Did you ever come home and see a car parked in front of your house? Perhaps you recognized the car because it belonged to a friend. Before you go inside your home, you know that your friend has come to visit. In making this decision you have drawn a conclusion, based on evidence.

Drawing conclusions means adding up the evidence you have gained from observing or from reading and using this evidence to make a judgment. In other words, you add up the facts or ideas you have been given and let them lead you to an idea of your own that extends the original information you were given. Read the following statement:

Jim is a straight A student. He is calm and never loses his head. He is taking some important tests next week. He will study hard for those tests.

What conclusion can be drawn from the information here? The most likely conclusion would be:

Jim will probably do well on next week’s tests.

This can be concluded because Jim does well in his studies and is not likely to be unnerved by tests. Drawing conclusions involves considering all of the information very thoroughly and then making an extension. However, you must be careful not to draw a conclusion that is not suggested by the original information.

Read the following statement and decide if you would draw the conclusion that follows it.

STATEMENT: The young man had a broken arm.
CONCLUSION: The young man was a football player.

If this conclusion was drawn from the statement above it, it is an incorrect conclusion. There is no evidence to suggest that the young man played football, even though he may have.

Read the following paragraphs about anthropologist Jane Goodall. As you read, think about what conclusion can be drawn about Jane’s answer and why.

About a month after her arrival in Africa, someone suggested that anyone as interested in animals as she was should certainly meet Dr. Louis Leakey, the famous anthropologist. Their meeting fulfilled Jane’s childhood desire.

Dr. Leakey was impressed with the sensitive young woman and instantly hired her as a secretary for his museum staff. During the eight years that Jane worked in Nairobi, Kenya, with Dr. Leakey, she learned much about anthropology and was finally invited to accompany Dr. Leakey and his wife on one of their annual expeditions.

It was on that expedition that Dr. Leakey told Jane of the work that needed to be done with the wild chimpanzees. He informed her that an extended field study had never been undertaken. Then he asked her if she would be willing to tackle the job.

Before a conclusion can be drawn, the information must be sorted. Consider the following evidence:

1. Jane meets Dr. Leakey and fulfills a childhood desire.
2. Dr. Leakey is impressed with Jane.
3. Jane works for him for eight years, learning much about anthropology.
4. Jane is invited to accompany Leakey on an expedition.
5. Dr. Leakey tells Jane of a study that needs to be done.

By adding up the above information, you can conclude that Jane will accept her assignment. In drawing this conclusion you are also drawing other ones as well. They are:

1. Jane likes working with animals.
2. Jane likes working for Dr. Leakey.
3. Dr. Leakey is pleased with Jane’s work.

When drawing conclusions, always be sure to add up only the evidence that is given.
Read the following paragraphs and circle the letter of the conclusion that can be drawn for each one.

1. Last year, after several years of effort, a group of business people succeeded in breeding sea turtles in captivity. The turtles laid nearly 5,000 eggs and the business people are confident that they will soon have sea turtles to send to northern markets.
   a. The business people are breeding sea turtles to save them from extinction.
   b. The business people are breeding sea turtles for their meat.

2. The cost of automobile insurance has gone up steadily over the past few years. When a large group of people were asked why they thought this was so, many of them responded that with more drivers, there are more cars, and more cars mean more accidents.
   a. The auto repair business has expanded.
   b. The cost of autos has risen.

3. Canadian money has similar value to American money and comes in the same denominations (except that Canada also has a very handy and much-used two-dollar bill). Although American money is universally accepted, with a couple of cents knocked off the dollar for the exchange rate, the smile of welcome is sometimes warmer if you have gone to the trouble of changing your money into local currency. This may be even truer in Canada than in Europe, because Canadians are so resentfully accustomed to being regarded as a mere northern part of the United States.
   a. American money would be more welcome in Canada than Canadian money.
   b. Canadian money would be more welcome in Canada than American money.

4. People in the West are blending traditional Chinese medicine, herbal remedies, and acupuncture with Western medicine, which employs such things as antibiotics and anesthetics.
   a. Westerners have decided to adopt traditional Chinese medicine.
   b. Westerners have decided there is good in both kinds of medicine.

5. Grass, hay, and grain are low in fat content, and are used to feed beef steers. However, steer meat has a high-fat content and is now considered to play a major role in contributing to artery and heart disease in humans.
   a. Something in the steer’s system changes low-fat food into high-fat meat.
   b. Steers should be fed a diet that will not produce high-fat meat.