Inductive Reasoning Encyclopedia Article

Inductive Reasoning

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Inductive Reasoning

Way of thinking that uses comparisons to reach conclusions.

When a child uses inductive thinking or reasoning, he or she engages in the evaluation and comparison of facts to reach a conclusion. Inductive reasoning progresses from observations of individual cases to the development of a generality. (Inductive reasoning, or induction, is often confused with **deductive thinking;** in the latter, general principles or conditions are applied to specific instances or situations.) If a child puts his or her hand into a bag of candy and withdraws three pieces, all of which are red, he or she may conclude that all the candy is red. Inductive reasoning, or induction, is the process by which a general conclusion is reached from evaluating specific observations or situations.