

Detective stories



Concept:
Investigation and inquiry



Recommended:
2nd grade



Length:
25-80 minutes

About this lesson

In this lesson, students will listen to a detective story, identify some basic elements of detective stories, and create a graphic organizer to plan their own story. While we suggest 2nd grade as the recommended grade level for this activity, you can adapt it to suit the needs and interests of your class.

Learning objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will:

- Describe what a detective does
- Identify parts of a detective story
- Create a graphic organizer for a detective story
- Share ideas for a detective story

Driving question

How can we tell if a story is part of the mystery genre?

Future ready skills

Communication

Planning

Problem solving

Lesson breakdown

25-35
minutes

Activity 1 - Detective story time

In this activity, students listen to a detective story and learn about the elements of a detective story.

45-55
minutes

Activity 2 - Create your detective story plan

In this activity, students will create a simple graphic organizer to plan a detective story.

In-app My Files

Upload students' graphic organizer to the **My Files** app on their **Dpad**.

Lesson vocabulary

- Genre
- Evidence
- Suspect
- Motive
- Hunch

Detective story time



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Inquiry prompts

- How do you know when a story is a detective story?
- Why do detectives look for evidence when trying to solve a case?

Instructions

- 1 In this activity, students listen to a detective story. Depending on book length, you can read a full short story, a standalone chapter, or key excerpts. Some great books about kid detectives include:
 - Nate the Great – Marjorie Weinman Sharmat
 - Encyclopedia Brown – Donald J. Sobol
 - King and Kayla and the Case of the Missing Dog Treats – Dori Hillestad Butler
 - The High-Rise Private Eyes: The Case of the Missing Monkey – Cynthia Rylant
 - Cam Jansen: The Mystery of the Stolen Diamonds – David A. Adler
 - Jigsaw Jones: The Case of the Missing Hamster – James Preller
 - A to Z Mysteries: The Absent Author – Ron Roy
- 2 After listening, ask students how they know when a story is a detective story (e.g. there is a detective character, something unexpected or strange happens, characters have to solve a mystery, other characters may be suspects, etc.). Remind students to use examples from the book to back up their points.
- 3 Make a list of students' ideas in a manner that allows you to review and display the list as a way to kick-off [Activity 2 - Create your detective story plan](#).

Materials required

- Flip chart
- Marker
- Detective story

Artifacts

A flip chart of students' ideas about what makes a detective story can be displayed in the classroom.

Create your detective story plan



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Inquiry prompts

- Who is in your detective story?
- What problem or mystery is in your detective story?
- How is the mystery solved?

Instructions

In this activity, students use a graphic organizer to plan a detective story.

- 1 Review the class list of features that make a story a detective story from [Activity 1 - Detective story time](#).
- 2 Explain that students will plan their own detective story using a simple organizer.
- 3 Give each student a graphic organizer divided into 4 sections with the headings: Characters, Mystery/problem, Clues, and Solution.
- 4 Students fill in each section with words or simple drawings to plan their story.
- 5 Have students share their organizer with a partner or small group if time allows.

Materials required

- Paper
- Crayons, pencil crayons, or markers

Artifacts

Students' graphic organizers showing the characters, mystery or problem, and solution for a detective story.