

## ANSWERS TO UNCRITICAL INFERENCE TEST

Individuals are prone to make inferential errors (Nisbett & Ross, 1980). See if you have such a tendency. I created the version on page 186 of the text; what Haney (1967) originally devised and called “The Uncritical Inference Test.” “?” is the correct answer for all of the statements. Without exception, these statements are based on guesses regarding what is likely but not verifiably true from the information provided. **The reasons these statements are uncertain (inferences) are as follows:**

1. Chris Cross is a doctor of some sort but not necessarily a medical doctor (Dr. Cross may be a Ph.D., chiropractor, dentist, etc.).
2. Dr. Cross is not necessarily a man.
3. Yoshi Yamamoto has a Japanese name, but isn’t necessarily Japanese (married name, assumed name, adoptive name).
4. Pat Sinclair may be a male, not a “her.”
5. This requires an inference that Dr. Cross is irritated and that Nurse Sinclair and “the nurse in charge” are the same person, which cannot be ascertained from the information provided.
6. Yoshi Yamamoto may be an orderly taking a break or a visitor resting, not a patient.
7. This requires an inference that a “look of anger” automatically produces a “reddened face.” Again, Nurse Sinclair may be male.
8. There may have been four people in room #314 if Nurse Sinclair and the nurse in charge are not the same person.

9. Dr. Cross works at St. Luke's. Nowhere does it say this story occurred there.

10. Again, four people may be in the story: Dr. Cross, Nurse Sinclair, the nurse in charge, and Yoshi Yamamoto.

If we don't even recognize that we've made an inference, then we're not likely to notice when the inference is a bad one. If individually you do poorly on recognizing and critically evaluating inferences, imagine the quality of decision making in a group when most or all of the members are inclined to make inferential errors.