

## RESEARCH ACTIVITY: Inferences – which theory is supported by the most evidence?

Study the table below. Which theory is supported by the most evidence?

| Type of inference                 | Answers query   | Predicted by search-after-meaning theory? | Predicted by minimalists? | Normally found? |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|---------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Referential                    | To what previous word does this apply? (e.g., anaphora) | Yes                                       | Yes                       | Yes             |
| 2. Case structure role assignment | What is the role (e.g., agent, object) or this noun?    | Yes                                       | Yes                       | Yes             |
| 3. Causal antecedent              | What caused this?                                       | Yes                                       | Yes                       | Yes             |
| 4. Supraordinate goal             | What is the main goal?                                  | Yes                                       |                           | Yes             |
| 5. Thematic                       | What is the overall theme?                              | Yes                                       |                           | ?               |
| 6. Character emotional reaction   | How does the character feel?                            | Yes                                       |                           | Yes             |
| 7. Causal consequence             | What happens next?                                      |   |                           | No              |
| 8. Instrument                     | What was used to do this?                               |   |                           | No              |
| 9. Subordinate goal-action        | How was the action achieved?                            |   |                           | No              |

Adapted from Graesser, A.C., Singer, M. and Trabasso, T. (1994). Constructing inferences during narrative text comprehension. *Psychological Review*, 101: 371–95 [doi: 10.1037/0033-295X.101.3.371].