

The Sock on the Chair

K-2 with adult support | 10-15 minutes | Prep: 2 minutes

What children practice

Children distinguish something directly observed from an idea about what it might mean, and give a reason for one inference.

Gather and set up

One clean sock, a chair and a sheet of paper. Use an adult-drawn version or describe the same scene if objects are unavailable. No child needs to touch the sock. Put one sock on the chair seat, with one sheet of paper underneath it. Show everyone the arrangement or draw it clearly. Do not add other objects. Read the cards aloud so decoding is not a barrier.

0-2 min • Meet the mystery

Introduce the sock as ‘our extremely quiet visitor.’ Ask children what they can see. Model: ‘The sock is on the chair’ is an observation.

2-5 min • Try an idea

Say: ‘Someone may have put it there to dry.’ Explain that this is an inference, an idea about the scene. We did not see someone do that.

5-10 min • Sort together

Read the six cards. Children point to ‘We can observe it’ or ‘We are explaining it,’ or sort with a partner. Discuss the reason rather than racing.

10-13 min • Invent, then check

Invite a wonderfully silly explanation. Ask whether the scene gives us a reason to believe it. Enjoy the invention while keeping pretend stories distinct from supported conclusions.

13-15 min • One of each

Each child draws or tells one observation and one possible explanation. Ask what else they would need to know to check it.

Free 30-minute introductory workshop

Live on Zoom: the whole book + voices + a turn directing C. J.

Adults: cjmcguirebooks.com/visit

Subject to availability. School/library groups; a teacher or librarian hosts.

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Keep the thinking going

'The sock can be a movie star in our pretend story. What clues would we need before saying that is really what happened?'

What a response might sound like

Cards 1, 3 and 5 are observations of the setup: a sock on a chair, paper underneath it, and one sock. Cards 2, 4 and 6 are inferences about why it is there or what may happen. 'Someone forgot it' is possible, but the objects alone do not establish that.

Make the first step smaller

Keep only two cards at first. Pair a spoken label with a point or object. Offer 'I see...' and 'I think...' sentence starters. A child can direct an adult to move a card.

Add a challenge when ready

Ask which inference is plausible and what information would help check it. Then change one visible detail and have children update only the observation that changed.

A quick check for understanding

Can the child show which part can be directly observed and which part explains it? Naming the categories matters less than explaining the difference in their own way.

No printer? No problem.

Place two pieces of paper on the table as sorting spaces. Read the cards from this page and let children point, gesture or tell you their choice.

Print only what you need

Pages 1-2: adult reference. Page 3: one set of cards per group, or read aloud without cutting. Page 4: optional child response. US Letter: actual size. A4: Fit. Student pages use black lines and white backgrounds.

Developed for C. J. McGuire Books with AI assistance. Suggested activities for educator review, not an independently evaluated curriculum. Feedback: hello@cjm McGuire Books.

We can observe it / We are explaining it



A grown-up can read these. Point, tell, sign or use your usual communication supports.

1

A sock is on the chair.

2

Someone forgot the sock.

3

Paper is under the sock.

4

The sock is there to dry.

5

There is one sock.

6

Someone will put the sock on soon.

The sock's extremely serious case file



Draw, tell, dictate or write. An adult can put your words on the page.

Draw what is actually there.

I think... because...

To check my idea, I could ask...