

# Brief Focus Lesson

**Comprehension:** Infer and Support with Evidence (Grade 6)

**Text:** *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick* by Chris Van Allsburg

<b>CAFE Goal</b>	Comprehension
<b>CAFE Strategy</b>	Infer and support with evidence.
<b>Observe/Relate</b>  (1 – 2 min.)	<p>Have you ever been to an art museum? Visiting an art museum is one of my favorite things to do. I know that artists tell stories through their work, and I like to learn those stories. When I look at a painting, I try to figure out the ideas that the artist wants to convey to viewers. I use the title of the painting (if there is one) and clues in the painting along with my background knowledge to infer. That inference is not just something that I imagine—I have evidence from the painting to support it. My evidence might be the artist’s use of certain colors or textures, the choice of different objects, or the expressions of people in the painting.</p> <p>Writers are also artists—they use words so that readers can create pictures in their minds. They sometimes illustrate their own books or supply photographs for them, or work with another artist to create the pictures. As a reader, I make inferences based on the text in addition to the pictures. I use the evidence from both the writing and the pictures to support my inference.</p>
<b>Teach and Reinforce</b>  (2 – 3 min.)	<p><b>Establish purpose</b> – <i>Today we are learning to infer and support with evidence.</i></p> <p><b>Create urgency</b> – <i>We are learning to infer and support with evidence because it enables us to figure out the author’s message even if it is not stated directly in the text.</i></p> <p><b>Explicit teacher modeling</b> – Today I want to share part of a famous and puzzling book titled <i>The Mysteries of Harris Burdick</i> with you! It was created by Chris Van Allsburg, an award-winning author and illustrator. He is well-known for writing books that encourage readers to make inferences.</p> <p>Read the introduction to <i>The Mysteries of Harris Burdick</i> (page 3) to the group. Then turn to page 4, the section entitled <i>Archie Smith, Boy Wonder</i>. Share the title of this part along with the caption, “A tiny voice asked, ‘Is he the one?’” <i>Begin by saying, I can use what I already know, along with clues from the text and pictures to make an inference. My inference won’t just be a guess because I will have evidence from the text to support it.</i></p>

Let me begin by looking closely at the text. The child in the picture is named Archie Smith. Here are some inferences I can make:

Using the information on the page with the title and caption, I infer that there must be something special about Archie. Maybe that title and caption mean that Archie is a genius or an inventor. The evidence is that the author has used the words *Boy Wonder* after Archie's name.

Based on the question that comes from the small voice, I infer that someone (or something) is on a mission. The evidence is that a voice has asked the question, "Is he the one?" These words suggest that the one looking for Archie is not sure that this boy is the right person.

In the picture, Archie is asleep; I can infer that he feels safe. The evidence is that Archie looks peaceful when he is sleeping; plus, he is sleeping with the window open.

There are several orbs of lights floating in Archie's bedroom. I also see a few more outside the window. I infer that these lights are not ordinary; they might be from a spaceship. My evidence is based on the way that the lights are floating in the room. They don't look like normal lights that people have in their houses. I've seen vehicles from outer space represented that way. The voice saying "Is he the one?" might be coming from one of the travelers on the spaceship.

*(If you would like to provide students with a visual of these inferences along with the supporting evidence, you can create a chart like the one below):*

**Inference 1:**

There is something special about Archie. Maybe he is a genius or an inventor.

**Evidence:**

The author uses the words "Boy Wonder" after his name.

**Inference 2:**

Someone (or something is looking) for Archie, but that person or thing does not know Archie.

**Evidence:**

"A voice asks the question, 'Is he the one?'" as though the speaker needs confirmation that Archie is the right person.

**Inference 3:**

Archie feels safe.

**Evidence:**

He looks peaceful when he is sleeping.  
He sleeps with the window open.

**Inference 4:**

The orbs of light might be from a spaceship.

**Evidence:**

There are two lights floating into Archie’s bedroom through an open window; there are several more lights outside the window.

I’ve just shared some ways that I have used clues from the text and pictures to make some inferences that are supported by evidence. Now it is your chance to apply this very useful strategy.

**Practice**  
(2 – 3 min.)

Here is another unusual picture. The title is “Under the Rug” and the caption is “Two weeks passed and it happened again.” Using the clues in the text and the picture, along with your background knowledge, you will make some inferences. Remember that you will support your inferences with evidence. For this practice, you will work with a partner. I’ll ask you to identify an inference together. One of you will write it on a sticky note labeled **Inference**; the other will write some pieces of evidence that support this inference on a sticky note labeled **Evidence**.

You can add your sticky note to the piece of Chart Paper I have labeled with the name of our target strategy: **Infer and Support with Evidence**. Once all children have added their sticky notes to the chart, invite some partnerships to share.



Examples might include responses like the following:

**Inference:**

The man is afraid or angry because some creature under the rug is bothering him.

**Evidence:** The man is trying to hit whatever is under the rug. The text says that “something like this happened two weeks ago.”

**Inference:**

Whatever is under the rug is fairly powerful.

**Evidence:**

	<p>It is causing the table and lamp to become unsteady.</p> <p>The man needs a chair to defend himself against whatever is under the rug.</p> <p>If possible, add <i>The Mysteries of Harris Burdick</i> to your classroom library and encourage students to revisit it to practice the strategy of infer and support with evidence.</p>
<p><b>Encourage and Plan</b>  (1 – 2 min.)</p>	<p>We have just learned how to infer and support with evidence. We infer using clues in the text and our own background knowledge. Since we know that it's important to have a reason for our inference, we need evidence from the text to support it. Based on our work today, we realize that using this strategy is a lot of fun! What are some other times when you might be able to apply this strategy today?</p>
<p><b>Common Core Alignment</b></p>	<p>Most strategies are applicable to all grade levels. Infer and support with evidence aligns with Standards RL.6.1 and RI.6.1 on our <a href="#">Grade 6 CAFÉ Menu</a> or <a href="#">CCSS Grade Level Matrix</a>.</p>