Inference 'Reading between the lines'

Inferring is working out the author wants you to think. An inference is "reading between the lines" to understand things not directly stated by the author. Inferences are based on information stated in the text as well as what is known from personal experience which relates to the passage being read.

In school, we explain that to make inferences we need to 'be a reading detective'. When reading and discussing books at home, you can support by encouraging your child to make inferences based on clues in the text. Their understanding of the context of the book will help them to develop this important skill.

Here are some brief examples of inference:

1. *The sandwich you left on the table is gone. Crumbs lead to your dog's bed, and a piece of meat hangs out of her mouth.*

Using the evidence from this passage, you can infer she (the dog) has eaten the sandwich.

2. *Harry's face turned red and he started to yell, balling his hands up into shaking fists.*

From the evidence in this passage you can infer that he's really angry about something, though we don't yet know what it is.

Suggested questions to encourage inference skills:

- Why was… feeling...?
- Why did ... happen?
- Why did ... say ...?
- Can you explain why ...?
- How does ... make you feel?
- How do these words make the reader feel?
- How do the descriptions of ... show that they are ...?
- How can you tell that ...?
- What voice might these characters use?
- What was ... thinking when …?
- Who is telling the story?
- What makes you think that?
- Which words give you that impression?
- How do you feel about...?
- What evidence is there of/that …?
- Can you explain why...?
- Why did X happen?
- Why does X do this?