What is inferring?

To infer is to draw a conclusion based on reasoning and evidence. When making inferences, information at hand is analysed for any patterns or connections that are implied or hinted at, that is, in order to interpret and analyse data, students may need to make inferences based on information they have collected. For example, if the release of a new product results in large queues at the store, it could be inferred that this product is popular.

A process of inferring may include:

- determining what is being asked

- identifying the specific evidence at hand

- determining meaning from the patterns and/or connections in the evidence

- using evidence and reasoning to draw conclusions

- checking whether the conclusions are reasonable based on the evidence at hand.

Infer as a cognition

Cognitive verbs are categorised using Marzano & Kendall's four elements of the cognitive system: retrieval, comprehension, analysis and knowledge utilisation (2007).

The cognitive verb infer is part of the retrieval element of cognitive process. This element involves the 'generation of new information not already possessed by the individual' (p. 44).

Infer in the Australian Curriculum Version 9.0

The cognitive verb infer appears in various achievement standards (AS) and/or content descriptions (CD) in the Australian Curriculum. The following table shows the use of infer across the Australian Curriculum in Years 7–10.

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Infer in the Years 7–10 Australian Curriculum AS and CD

	English	Health and Physical Education	Humanities and Social Sciences				Mathematics	Science	Technologies			The Arts				
Years 7–10			Civics and Citizenship	Economics and Business	Geography	History			Technologies	Design and Technologies	Digital Technologies	Dance	Drama	Media Arts	Music	Visual Arts
Year 7	CD				CD											
Year 8	CD				AS CD											
Year 9	CD				AS CD											
Year 10	CD				AS CD											

Infer in the Years 7–10 Australian Curriculum AS and CD

	Languages P–10 sequence							Languages 7–10 sequence						
	Chinese	French	German	Indonesian	Italian	Japanese	Spanish	Chinese	French	German	Indonesian	Italian	Japanese	Spanish
Year 7	CD													
Year 8	CD													
Year 9								CD						
Year 10								CD						

Learning area/subject examples include, but are not limited to:

Year/s	Learning area/subject	AS	CD
Years 7–8	Languages: Chinese P–10 Sequence		apply understanding of sentence structures, expressions, character components and writing system features to **infer** meaning, and compose and respond to texts AC9LC8U02
Year 8	Humanities and Social Sciences: Geography	They (students) interpret and analyse data and information to explain patterns and trends and **infer** relationships.	interpret and analyse geographical data and information to identify similarities and differences, explain patterns and trends and **infer** relationships AC9HG8S03
Year 9	English		use comprehension strategies such as visualising, predicting, connecting, summarising, monitoring, questioning and **inferring** to compare and contrast ideas and opinions in and between texts AC9E9LY05
Year 10	Humanities and Social Sciences: Geography	They interpret and analyse data and information to make generalisations and predictions, explain significant patterns and trends, and **infer** relationships.	evaluate geographical data and information to make generalisations and predictions, explain patterns and trends and **infer** relationships AC9HG10S03

References

Marzano, R & Kendall, J 2007, *The New Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*, Corwin Press, Thousand Oaks, CA.

More information

This information sheet is part of a suite of resources to support teachers in the explicit teaching and assessment of students' thinking. The suite of resources includes categories of common cognitive verbs, cognitive verb overviews and a cognitive verb toolkit with information sheets, posters and graphic organisers.

If you would like more information, please visit the QCAA website www.qcaa.qld.edu.au and search for 'cognitive verbs'. Alternatively, the suite of resources can be found here: www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/p-10/aciq/version-9/cognitive-verbs-in-version-9.0.