

Social Studies – Source-based Skills #1: Inference

Overview

Facts VS opinions

- **Facts** : known & proven to be true (evidence based)
- **Opinions** : view / judgement formed, not necessarily based on facts

Types of sources given:

1. **Textual** – written in words
2. **Pictorial** – photographs, political cartoons
3. **Oral** – speeches, interviews
4. **Statistical reports** – charts, figures

Background information (BI)

Provides a context in which the SBCS is situated against

Elaborate on the overarching issue (focal point of investigation in SBCS) and provide some guiding questions leading to the issue

Provide context of situation when a de-contextualised SBCS is given

Provide a chronological overview of situation

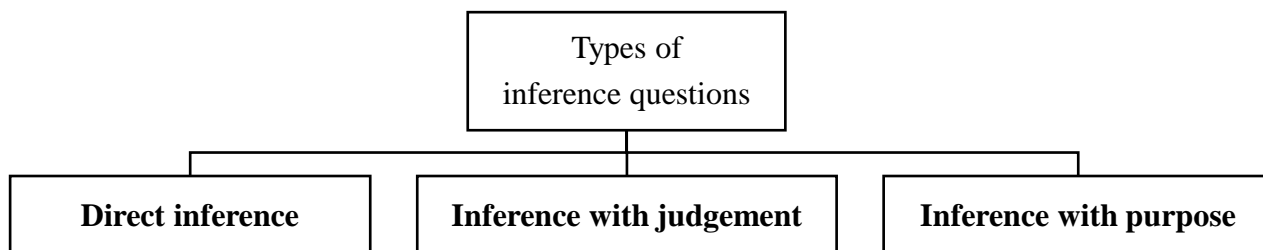
Easier to understand the sources & analyse more accurately

Keep the focal point of SBCS in mind

Better understand the main message of each source

Better understand how each source relates to each other

Infer more precisely about the message and purpose of each source



Inferences

Draw a conclusion about an issue by using information from the source (evidence) and making sense of it using what you already know (contextual knowledge)

Levels of inference

Strong: Encompasses the source as a whole and give main message of the source

Weak: Focus only on a part of the source, ignores the rest. Sub-message of the source

Invalid: lifting or paraphrasing words from the source

Steps on making valid inference

Step	Explanation
1. Analyse question	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Highlight the topic and keywords of the question• Use the topic to focus on the requirement of the question
2. Read BI	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand context in sources
3. Analyse source with topic of question & context in mind	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Look at the provenance of the source (where it is published, identity of author, date)• When reading text, highlight parts in text that answer topic of question, collect information

4. Answer question directly, support inference with evidence & explanation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not lift / paraphrase the evidence when making inference Use PEE format
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Direct inference

Answering

Demand of question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draw a conclusion about an issue by using information from the source (evidence) and making sense of it by using what you already know (contextual knowledge) to answer the focus of the question asked. Format: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Answer question using the keyword in question Address question issue by copying same exact phrasing in question Quote evidence to support inference Explain how evidence links to inference 												
Example of questions	<p>Examples</p> <table> <tr> <th>Question</th><th>Demand</th></tr> <tr> <td>What is the message of the source?</td><td>Infer the main message of the source</td></tr> <tr> <td>What does the source tell you about ... [an issue]?</td><td>Infer the main message with regards to the issue stated in question</td></tr> <tr> <td>What does the source tell you about the author's opinion / attitude?</td><td>Infer the author's feeling / emotion / mindset</td></tr> <tr> <td>What can you learn from the source about ... [an issue]?</td><td>Infer learning point (a view / opinion / message) with regards to the issue stated in question</td></tr> <tr> <td>What can you infer from the source about ... [an issue]?</td><td>Make a conclusion with regards to the issue stated in question</td></tr> </table>	Question	Demand	What is the message of the source?	Infer the main message of the source	What does the source tell you about ... [an issue]?	Infer the main message with regards to the issue stated in question	What does the source tell you about the author's opinion / attitude?	Infer the author's feeling / emotion / mindset	What can you learn from the source about ... [an issue]?	Infer learning point (a view / opinion / message) with regards to the issue stated in question	What can you infer from the source about ... [an issue]?	Make a conclusion with regards to the issue stated in question
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Inference with judgement

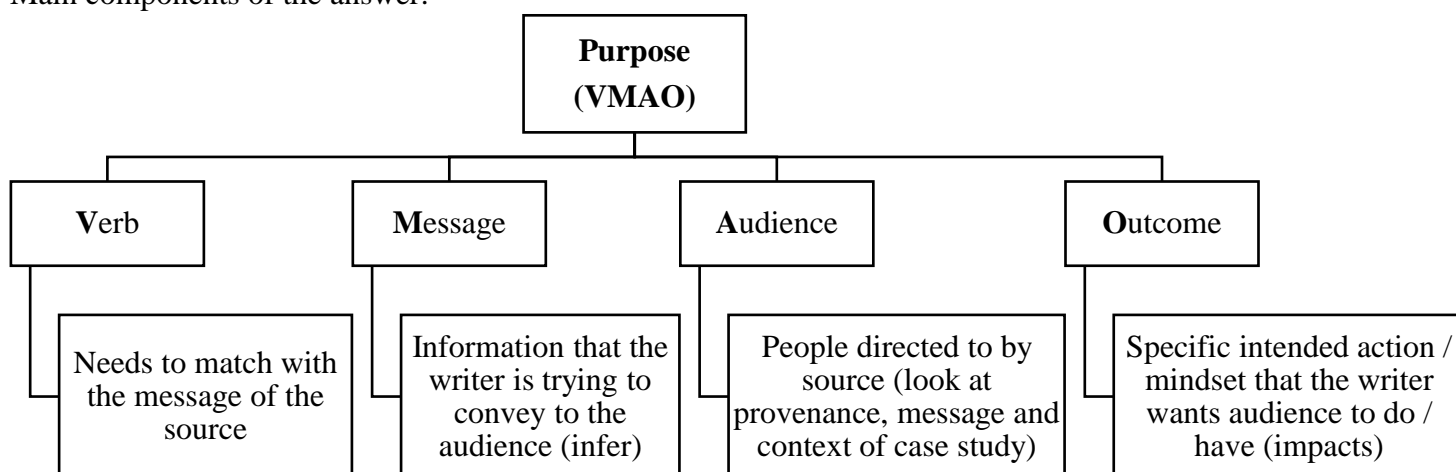
Answering

Demand of question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Same steps to analyse source * Infer author's stand on specific topic after making content inference Format: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Answer question using the keyword in question Address question issue by copying same exact phrasing in question * Provide a reason for the stand Quote evidence to support inference Explain how evidence links to inference and stand 							
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Inference with purpose*

WHY a source is published?

Main components of the answer:



Helping phrases for Verb

Starters for verb	Starters for outcome
1. To influence / convince	So that (audience) will support ...
2. To highlight concerns / problems	So that (audience) will condemn ...
3. To justify actions	So that (audience) will reconsider the decision ...
4. To assure	So that (audience) will review the policy ...
5. To motivate / encourage	

Answering

Demand of question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Figure out why the source was created / published → consider rationale and motivation (reason needed for the answer – VMAO is the reason required) for having the source in the first place Format: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Answer question using the keyword in question Address question issue by copying same exact phrasing in question * Provide a reason in the form of VMAO for the stand given Quote evidence to support inference Explain how evidence links to inference and stand 	
Example of questions	Examples	
	Question	Demand
	Why do you think ... made this speech at this time? (*specific awareness of the situation at that time)	Infer purpose (VMAO) of producing source
	Why did the author publish this?	
	What is the purpose of the source?	

Tone

The manner in which the message / idea is conveyed
sensitive to the choice of words used by author

Detection of tone

Method of detecting	Example	Tone
1. Loaded language	This is <u>ridiculous</u> ! Does the government think that we are <u>slaves</u> of the nation by <u>working us to the bones</u> ?	1) Emotive / emotional 2) Extreme 3) Exaggerated
2. Overall tone (inference + 'feel' of the message)	The policy is not perfect and in fact there is no perfect policy in the real world. Our policy has been recognised and modelled by many other countries who look up to our system. It is well-received by the international community and highly applauded for the excellence and efficiency.	1) Highly for / against someone or something 2) Biased against / objective

Note:

- Tone must be accompanied by an ISSUE
 - ✗ The source is critical.
 - ✓ The source is critical towards the building of an eldercare centre.
- Show the intensity of the emotion

Some tone words

Loaded language		Overall tone
1. Pessimistic	9. Praised / condemned	1. Balanced
2. Optimistic	10. Condemned	2. Objective
3. Bitter	11. Highly supportive of ...	3. Critical of ...
4. Disgruntled	12. Critical of ...	4. Biased towards / against
5. Resentful	13. Scornful	5. Highly supportive
6. Sceptical	14. Ridicule	
7. Disapproval	15. Agitated	
8. Approval		

Literary devices in the source

Literary device	Explanation
1. Irony	Someone writes something opposite to the person's true meaning. It can also be a difference between what is expected to happen and what actually happens.
2. Sarcasm	Use remarks that clearly mean the opposite of what they say, in order to hurt someone's feelings or to criticise something in humorous way.
3. Exaggeration	Over-emphasising something – making it better or worse than in reality. Used to emphasise the importance of something, to create a lasting impression, or to evoke stronger feelings.

Pictorial sources

Same steps when analysing source

1. Analyse question
2. Read BI
3. Analyse source with topic of question & context in mind
4. Answer question directly, support inference with evidence & explanation

Photographs

Consider the intention of the creator – purpose

Things to consider before inferring the main message

1. Who he represents, who he is standing up for
2. Where the photo is published. The message behind the photo could be different if it was published in a national newspaper as opposed to a personal blog.
3. Why this angle is used, the type of lens, what is in the foreground / background

4. Why the photograph chose this shot, what he is trying to show / prove to the audience
The provenance sets the context of the question

Posters

Created for a defined purpose

Put yourself in the shoes of the creator / publisher of the poster

Things to consider before inferring the main message

What is the aim of the person / organisation? What is its main function / job?

In what situation is the poster created? Was there a good reason for the need to distribute posters for the masses?

Who could be the target audience and why this group?

What is the creator hoping to get out of this poster? What is he hoping that the audience would do in response (intended outcome)?

Political cartoons

Common techniques used

1. **Symbolism & universal symbols**
2. **Exaggeration**
3. **Importance of captions / words**

Cartoonist draws a cartoon to impose his point of view on the audience. His aim is to influence your mind to his view.

Uses techniques to get his point across. Need to be aware of such techniques to infer the correct big message instead of sub-messages

Understand the background information which triggered the cartoonist

Symbolism & universal symbols

Exaggeration

Importance of captions