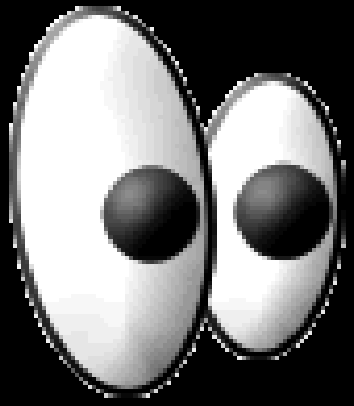

Observation vs Inference

Learning Objectives

- Explain the difference between an observation and an inference.
- Describe the two types of observations.

What is an Observation?

Observation: the gathering of information using one or more of your five senses.

Two Types of Observations

Qualitative: describe what you observe

Quantitative: measure what you observe

The flower has white petals

The flower has 18 petals

What is an Inference?

This white flower is commonly used to make flower leis in Hawaii

Inference: an explanation for the observations that you have made which are based on your past experiences and prior knowledge.

Example 1

Observation: the grass on the front lawn is wet.

Inference: it rained

the sprinkler was on

the dog urinated on the grass!

Example 2

Observation: the school fire alarm is ringing.

Possible inferences:

there is a fire at the school
this is a fire drill
a student pulled the fire alarm

Example 3

Provide one observation and inference for the image above.

Example 4

Provide one observation and inference for the image above.

The End