inferring new vocabulary and new words but you can also infer and guess other ideas from texts and stories.

When you read a story you will find clues, which will help you to make good guesses about characters, the plot or ideas in a story.



A guide to help you infer meanings.

Here is a table which will help you to infer. We will look at a short passage and make a good inference about the story.

It says..... (What facts does the text tell us?)	+	I say..... (What facts do you already know?)	=	Inference

A guide to help you infer meanings.

It was noon, right in the middle of the day. Ted's large hat covered his face but the sweat still ran down his face and fell onto the floor.

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It was the middle of the day. He is wearing a hat. He was sweating.				

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It was the middle of the day. He is wearing a hat. He was sweating.		The middle of the day is usually when the sun is hottest. I wear a hat to protect from the sun. People sweat when they are working or it is hot.		I guess that Ted lives in a hot and sunny place like the south of Vietnam.

Inferring meaning from texts

Sometimes you will be inferring the meaning of new words and texts at the same time especially when doing a difficult reading from the text.

It sounds hard, if you can infer the meaning you won't panic and need to run for a dictionary.

Let's look another extract together.

Clues and questions

Billy had been scared of the dark for as long as he could remember, but lately his fear had become much worse. He'd started seeing things lurking in the shadows of his room — creeping, crawling things that made his muscles freeze in terror and the breath judder in his chest. It made him feel stupid and ashamed. It was why he now kept a night light on in his bedroom, and why he couldn't have stayed over at Tom's house.

Taken from 'The Night's Realm'
Written by Nick Ward

First let find some clues.

We know that Billy is scared of the dark and it is getting worse.

He is seeing some scary things, this will help us with our 1st word.

Clues and questions

Billy had been scared of the dark for as long as he could remember, but lately his fear had become much worse. He'd started seeing things **lurking** in the shadows of his room — creeping, crawling things that made his muscles freeze in terror and the breath judder in his chest. It made him feel stupid and ashamed. It was why he now kept a night light on in his bedroom, and why he couldn't have stayed over at Tom's house.

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lurking

It describes the 'things' that Billy sees. So it is an adjective.

Are these things going to be scary?

What other things and animals hide in shadows?

Can you infer what it might mean?

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lurking – (adj)

**remaining hidden so
as to wait in ambush.**

**(like a predator waiting
for prey)**

Clues and questions

Billy had been scared of the dark for as long as he could remember, but lately his fear had become much worse. He'd started seeing things lurking in the shadows of his room — creeping, crawling things that made his muscles freeze in terror and the breath **judder** in his chest. It made him feel stupid and ashamed. It was why he now kept a night light on in his bedroom, and why he couldn't have stayed over at Tom's house.

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judder (v)

How is Billy feeling?

How do you feel when you are scared?

What does your breathing do when you are scared?

2. Inferring new words

Look at the sentences below and try to infer what the underlined word could mean. Read the sentence for clues and try and guess.

- If you already know the word try and think of 1 or 2 synonyms of that word you know or can infer from the text.

2. Inferring new words

1. The tiger walked slowly through the grass stalking it's prey carefully.

2 The ship's cook made breakfast, lunch and dinner in the galley, before serving it to the crew.

Answers

1. 1. stalking (v)
2. a) jumping
3. b) following and watching
4. c) eating
5. d) shouting at

6. 2. Galley (n)
7. a) a ship's bedrooms
8. b) a ship's kitchen
9. c) a ship's toilet
10. d) a ship's store

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2. Inferring new words

3. Harry looked carefully at this bizarre old lady. She wore bright pink and green dress, had purple hair and the strangest looking hat he had ever seen.

4. Sally felt so contented, as she sat next to her grandma and her little brother watching her favourite film.

Answers

1. 3. bizarre (adj) -
2. a) strange or weird
3. b) normal
4. c) beautiful
5. d) fat

6. 4. contented (adj)
7. a) happy
8. b) sad
9. c) angry
10. d) bored

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2. Inferring new words

5. “Wake up!” Thao’s mum shouted.
“Give me five more minutes” she drowsily replied
and rolled over onto the other side of the bed.

6. As she saw the hungry-looking sharks getting
closer to her tiny boat, Truc picked up her sharp,
long harpoon and threw it as hard as she could.

Answers

1. 5. drowsily (adv) -
2. a) happily
3. b) angrily
4. c) sleepily
5. d) crazily

6. 6. harpoon (n)
7. a) net for catching fish
8. b) teddy bear
9. c) a round rock
10. d) a spear used for
hunting fish

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3. Inferring ideas and draw your brain!

First take a piece of paper or a notebook and draw an outline of your head like this:



3. Inferring ideas and draw your brain!

Next we will read a short text together. After that we will write some facts from the texts on the outside of your head.



3. Inferring ideas and draw your brain!

Kevin looked out of the window again, he had seen the same bird fly across the playground three times today. He tried to listen to his teacher, but his teacher's voice made him feel sleepier.

Kevin wanted nothing more than to play outside again and play football with his friends. Instead he was stuck inside again listening to his teacher go on and on about that stupid story.

3. Inferring ideas and draw your brain!

Read the story again and look for facts and clues that tell us that Kevin is bored or unhappy.

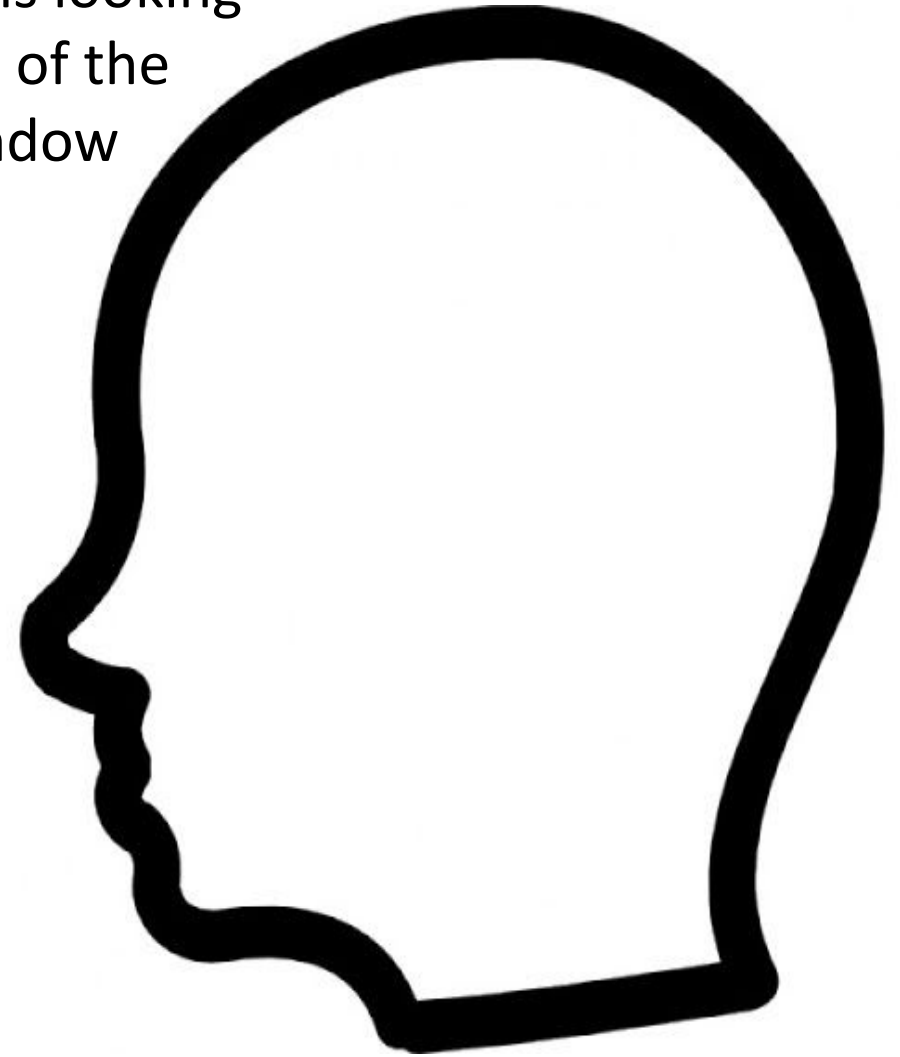
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Look at the first paragraph.
Write some clues that tell us
Kevin is bored on the outside of
the head like this:

He is looking
out of the
window

Kevin looked out of the window
again, he had seen the same bird
fly across the playground three
times today. He tried to listen to
his teacher, but his teacher's
voice made him feel sleepier.



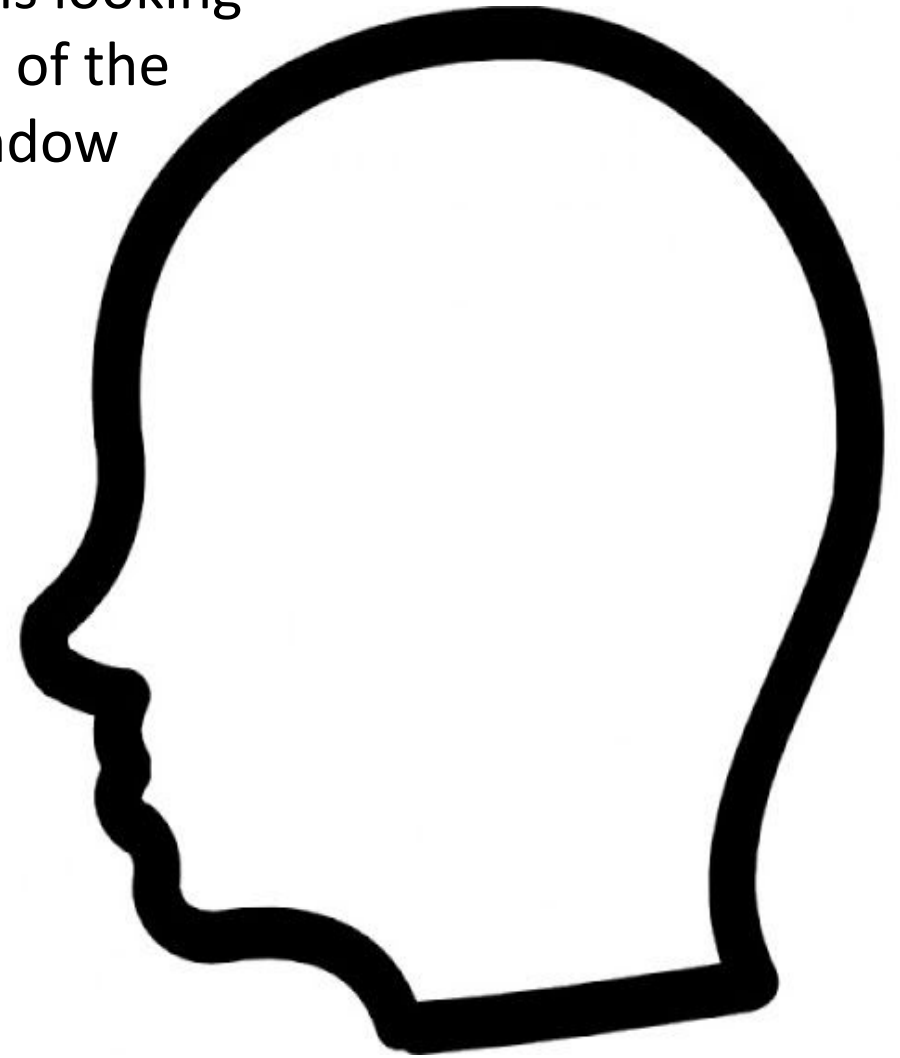
Kevin is bored or unhappy

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He is looking
out of the
window

He feels sleepy



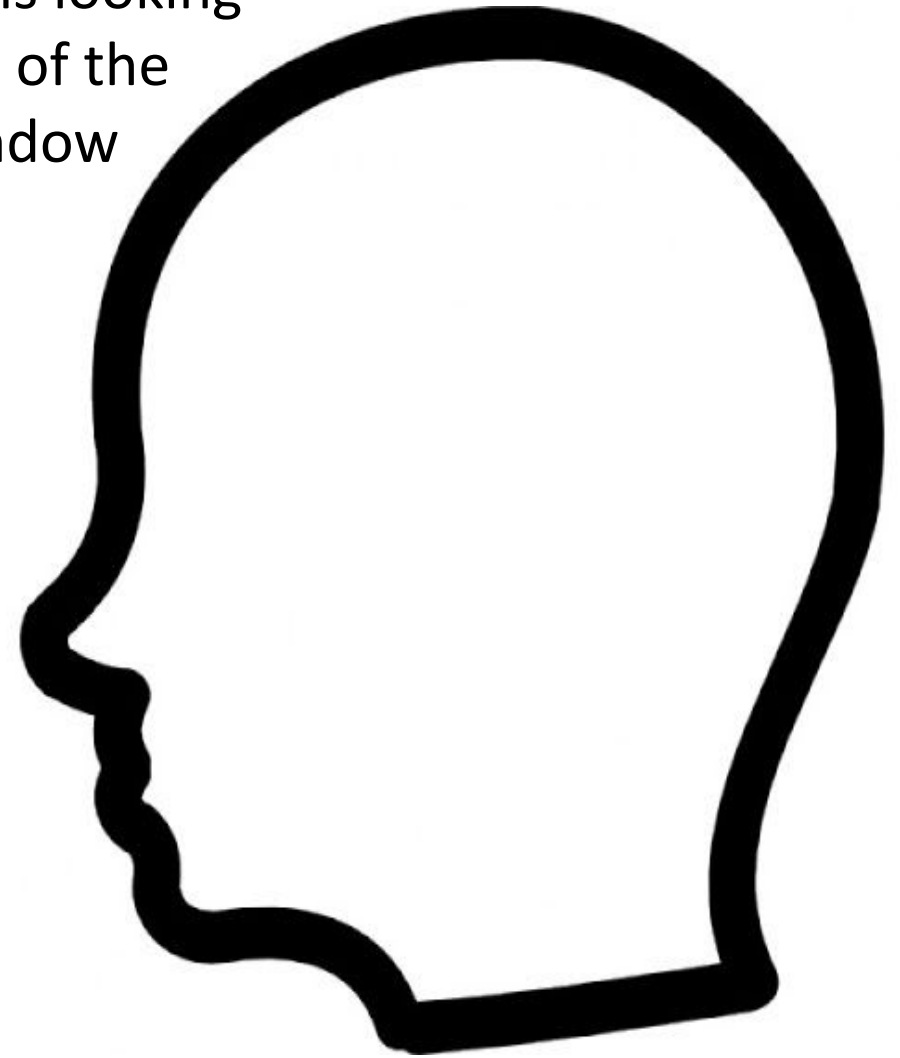
Kevin is bored or unhappy

Now look at paragraph two and find more clues:

Kevin wanted nothing more than to play outside again and play football with his friends. Instead he was stuck inside again listening to his teacher go on and on about that stupid story. He waited hoping for the bell to ring.

He is looking
out of the
window

He feels sleepy



Kevin is bored or unhappy

You should have a head that
looks a little like this:

He was stuck inside.

He is looking
out of the
window.

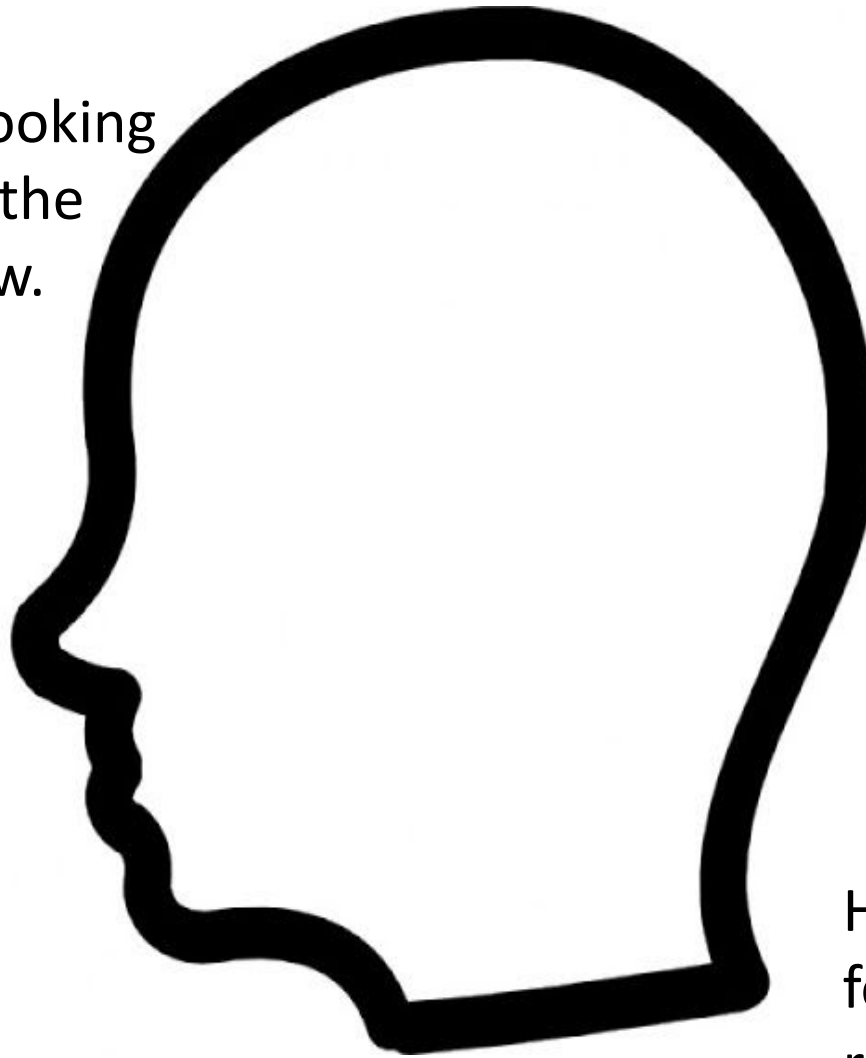
He wants to
play football.

He thinks
the story is
stupid.

He feels
sleepy`

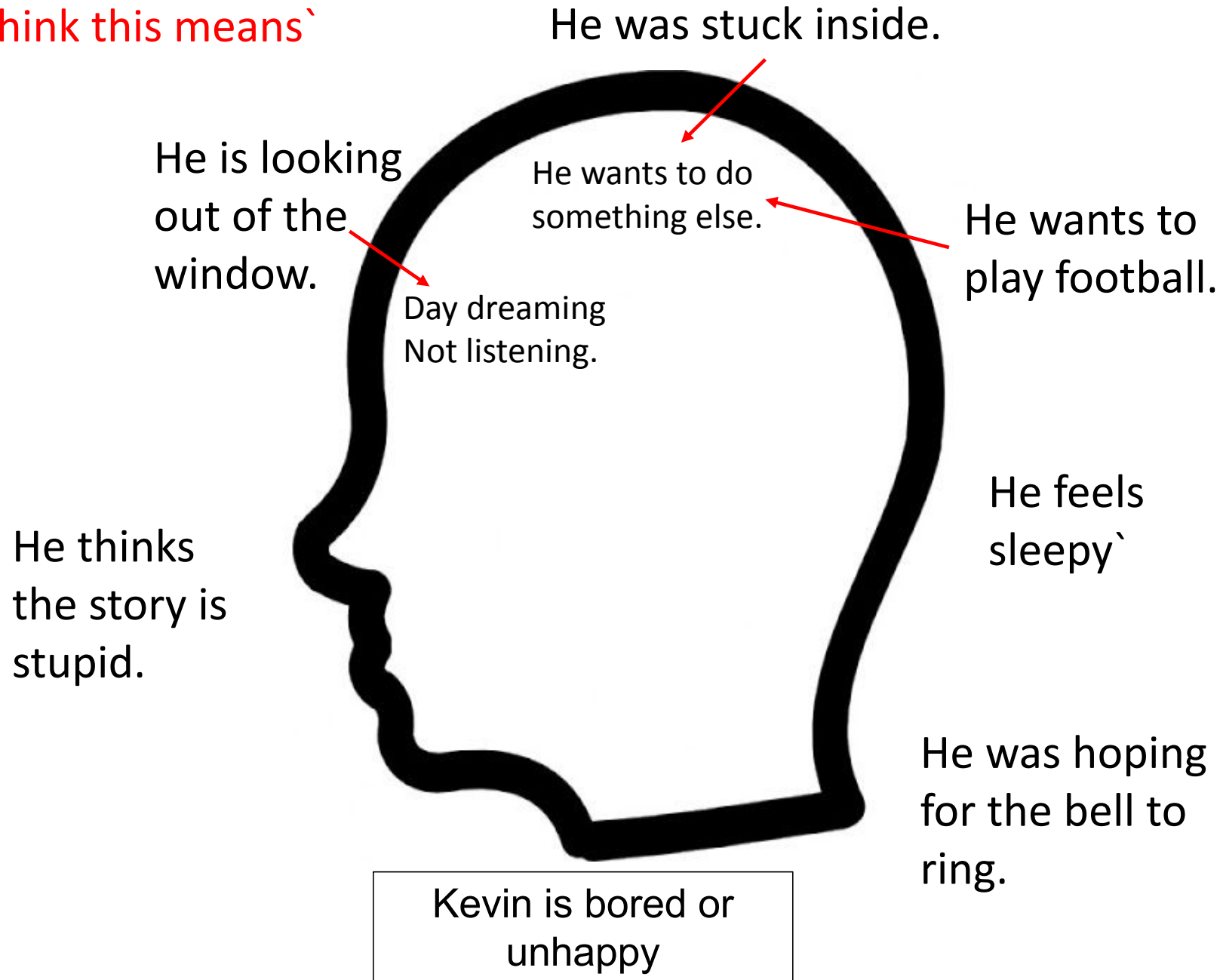
He was hoping
for the bell to
ring.

Kevin is bored or
unhappy



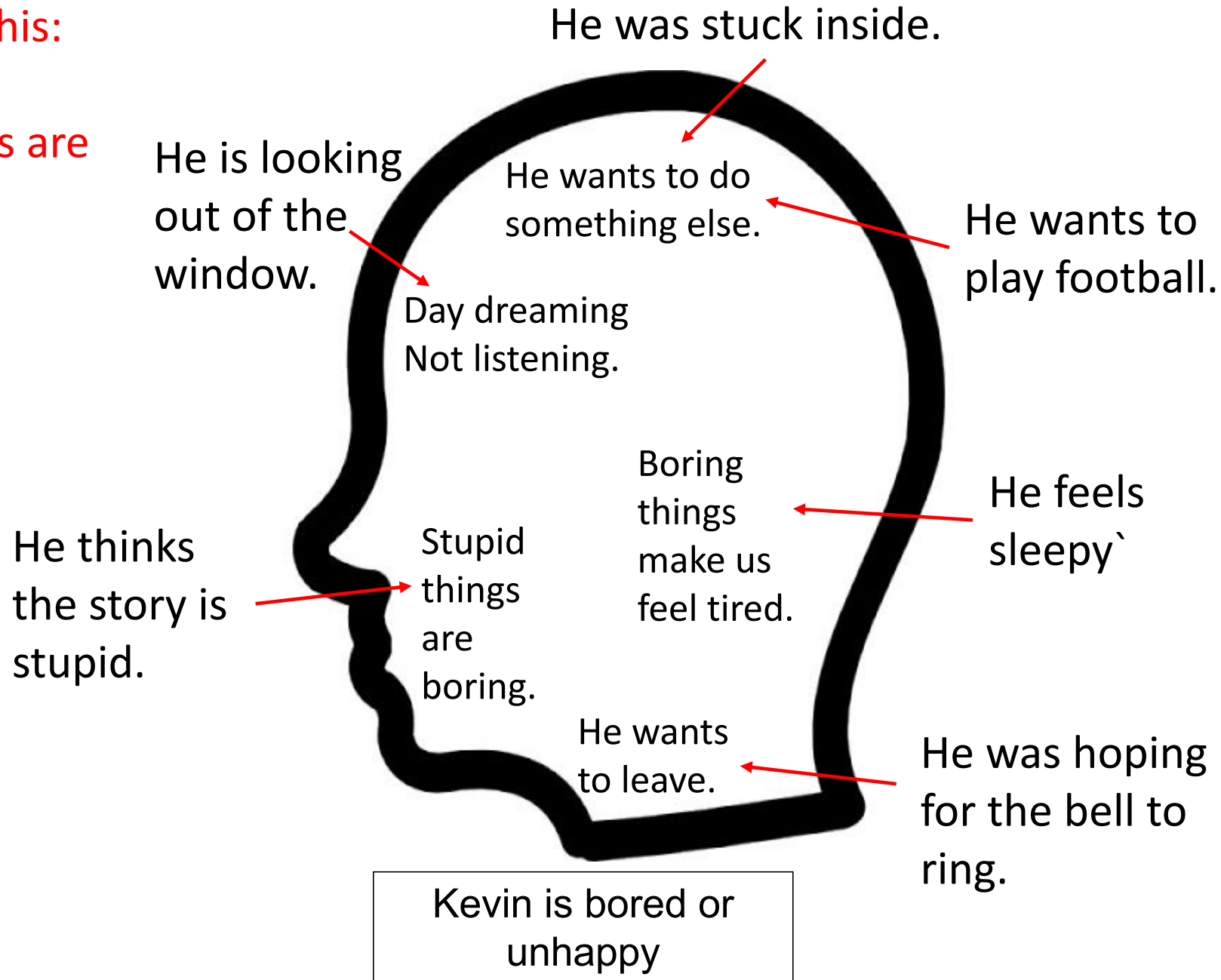
Next inside your head write
what you think this means`

Like this:



You should have something that looks like this:

Other ideas are good too!



Review

Today we

1. Reviewed parts of speech.
2. Learned how to infer new vocabulary.
3. Learned how to infer ideas from the text.

Review quiz.

1. When we infer we always get one 100% correct answer? True/False

1 _____

2. What part of speech does an adjective describe?

2 _____

3. Find two adverbs in this sentence:

“I need to quickly finish my homework, before I eat my dinner,” said Khang.

3 _____

4. What does contented mean?

4 _____

5. Infer the meaning of the underlined word in this sentence:

5 _____

Helen screamed when she saw the monster’s horrifying face.

Review quiz.

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4. What does contented mean?
5. Infer the meaning of the underlined word in this sentence:

Helen screamed when she saw the monster’s horrifying face.

Answers

1 false

2 a noun

3 quickly
before

4 happy

scary, terrifying,
5 frightening

Before we go.....

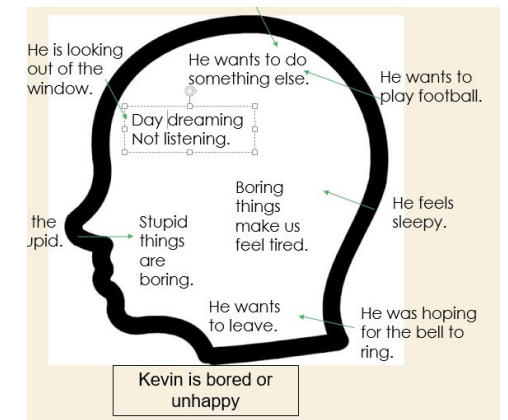
Remember when reading a new text for the first time, you should:

- Highlight or underline any new vocabulary.
- Try to **infer** the new words by working out what part of speech it is and use clues from the text to guess the new word, before you check in a dictionary.

Before we go.....

- You can also **infer** information about characters and actions in a story.
- Use a table or picture to help you to write, down, what the text says, what you say and what you can infer.

It says..... (What facts does the text tell us?)	+	I say..... (What facts do you already know?)	=	Inference



Remember you can infer everywhere not just in school or in English class.



Next time you don't know something.
Stop and look for clues.
Use your knowledge in your brain.
Make a good guess!

