

Detective on the Case

GUIDELINES

Objective: Students act as detectives and file a case report based on their mystery. Their job is to report information such as setting, characters, clues, conflict, and resolution.

This activity will help students understand the characteristics of mysteries. They'll discover that quite a bit of the information is included to throw the reader off track as he or she is trying to figure out the mystery. Discuss the difference between real clues and false clues. A real clue helps the reader put the pieces together to reveal the solution to the mystery. A false clue makes the reader believe something other than the truth. At the end of the mystery, the reader discovers which clues were real and which were false. (Sometimes this information is revealed along the way.)

Students will notice a similar pattern with the characters as with the clues. Most likely, all of the characters acted suspicious at one time during the story. And perhaps the character that seemed the most innocent turned out to be the villain!

To show their understanding of the story, students write a description of how the case was solved. The most complicated part of a mystery is often the resolution, so this is an important part of the assignment.

Encourage students to make their projects look like official reports by designing their own case report forms and making up a name for their detective agency. They should include the name of the agency at the top of the form.

CLUES R US
Official Case Report

Case: Spider Kane and the Mystery Under the May-Apple
by Mary Pope Osborne

Location: The Cottage Garden and the Dark Swamp

Mystery: Mimi has been kidnapped and Leon tries to find her.

Characters:
 La Mère Leafwing - Leon's mother. She dislikes Mimi from the start.
 Leon Leafwing - A butterfly who tries to find Mimi.
 Mimi - A new butterfly in the garden with a secret past.
 Walter Dogtick - He used to be friends with La Mère. He was seen near Mimi's home carrying a large sack.
 Spider Kane - A clever detective.
 Emperor Moth - Ruler of the Dark Swamp, a criminal.

Clues:
 Stolen crown, boot, and scarf - All were props used to trick Leon.
 Message scratched in dirt - Also used to trick Leon and make him think Emperor Moth kidnapped Mimi.
 Stage voice at campsite - This was the Hawk. They were discussing Leon.

Case Solved: Mimi was not really kidnapped. They made up the whole story to test Leon's courage and see if he could join the Order of MoTH. This is Spider Kane's group that helps other creatures in danger.

Alicia Mason-Brown
 Signature

November 12
 Date

Mystery

Detective on the Case

You've just landed a job as a detective! Now that the mystery in your book has been solved, your job is to file an official case report for your agency's records. You'll need to review the case and accurately fill in the information. Make the report look as official as you can by designing your own case report form. Be sure it includes the information listed below.

DUE DATES
Book approved _____
Book finished _____
Project finished _____

MATERIALS

lined paper

DIRECTIONS

- 1 Find a mystery that interests you and is at an appropriate reading level for you. Have your book approved by your teacher.

Book Title: _____

Author: _____

- 2 At the top of your case report, write the name of your detective agency, the book title, and author. Then, write the location and the approximate time of the mystery (in other words, the setting).
- 3 Next, write a brief description of the mystery. What was the problem? What needed to be solved?
- 4 Look through the book to find clues that helped solve the mystery. Make a list of at least three of them. Beside each, write the information the clue revealed in the end.
- 5 Who was involved? Make a list of the main characters. Beside each character, note any suspicious behavior that occurred at any point in the story. Write whether any additional information was revealed about each character at the end of the story.
- 6 Finally, describe how the mystery was solved. If any detectives deserve special mention, explain why here.
- 7 Sign and date your report, and pass it in to the chief detective (your teacher).

Name: _____ Date: _____

Mystery

Detective on the Case

Book Title: _____

	POSSIBLE POINTS	POINTS EARNED
1 Was your book approved on time?	5	
2 Did you hand in your project on time?	10	
3 Did you describe the setting?	10	
4 Did you describe the mystery?	15	
5 Did you list and write about at least three clues?	15	
6 Did you list the characters and any suspicious behavior?	15	
7 Did you explain how the mystery was solved?	20	
8 Are the spelling, punctuation, and grammar correct?	10	

Comments: _____

