

Reading Comprehension

Helping Children Understand What They Read

When children reach 4th and 5th grades, they spend more time reading on their own. But they still need lots of practice and help from their parents to get better. They need to be able to read words accurately, with expression, and at a good speed. Teachers call this fluency. Sometimes parents think children should understand and remember everything in the story the first time they read it. But children often need to talk about a story or to read it several times to really understand it.

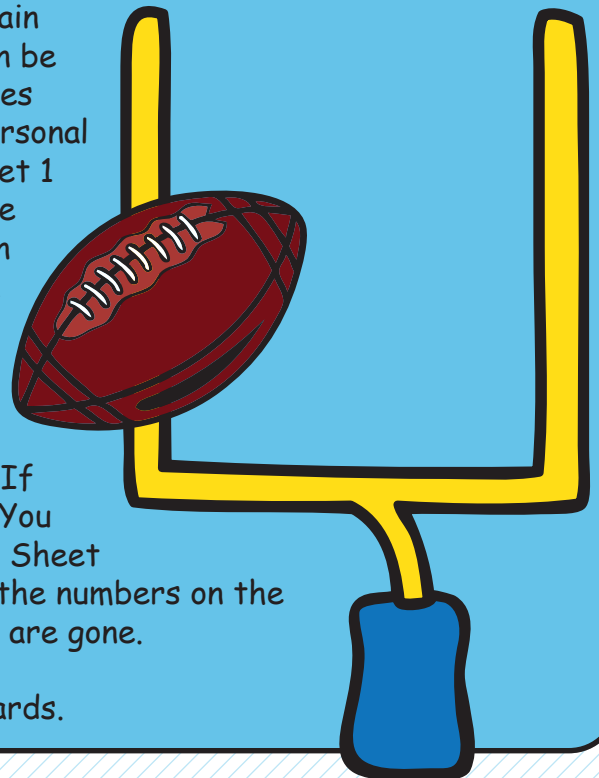
Also, as they read, teachers will ask children to read "beyond the words." At this age, children are asked to tell the difference between facts and opinions in what they read, to separate causes and effects, and to make inferences about what they read. Teachers call this reading comprehension.

Here are some ways to help your child improve his reading comprehension and fluency.

Fact or Opinion Football

As children grow up, much of what they read will contain facts and opinions. A fact is something that has or can be shown to be true. An opinion is the view somebody takes about an issue, especially when it is based solely on personal judgment. For this game, start by cutting apart the Set 1 Fact or Opinion Football cards. Shuffle them and place them face down in a stack. Place the goal post sheet in front of your child. Draw the top card from the stack and read it to your child (for example, "Apples, peaches, and oranges are types of fruit") without telling her the answer. Have her decide if the sentence is a fact or opinion. If her answer is correct, give her the card so she can place it on her goal post. If incorrect, place the card at the bottom of the stack. You can check the Fact or Opinion Football Parent Answer Sheet for the correct answer (numbers on the cards match the numbers on the Parent Answer Sheet). Keep playing until all the cards are gone.

Play the game again using the Set 2 Fact or Opinion cards.





Cause and Effect Match

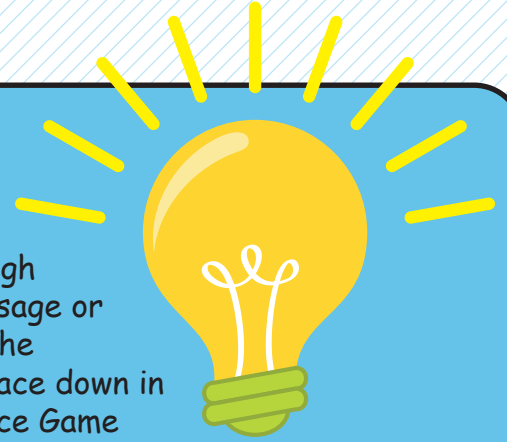
Teachers also will ask children to identify causes and effects in what they read. A cause is what makes something happen or is responsible for something that happens. An effect is a change that occurs as a direct result of a cause. For example, heavy rain can lead to flooding, where rain is the cause and flooding is the effect.

Cut apart the Set 1 Cause cards, shuffle them, and place them face down in a stack on the table. Cut apart the Set 1 Effect cards and place them face up on the table in a row. Have your child select the top card from the cause stack and read it out loud. Then have him look at the effect cards and find one effect that is related to the cause. If he finds the right effect card, he should pick up the card, read it out loud, and then place the two cards side by side. Continue until all cards are matched.



Play the same game using the Set 2 Cause and Effect cards.
Then again with the Set 3 Cause and Effect cards.

Incredible Inferences



As children read, they need to draw inferences from what they read. Inferences are ideas your child figures out through reasoning when the answers aren't specifically given in a passage or text. You need twenty pennies to play this game. Cut apart the Incredible Inference Cards, shuffle them, and place them face down in a stack between you and your child. Give Incredible Inference Game Sheet 1 to your child and keep Game Sheet 2 for yourself. Taking turns, you and your child draw a card from the stack and read it. For example, "Mom made a cake, decorated it, and put candles on it. There were lots of balloons. Children came with presents. Everyone played games. What is going on?" Look for the answer on either your child's Inference Game Sheet or your Inference Game Sheet. Because of the cake, candles, balloons and presents, the inference is that it is a birthday party. Place a coin on the birthday party circle on one of the Game Sheets. Continue playing until all the circles are covered on both Game Sheets. We have given you a Parent's Incredible Inferences Answer Sheet so you know which inference goes with each statement (numbers on the cards match the numbers on the Parent Answer Sheet).

More Incredible Inferences

If your child did okay with the Incredible Inferences game, you can play the same type of game with more advanced statements. This time, use the More Incredible Inferences Cards and More Incredible Inferences Game Sheets. Play the game the same way as you did with Incredible Inferences. These statements are more difficult so your child may need your help in finding the correct inferences. If your child has trouble coming up with the answers you could:

- Have him read the card again
- Point out clues for him
- Have him go through the answers on his game card to see if any make sense.

Once again, we have given you a Parent's More Incredible Inferences Answer Sheet so you know which inference goes with each statement (numbers on the cards match the numbers on the Parent Answer Sheet).

Watch Families Doing Activities

To see families doing these activities, please go to: www.washoestrivingreaders.com. Next, click on the Family Literacy Videos tab at the top of the page. Then, scroll down the page and click on the video that goes with this tip sheet. Other tip sheets and videos are there as well.

More Ideas

If you and your child enjoy these activities, tell your child's teacher. The teacher may have more ideas to share for learning fun at home. If your child is having a hard time with these activities, you can also talk to your child's teacher. There may be another tip sheet or other activities to help.



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Fact or Opinion Football Cards

Set 1 (Cut apart cards)

<p>Bread is made from flour.</p> <p>1</p>	<p>Cats are the best pets.</p> <p>2</p>
<p>We live in the United States.</p> <p>3</p>	<p>All children like to ride skate boards.</p> <p>4</p>
<p>Chocolate ice cream is better than vanilla ice cream.</p> <p>5</p>	<p>There are 12 months in a year.</p> <p>6</p>
<p>The earth revolves around the sun.</p> <p>7</p>	<p>Everyone should eat pizza every day.</p> <p>8</p>

Fact or Opinion Football Cards

Set 1 (Cut apart cards)

<p>Spiders are scarier than snakes.</p> <p>9</p>	<p>The sun rises in the east and sets in the west.</p> <p>10</p>
<p>Dogs bark.</p> <p>11</p>	<p>It feels good to walk barefoot.</p> <p>12</p>
<p>Riding a bike is more fun than swimming.</p> <p>13</p>	<p>Green is the prettiest color.</p> <p>14</p>
<p>Spiders have eight legs.</p> <p>15</p>	<p>Apples, peaches, and oranges are types of fruit.</p> <p>16</p>

Fact or Opinion Football Parent Answer Sheet

Set 1

1	Bread is made from flour.	Fact
2	Cats are the best pets.	Opinion
3	We live in the United States.	Fact
4	All children like to ride skateboards.	Opinion
5	Chocolate ice cream is better than vanilla ice cream.	Opinion
6	There are 12 months in a year.	Fact
7	The earth revolves around the sun.	Fact
8	Everyone should eat pizza everyday.	Opinion
9	Spiders are scarier than snakes.	Opinion
10	The sun rises in the east and sets in the west.	Fact
11	Dogs bark.	Fact
12	It feels good to walk barefoot.	Opinion
13	Riding a bike is more fun than swimming.	Opinion
14	Green is the prettiest color.	Opinion
15	Spiders Have eight legs.	Fact
16	Apples, peaches, and oranges are types of fruit.	Fact

Fact or Opinion Football Cards

Set 2

(Cut apart cards)

<p>Water freezes at 32 degrees Fahrenheit.</p> <p>1</p>	<p>Hamburgers are better than hotdogs.</p> <p>2</p>
<p>Elephants are bigger than dogs.</p> <p>3</p>	<p>July is the best month of the year.</p> <p>4</p>
<p>There are 12 inches in a foot.</p> <p>5</p>	<p>Math is easier than reading.</p> <p>6</p>
<p>Being an airplane pilot is the hardest job.</p> <p>7</p>	<p>The President lives in Washington, D.C.</p> <p>8</p>

Fact or Opinion Football Cards

Set 2

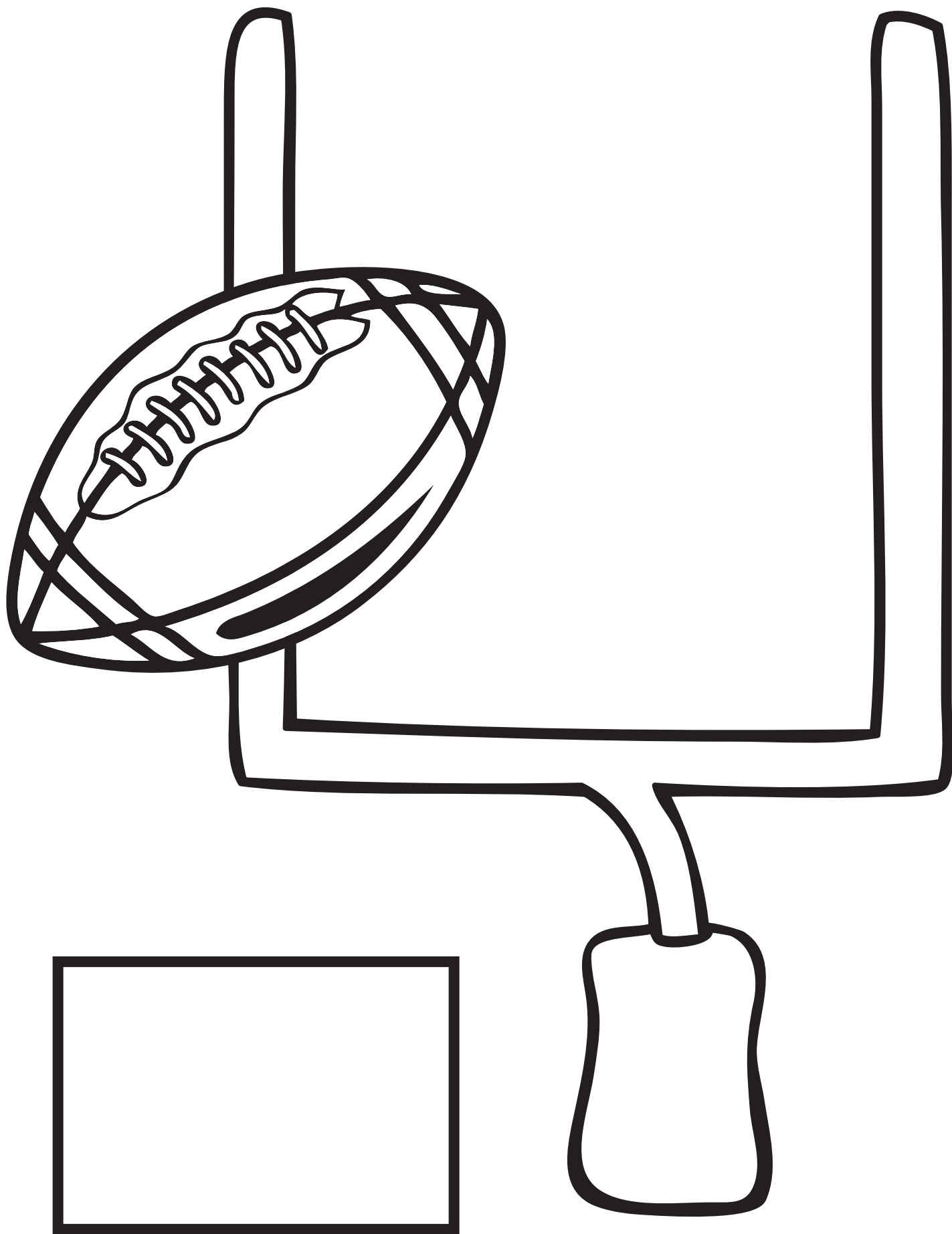
(Cut apart cards)

<p>Cell phones are the greatest invention.</p> <p>9</p>	<p>Zebras have stripes.</p> <p>10</p>
<p>George Washington was our first President.</p> <p>11</p>	<p>Football should be played all year.</p> <p>12</p>
<p>The sun is a star.</p> <p>13</p>	<p>Ketchup is made from tomatoes.</p> <p>14</p>
<p>Camping is not fun.</p> <p>15</p>	<p>Trucks are big and noisy.</p> <p>16</p>

Fact or Opinion Football Parent Answer Sheet

Set 2

1	Water freezes at 32 degrees Fahrenheit.	Fact
2	Hamburgers are better than hotdogs.	Opinion
3	Elephants are bigger than dogs.	Fact
4	July is the best month of the year.	Opinion
5	There are 12 inches in a foot.	Fact
6	Math is easier than reading.	Opinion
7	Being an airplane pilot is the hardest job.	Opinion
8	The President lives in Washington, D.C.	Fact
9	Cell phones are the greatest invention.	Opinion
10	Zebras have stripes.	Fact
11	George Washington was our first president.	Fact
12	Football should be played all year.	Opinion
13	The sun is a star.	Fact
14	Ketchup is made from tomatoes.	Fact
15	Camping is not fun.	Opinion
16	Trucks are big and noisy.	Opinion



Incredible Inferences

Inference Cards

(Cut apart cards)

<p>A person takes your temperature. Another person listens to your heart and asks how you are feeling.</p> <p>Where are you?</p> <p>1</p>	<p>You watch the screen. You see a man telling what the weather will be tomorrow. You switch the channel to watch a cartoon.</p> <p>What are you doing?</p> <p>2</p>
<p>The boy looked at the cover and read the title. He looked at the pictures and some of the words. He went back to the beginning and began.</p> <p>What is the boy doing?</p> <p>3</p>	<p>The girl changed her clothes. She grabbed a towel and sunscreen. When she got there she walked to the edge, took a deep breath, and jumped in.</p> <p>What is the girl doing?</p> <p>4</p>
<p>Mom made a cake, decorated it, and put candles on it. There are lots of balloons. Children came with presents. Everyone played games.</p> <p>What is going on?</p> <p>5</p>	<p>My brother woke up early and got dressed. After he ate breakfast, he waited for the bus. He and all the other children arrived as the bell was ringing.</p> <p>What is my brother doing?</p> <p>6</p>
<p>Dad put the tent and sleeping bags in the back of the car. Mom put the food in a cooler. The family got in the car and headed for the mountains.</p> <p>What is the family doing?</p> <p>7</p>	<p>The family took a cart and pushed it to the first row. They chose vegetables and fruit. Next they picked out meat and tomato sauce. Then they paid for it all and a lady put it in bags.</p> <p>Where did the family go?</p> <p>8</p>

Incredible Inferences

Inference Cards

(Cut apart cards)

<p>The children lined up at the door. Some took a ball and others took jump ropes. They ran out and began playing games.</p> <p>Where did the children go?</p> <p>9</p>	<p>He put meat, broccoli, and french fries on his plate. He picked up his knife and fork, cut the meat, put it in his mouth and began to chew.</p> <p>What is he doing?</p> <p>10</p>
<p>The children read the directions. They got out a bowl and pans. They put sugar, flour, and butter in a bowl. They rolled it into balls, and put them in the oven.</p> <p>What are they doing?</p> <p>11</p>	<p>The family saw many animals. First, they saw the giraffes. Then they went to the bear den. They thought the monkeys were very fun to watch.</p> <p>Where is the family?</p> <p>12</p>
<p>You have to give it plenty of food and water. It needs to go outside and get fresh air and sunshine. You need to pet it and play with it.</p> <p>What do you have?</p> <p>13</p>	<p>It was very quiet when we entered. There were people at tables. Others stood at shelves. We saw many books.</p> <p>What building were you in?</p> <p>14</p>
<p>She cried and cried. She made a poster and offered a reward. She wasn't sure when it had happened. She did not know if it had just fallen off or if she had dropped it when she put it on.</p> <p>Why is she crying?</p> <p>15</p>	<p>It was the night before. He was excited and could not sleep. His uniform lay on the bed. He had practiced with his bat and ball. The coach said this was going to be a great season.</p> <p>What is happening the next day?</p> <p>16</p>

Incredible Inferences

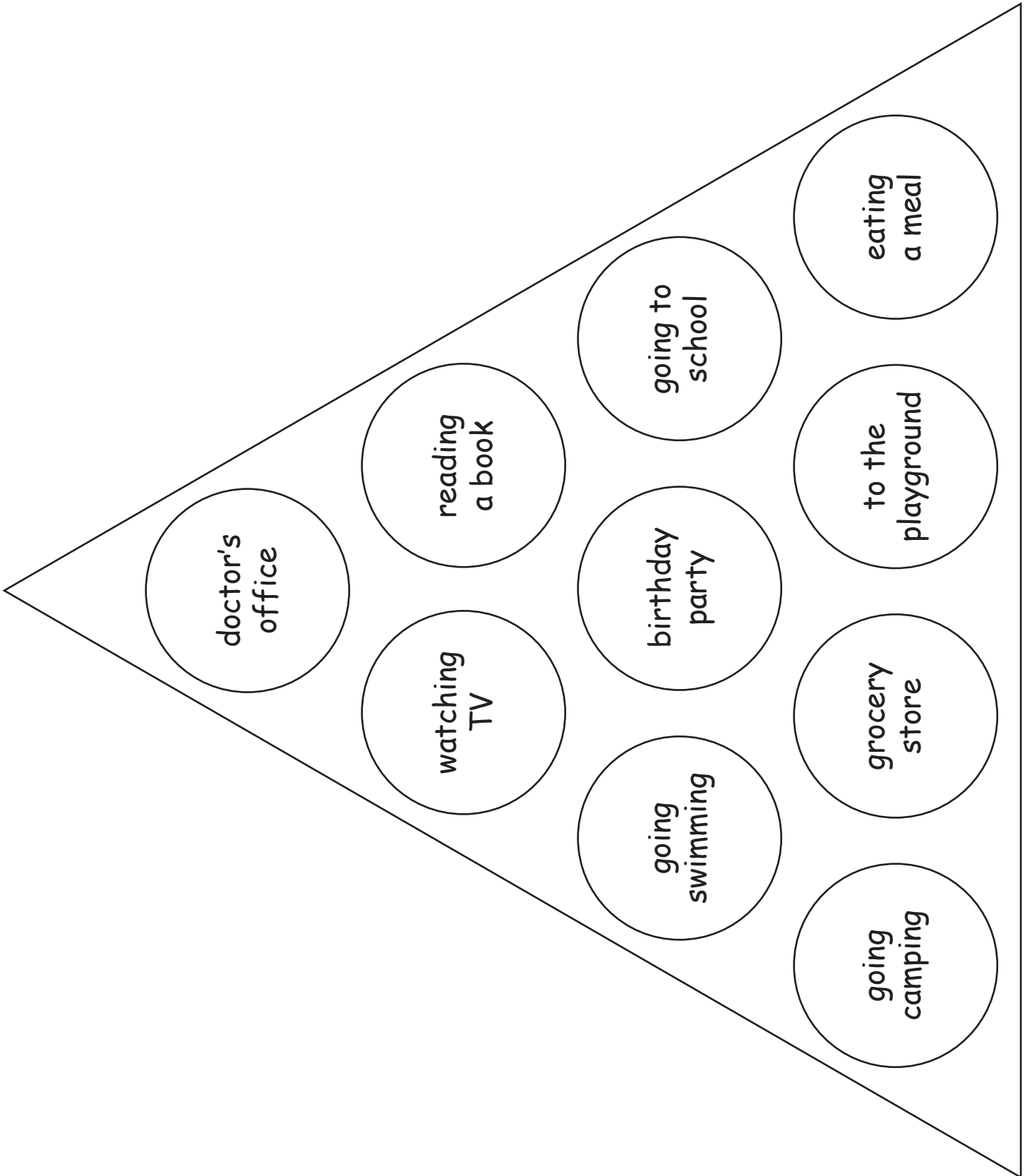
Inference Cards

(Cut apart cards)

<p>He heard a sound of twigs breaking. He was startled when an owl hooted. He walked through the trees and came to a creek.</p> <p>Where is he?</p> <p>17</p>	<p>We have tickets. We go to our seat and strap ourselves in. The cars start to move very slowly up the hill. Finally, we are at the top and then we quickly race down.</p> <p>Where are we?</p> <p>18</p>
<p>The man made rows and put one type in each. He covered them and watered the rows every day. Soon he saw sprouts and he was able to pick them.</p> <p>What is the man doing?</p> <p>19</p>	<p>The boy ran the water. He called Skippy. Skippy hopped in and splashed. He got the soap, scrubbed Skippy, and rinsed him off. Skippy barked and shook himself off.</p> <p>What was happening?</p> <p>20</p>

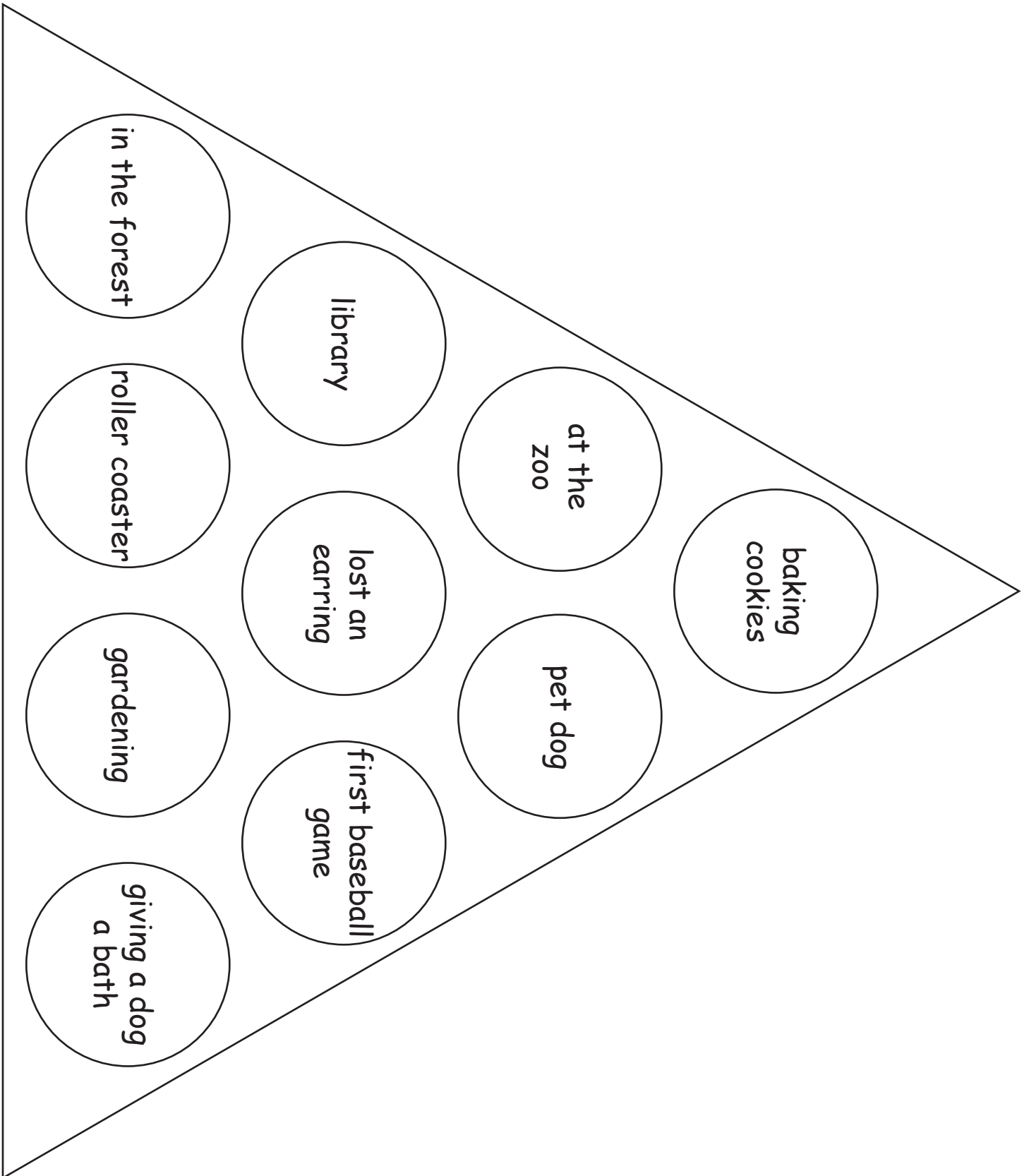
Incredible Inferences

Game Sheet 1



Incredible Inferences

Game Sheet 2



Incredible Inferences

Parent Answer Sheet

Game Sheet 1

1	Where are you?	doctor's office
2	What are you doing?	watching TV
3	What is the boy doing?	reading a book
4	What is the girl doing?	going swimming
5	What is going on?	birthday party
6	What is my brother doing?	going to school
7	What is the family doing?	going camping
8	Where did the family go?	grocery store
9	Where did the children go?	to the playground
10	What is he doing?	eating a meal

Game Sheet 2

11	What are they doing?	baking cookies
12	Where is the family?	at the zoo
13	What do you have?	pet dog
14	What building were you in?	library
15	Why is she crying?	lost an earring
16	What is happening the next day?	first baseball game
17	Where is he?	in the forest
18	Where are we?	roller coaster
19	What is the man doing?	gardening
20	What was happening?	giving a dog a bath

Cause and Effect Match

Set 1

(Cut apart cards)

Causes

Effects

Billy was very hungry.	She put on a jacket.
It rained for three days and nights.	Corn and beans grow.
The girl felt cold.	He ate a sandwich.
The farmer plants the seeds and waters them.	The river overflowed into the streets and houses.

Cause and Effect Match

Set 2

(Cut apart cards)

Causes

Effects

The baby cried.	He was late for school.
The school bell rang.	She made an A on the test.
Julie studied for the test.	The students lined up at the classroom door.
He left the house late and got stuck in traffic.	The mother picked up the baby.

Cause and Effect Match

Set 3

(Cut apart cards)

Causes

Effects

Smoke filled the room.	He scraped his knee and elbow.
The storm kept my brother awake all night.	She has no cavities.
He ran fast and tripped on the sidewalk.	The fire alarm sounded.
She brushes and flosses her teeth everyday.	The next day he was tired and took a nap.

Cause and Effect Match

Parent Answer Sheet

Causes

Effects

Set 1

Billy was hungry.	He ate a sandwich.
It rained for three days and nights.	The river overflowed into the streets and houses.
The girl felt cold.	She put on a jacket.
The farmer plants the seeds and waters them.	Corn and beans grow.

Set 2

The baby cried.	The mother picked up the baby.
The school bell rang.	The students lined up at the classroom door.
Julie studied for the test.	She made an A on the test.
He left the house late and got stuck in traffic.	He was late for school.

Set 3

Smoke filled the room.	The fire alarm sounded.
The storm kept my brother awake all night.	The next day he was tired and took a nap.
He ran fast and tripped on the sidewalk.	He scraped his knee and elbow.
She brushes and flosses her teeth everyday.	She has no cavities.

More Incredible Inferences

Inference Cards

(Cut apart cards)

<p>The room was a mess! Pots and pans were piled in the sink. Drawers and cabinets were flung open. Chocolate chips dotted the floor and empty cartons were on a sticky counter, but the smell was delicious.</p> <p>Why was the room a mess?</p> <p>1</p>	<p>The young woman looked down at her long dress. She felt like a princess. She and the others stood in the hall. They listened to the music. Then she heard the cue. She walked down the aisle as she held her flowers.</p> <p>What was this event?</p> <p>2</p>
<p>The girl saved all her money. It was exactly what she wanted. She imagined gliding down the road pedaling effortlessly. She finally had enough money to make her dream come true.</p> <p>What was her dream?</p> <p>3</p>	<p>The bear ate lots of nuts and fish. Her fur got thick. She prepared her den. The leaves fell from the trees and the days turned colder.</p> <p>What was the bear getting ready to do?</p> <p>4</p>
<p>Mailboxes are lined up outside the door. There is a long counter inside with scales. You can buy stamps, envelopes, and boxes. There are slots where you can mail a letter and long rows of boxes where some people go to pick up their mail.</p> <p>What is this place?</p> <p>5</p>	<p>The cat stretches and yawns. She strolls over to her favorite spot. The sun shines in and makes it very warm. She watches the birds and squirrels. Sometimes the fresh air blows in on her. She climbs up into her soft bed and looks at the animals for a while. Then she curls up and goes to sleep.</p> <p>6 Where is the cat's favorite spot?</p>
<p>The man measures the wood and uses a saw to cut it. He puts the wood in place and hammers nails into it. He continues until the entire wall is built.</p> <p>What is this man's job?</p> <p>7</p>	<p>The boy found it in the middle of the road on his way home from school. It was very tiny so he picked it up. He fed it food for several weeks. Soon, it grew and got very long.</p> <p>What did the boy find?</p> <p>8</p>

More Incredible Inferences

Inference Cards

(Cut apart cards)

<p>These athletes train a great deal. They eat a very healthy diet. Some compete in short races and others compete in long races called marathons.</p> <p>What is the sport?</p> <p>9</p>	<p>There are many things to see. Many farm animals are on display. The midway is full of people playing games and eating food. There is also a place where you can go on many different rides.</p> <p>What is the place?</p> <p>10</p>
<p>The rain was hard and steady. Sue stomped around the room and checked the clock every five minutes. The book that she bought the day before was flung in the corner beside the picnic basket and blanket. She stamped her feet and voiced her displeasure with nature.</p> <p>11 What plans did Sue have for the day?</p>	<p>The girl showed the lady her ticket. Then she walked down the stairs and found her seat. The players ran onto the field. They got into their positions. The ball went up in the air and the game began.</p> <p>12 Where was the girl?</p>
<p>Even though the man didn't want to do it he knew it had to be done. He picked up the phone and made the necessary arrangements. A few hours later, he found himself in a brightly lit room. He sat down in the movable chair. The person in charge bent over him as he began.</p> <p>13 Where was he?</p>	<p>People giggled and pointed at her feet. She didn't understand until she looked down. She turned red with embarrassment. She realized she should not have gotten dressed in the dark.</p> <p>14 Why shouldn't she have gotten dressed in the dark?</p>
<p>The waves crashed against the beach. Thunder cracked and lightning lit the sky. The wind howled and bent trees over sideways. People put shutters on their windows, bought supplies, and were ready.</p> <p>What were the people expecting?</p> <p>15</p>	<p>The decision was difficult. No one would find out. She was the only one who would know. It would guarantee her a good grade, but was it worth it? Would she really feel proud passing this way?</p> <p>What was her struggle?</p> <p>16</p>

More Incredible Inferences

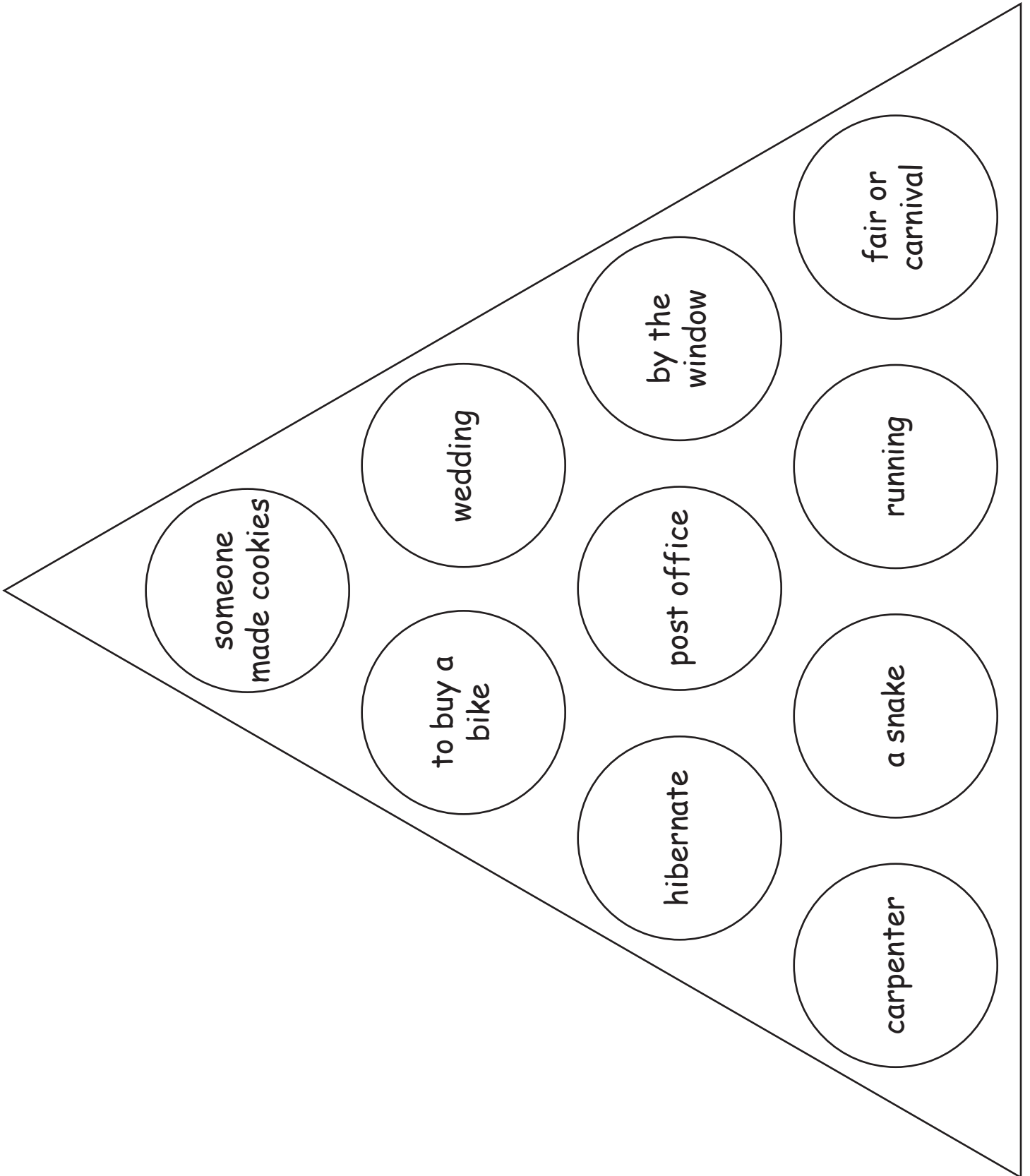
Inference Cards

(Cut apart cards)

<p>The students were very quiet when the teacher walked over to the science center. The children sat at their desks and looked down at their hands. No one made a sound. The teacher looked around the classroom. Then she saw the pieces on the floor.</p> <p>What had happened in the classroom?</p> <p>17</p>	<p>The boy put his books in his backpack and stood on the sidewalk in line. He climbed up three steps and said "Hi" to the driver.</p> <p>Where is he?</p> <p>18</p>
<p>The boy rode his bike to his friend's house after dinner. When he got there, he rang the bell. He waited, but no one came to the door. He looked in the driveway. The car was not there. There were no lights on and the windows were all closed. The boy got back on his bike and went home.</p> <p>19 What did the boy think?</p>	<p>The girl sneezed. Her dad felt her forehead and took her temperature. She told him her throat hurt. He pulled the blankets over her. He told her to try to sleep while he called her teacher.</p> <p>Why did he call her teacher?</p> <p>20</p>

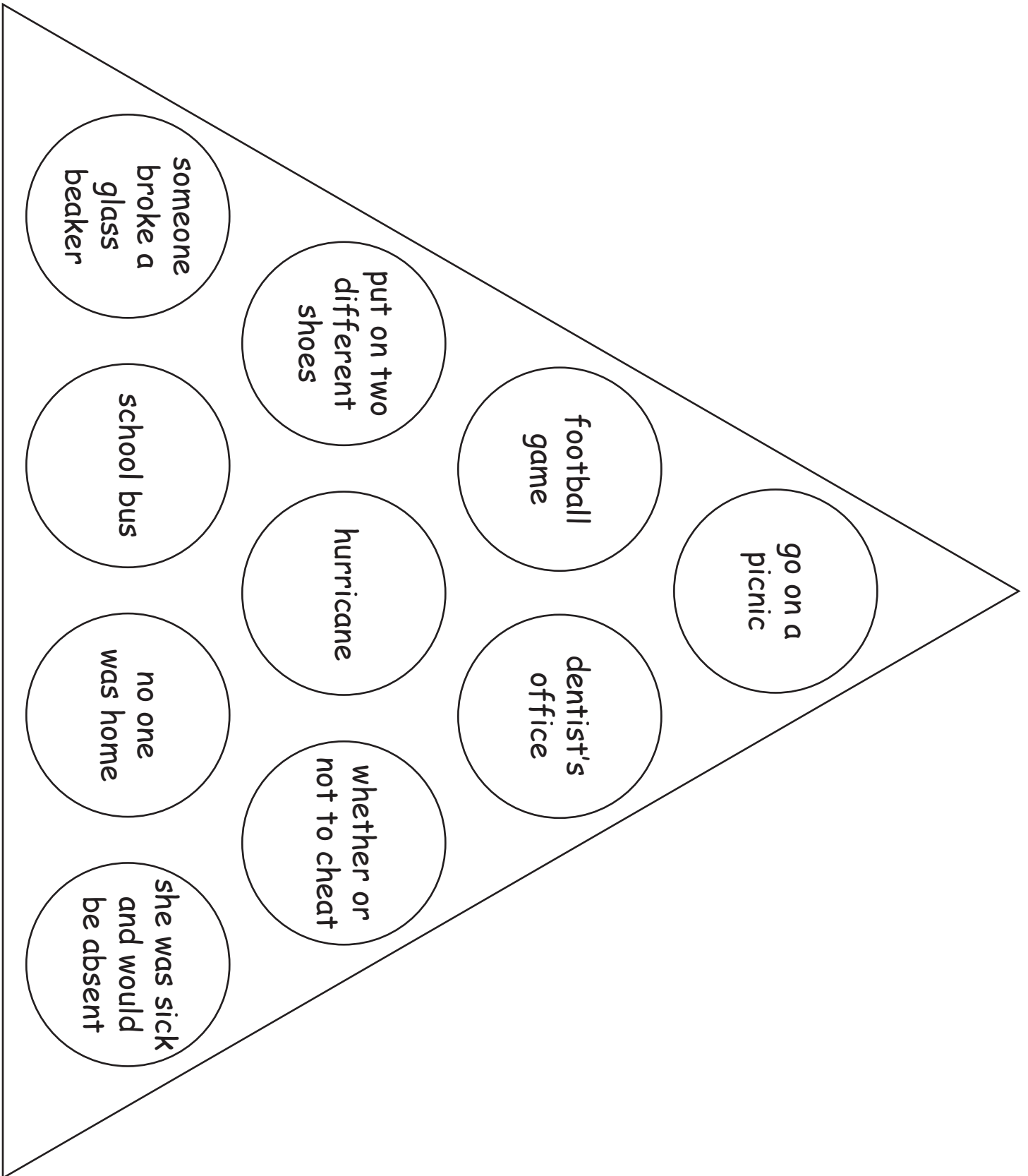
More Incredible Inferences

Game Sheet 1



More Incredible Inferences

Game Sheet 1



More Incredible Inferences

Parent Answer Sheet

Game Sheet 1

1	Why was the room a mess?	someone made cookies
2	What was this event?	wedding
3	What was her dream?	to buy a bike
4	What was the bear getting ready to do?	hibernate
5	What is this place?	post office
6	Where is the cat's favorite spot?	by the window
7	What is the man's job?	carpenter
8	What did the boy find?	a snake
9	What is the sport?	running
10	What is the place?	fair or carnival

Game Sheet 2

11	What plans did Sue have for the day?	go on a picnic
12	Where was the girl?	football game
13	Where was he?	dentist's office
14	Why shouldn't she have gotten dressed in the dark?	put on two different shoes
15	What were the people expecting?	hurricane
16	What was her struggle?	whether or not to cheat
17	What happened in the classroom?	someone broke a glass beaker
18	Where is he?	school bus
19	What did the boy think?	no one was home
20	Why did he call her teacher?	she was sick and would be absent