

Imply vs. Infer

The terms imply and infer are among the verbs that are commonly misused by writers. It is actually not uncommon for you to mix up the two words.

For example:

X She inferred that she is no longer committed to the team when she refused to attend the last three practice sessions.

✓ She implied her anger towards the coach by staying silent throughout the meeting.

X With the good numbers he's putting up, we can imply that Derrick Rose will have a very good season this year.

✓ We can infer that if Derrick Rose stays consistent with his game, the New York Knicks has a chance to be in the playoffs this year.

The word imply is a verb used to mean “to strongly suggest the truth or existence of something not expressly stated” or “suggest something as a logical consequence.”

Leftists rage at the DCCC for rejecting an abortion litmus test, imply that pro-life views are racist

[Washington Examiner](#)

Kathy Griffin Implies Ellen DeGeneres Has A 'Mean Streak' But Maintains She Has 'Immense Respect' For Daytime Talk Show Host

[International Business Times](#)

Sex trafficking case doesn't imply widespread criminal network, Springfield police chief says

[Springfield News-Leader](#)

On the other hand, the term infer is a verb which means “to deduce or conclude information

Imply vs. Infer

from evidence and reasoning rather than from explicit statements.”

UK government says incorrect to infer ‘Help to Buy’ review means cancellation
[Reuters](#)

What we can infer from Trump’s initial actions — and what we can’t
[PBS NewsHour](#)

Prosecutor says sect members could infer girls moved to U.S. for sexual purpose
[Salt Lake Tribune](#)

These two terms can actually be used to describe the same event but would come from two different perspectives. Consider the following situation:

After suffering a devastating injury and undergoing surgery and rehabilitation, Athlete A returned stronger and played better.

It can be inferred that the surgery and rehabilitation were successful, resulting to a better performance for Athlete A following his injury.

Athlete A’s better performance implies that both the surgery and rehabilitation were successful.

In sentence 1, the writer was able to deduce that the surgery and rehabilitation were successful based on how Athlete A performed during his return.

Meanwhile, in sentence 2, the writer does not actually claim that Athlete A’s performance was due to the success of the surgery and rehabilitation but suggests that this may be the case.