Inferences - Tutor Hints

An *inference* is a reasonable guess based on information given. In other words, you can discover hidden facts that are not directly stated in the passage. This is sometimes called *drawing a conclusion.*

Practice: Consider the following sentence.

   The Senator admitted owning the gun that killed his wife.

This is what we know to be true from the information provided:
- There is a Senator   - He was married   - His wife is dead
- The Senator owns a gun   - A gun was involved in her death

Which of the following *inferences* are supported by the information in the sentence?
-   [1]The gun has been recovered and identified as the weapon that killed the Senator's wife.
-   [2]The Senator previously denied owning the gun.
-   [3]There was a cover-up of the wife's death.
-   [4]The wife was shot.
-   [5]The wife was murdered. (Be careful with this one.)

How to make inferences/draw reasonable conclusion:

1. Rely on the information given. Base your inference on the facts presented.
2. Pay special attention to *all* of the details and how they form a picture or story.
3. Verify your inference:
       - Check your facts: Something may or may not necessarily be true; can you tell <u>for sure</u> by using only the information provided?
       - Make sure you are not adding information or making an unfair judgment.
4. Add up the facts:
       - What is the writer trying to suggest from this set of facts?
       - Do all of the facts and details add up to your conclusion?
5. Be alert to clues:
       - Are all of the details included or are some of them intentionally left out?

Example: You're standing in a convenience store. A woman walks in the door, grabs a candy bar, and walks out.
   a. She took a candy bar and left without paying.
   b. She stole the candy bar.
   c. She's is a thief.

We know for a fact she took the candy bar and left. She may have stolen it, or she could have an arrangement with the store owner; she may even BE the store owner. The last statement may be true, but if she's the owner, it is definitely not. We just don't know for sure based on the information provided.

Answers

<u>Practice</u>
1 and 4 are valid inferences (but not 5 because—who knows—the senator's wife may have been cleaning the gun, and it went off)