MAKING INFERENCES
Thank You, Mr. Falker
By Patricia Polacco

SUMMARY
Thank You, Mr. Falker is a story of Trisha, a little girl who could hardly wait for school to start. Trisha could paint and draw beautiful pictures but when she looked at the words and letters on a page, all she could see was a jumbled mess. Because Trisha could not read, she quickly fell behind in school. Her classmates began to bully her and call her dumb. Before long, Trisha began to believe the mean things her classmates said. Then her family moved to California where she met Mr. Falker. Mr. Falker was Trisha’s fifth grade teacher. He was different from every teacher Trisha had before. He wore striped coats and butterfly ties and he thought that Trisha was brilliant. Mr. Falker realized that Trisha was a smart and talented girl with a very unique problem. Mr. Falker did not call Trisha dumb. Instead he solved her problem and taught her to read.

LINK TO WHAT YOU KNOW
- Think of a time when you felt dumb. Why did you feel dumb?
- Think of a time when you tried to do something but found it difficult. How did you feel?
- What does the word “bully” mean?

Read Thank You, Mr. Falker once from beginning to end

WHY DO READERS MAKE INFERENCES?
When readers make inferences they use what they already know along with the information in the text to gain a deeper understanding of the story or information. When readers make inferences, they behave like reading detectives. Sometimes the author does not give you all of the information but instead gives you clues that require you to think and use your prior knowledge to understand better. For example, if an author writes; "Upon realizing his mistake, Jason's face turned bright red" you can infer that Jason is embarrassed. You read that Jason’s face turned bright red and you know that when people make mistakes and their faces turn red, that usually means that they are embarrassed. Now it’s your turn to try making an inference. Have fun thinking through reading!

Important Words to Know and Understand
Ladle
A large deep spoon with a long handle that is used for serving liquids
**READ**

Read the book again and stop on the following pages to practice making inferences.

**Page 2:** When the author describes Trisha’s family tradition, you can gather clues about what her family thinks is important. What can you infer about Trisha and her family? What is important to them? Why do you think so?

**Page 8:** Make an inference about Trisha. What can you infer about the way Trisha feels when she draws? Why does drawing help Trisha feel better? Why do you think so?

**Page 16:** Make an inference about Trisha’s classmates. Why do you think they bully Trisha? What can you infer about the reasons why people bully? Why do you think so?

**Page 31:** What can you infer about Mr. Falker and Miss Plessy? What do you think they had tears in their eyes after listening to Trisha read? Why do you think so?

**Page 35:** What can you infer about Mr. Falker? How do you think he felt when Trisha thanked him for helping her learn to read? Why do you think so?

**THINK**

Think about the places in the book where making an inference helped you to understand the book better. Did you make inferences to understand new words? Did you infer to understand a character’s feelings and thoughts better?

**TALK**

Talk to the person who read this book with you. Explain what making an inference is and how readers use inferring to understand what they read. Talk about the types of inferences that you made.

**REFLECT**

Readers always reflect on what they read. They think about the following:

- What did the text say?
- What do you already know about what the text says?
- What can you infer?
- How did you make inferences to understand and enjoy Thank You, Mr. Falker?

**WRITE**

Turn to the Making Inferences section of your notebook and write about the work you did while reading Thank You, Mr. Falker.

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**Tips for Making Inferences**

Pay attention to the words that the author uses to describe the setting of scenes in a book. The author takes the time to describe a setting to help you make a connection to the book. When you make a connection, you can use what you already know about a setting and infer more about how the setting might sound, feel or smell.
Think about the book. What clues does the author give you in the text that help you to infer. Write down the clues that the author gives you under "What the Text Says." Next, think about what you already know about the clue. Write down what you know under "What I Know." Last, write what you can infer.

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<th>What the Text Says</th>
<th>What I Know</th>
<th>What I Can Infer</th>
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