

Making Generalizations

STUDENT OBJECTIVES

- Make generalizations
- Distinguish between valid and faulty generalizations

RESOURCES AND PREPARATION

You will need photocopies for students of:

- **Student Lesson Summary**, p. 93
- **Practice Model**, “The World’s Ten Longest Bridges,” p. 94
- **Practice Worksheets**, Levels A and B, pp. 95–96
- **Reteaching Worksheet**, p. 97

You will also need:

- Transparency: **Teaching Model**, “World’s Busiest Airports”

Teach

1. **Generalizations:** Pass out the **Lesson Summary** and guide students through the **Academic Vocabulary**. Explain that a **generalization** is a broad statement about a class or category of people, things, or ideas based on a study of some of its members. Stress that a generalization should be based on facts and/or valid observations.
2. **Teaching Generalizations:** Use the **Lesson Summary** to review the five steps in making generalizations.
 - **Facts and Observations:** Stress that a generalization must be based on facts which come from a reputable source.

EXAMPLE This statement is based on a survey filled in by archaeologists.

Many archaeologists teach, in addition to digging for artifacts, working in museums, and translating old writings

- **Patterns or Connections:** When gathering facts or observations, look at the data to find patterns and connections. For example, in the above generalization, the writer looked at the results of a survey. In the survey, the writer saw a pattern emerging—that many archaeologists teach, in addition to the work one usually assumes an archaeologist does. Based on this pattern, the writer was able to make the above generalization.
- **General Statement:** Once you have collected data and seen a pattern, make a generalization that reflects the pattern. Be sure to use a complete sentences.
- **Validity:** Stress that all generalizations should be checked to see if they are valid. Ask, In the example generalization above, what would happen if the writer substituted the word *all* for the word *many*? (*The generalization would become faulty and invalid.*) What are some other words that signal a faulty generalization? (*all, none, never, greatest, worst*) What are some words that signal a valid generalization by qualifying or limiting the statement? (*some, most, in general, typically, usually*)
- **Stereotypes:** Point out that a **stereotype** is a broad generalization about a group of people based on gender, ethnicity, or religion. Stereotypes ignore individual differences and encourage prejudice. Why is the example in Step 5 of the Lesson

MAKING GENERALIZATIONS, CONTINUED

Summary a stereotype? (*because it is a broad generalization, not based on fact; it implies a prejudice against people who live outside of France.*)

3. Guided Practice: Display the **Teaching Model**, “World’s Busiest Airports.” Point out that the facts in this chart are true and from a reputable source. Explain that you can look for patterns or connections related to the locations of the airports and the number of passengers they serve, as well as changes in airport use from the previous year. Now, write the following general statements on the board. Ask the items below.

1. Few airports serve more than 60,000,000 passengers a year.
 2. All of the world’s busiest airports are located in the USA.
 3. American airports are growing faster than airports elsewhere in the world.
 4. Busy airports don’t bother Americans.
- Is the **first** statement a valid generalization? (*Yes; The facts in the chart show that only four of the world’s airports are this busy.*)
 - Why is the **second** statement a **faulty generalization**? (*Two of the world’s six busiest airports are located outside of the United States. Replacing the absolute all with some or many would make this generalization valid.*)
 - Why is the **third** statement **not valid**, given the information on the chart? (*Only 5 foreign airports are listed in the chart, hardly enough to make a generalization about airports elsewhere in the world.*)
 - Why is the **fourth** statement a **stereotype**? (*It is a broad generalization about a group of people based on ethnicity; nothing in the chart supports this statement.*)

QUICK CHECK. Have students use the **Teaching Model** to answer the item below about the following statement.

America’s busiest airport got busier in 2003.

- Is this a valid generalization? Why or why not? (*valid because it accurately reflects the facts on which it is based; each of the 5 busiest United States airports experienced an increase in passengers in 2003*)

Practice and Apply

Two worksheets on making generalizations appear on pp. 95–96.

- Assign **Practice A** to students who need more structured activities.
- Assign **Practice B** to grade-level and above-level students.

Answer Key: Practice Worksheet A

1. *b, c, d*
2. *a*
3. *c*
4. *Many*
5. *Few*

Answer Key: Practice Worksheet B

Samples:

1. *This is a valid generalization because it accurately reflects the fact on which it is based. There are only three bridges in the world of this length.*
2. *This is a faulty generalization because it is not supported by the facts in the chart. The chart does not provide any information about how much these bridges cost to build.*
3. *This is a faulty generalization because it is too broad. Four of the longest bridges are located in these two countries, but six others are not.*
4. *Many of the world's longest suspension bridges were completed during the 1990s.*
5. *The United States is home to several of the world's longest suspension bridges.*

Assess and Reteach

Use these guidelines to determine if students need the **Reteaching Worksheet**.

- **Practice Worksheet A:** Students should correctly answer all 5 items.
- **Practice Worksheet B:** Students should correctly answer at least 3 out of 5 items.

For students who need reteaching, review the **Student Lesson Summary**. Focus on the examples and relate them to one or two new examples, brainstormed with students. Then, have students complete the **Reteaching Worksheet**, p. 97.

Answer Key: Reteaching Worksheet

1. *Many downtown restaurants are closed on Mondays.*
2. *April snowfalls are extremely rare here.*