Get the “Feeling” by Inferring

Discuss with students how an author will often not tell you how a character is feeling. Instead, he shows the reader by describing the character’s behavior. It’s then up to the reader to use his own experience to figure out or infer how a character is feeling.

Select a part of a text where a character’s feelings are displayed through actions. Think aloud and describe the character’s actions, your own knowledge or experiences, and the inference you made about the character’s feelings. Write an inference statement such as “We inferred that the character felt \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ because the text said \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and we know from experience that \_\_\_\_\_\_.

Repeat this procedure with additional sections of text.

Then have students work in pairs to find another example of the character’s feelings that requires readers to infer. Pairs should write their inference statement on a plain white paper using markers. Then have pairs display the page they used to make the inference marked with a sticky note along with their written inference. Students circulate around the room to read and discuss inferences made by all of the groups.

