MYSTERY GENRE BOOK PROJECTS

Here is information for two FUN Mystery Genre Projects.

Project 1: Reading a Mystery Chapter Book and Writing a Summary

1. Your child will select a mystery chapter book that is approximately 100 pages and is at his/her reading level (no more than 5 words on any page that he/she cannot read independently).

2. The teacher must approve the chapter book selected.

3. The written summary is due on or before October 29, 2010. ** We will read and write during class several times a week. **

4. A thinking map (graphic organizer) and sloppy copy (rough draft) will be done first. For the sloppy copy, one line must be skipped between each line to allow space for revising and editing.

5. After editing and revising, the summary will be neatly re-written, with few, if any, mistakes. The final product may be typed and printed at home.

6. Format guidelines:
   The heading needs these items:
   * Student name, number, and date
   * Title of the book
   * Author of the book

   The body of the summary should follow this format:
   * Choose the main idea of the story and three supporting details.
     * Write one, high-quality paragraph.
     * Start the paragraph with a topic sentence (name it, verb it, tell it - see below) and include transition words before describing each of the three details.
     * Remember to include at least two examples or explanations for each detail.
     * End with a conclusion sentence.
     * Remember, do not give an opinion -- this is a summary.
To receive full credit on this project, your child needs to turn in these three items, each with your child’s name, number, and date (NND), on or before the due date:

(1) thinking map,
(2) sloppy copy (showing editing/revising in colored pen), and
(3) final summary

7. Illustrations are extra (optional).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name It</th>
<th>Verb It</th>
<th>Finish It</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In the book <em>The Cricket in Time Square</em></td>
<td>the author tells us</td>
<td>about a cricket who travels to New York.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the story “Akiak”</td>
<td>the author explains</td>
<td>how Akiak wins a dog sled race.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The story <em>Miss Alaineus</em></td>
<td>shows us</td>
<td>that it is important to follow directions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The book <em>The Giving Tree</em></td>
<td>teaches us</td>
<td>what happens when someone is greedy and selfish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The story “Tomas and the Library Lady”</td>
<td>reminds us</td>
<td>to be helpful to others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Chapters 4 and 5 of <em>Island of the Blue Dolphins</em></td>
<td>the author describes</td>
<td>how the people of Ghalas-at suffered many losses.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Project 2: Writing a Mystery Picture Book Story

Over the next few weeks, each child will write an original mystery story. In class, we will go through the writing process to ensure that each child will have a “ready-to-publish” story. Then, the “ready-to-publish” story will be developed into a children’s picture book. Most, if not all, of the writing will be done in class.

To complete this mystery picture book, each child will be responsible for:

1. Creating a thinking map (graphic organizer) for the story;
2. Writing a sloppy copy of the story;
3. Editing and revising the sloppy copy with a colored pen;
4. Completing a final draft of the story;
5. Writing the final draft, with colored illustrations (first in pencil, then with colored pencils), in a hardback “Bare Book”;
6. Posting continual progress on a classroom chart;
7. Completing the writing and illustrations on or before November 19, 2010;
8. Turning in the thinking map, sloppy copy, final draft, and completed picture book; and
9. Reading the picture book to his/her 1st grade buddy.

Requirements for the Book

1. Write a story with a mystery plot;
2. Include elements of the mystery genre;
3. Create and develop interesting main and secondary characters;
4. Include a description of the setting;
5. Use correct spelling and punctuation;
6. Follow directions:
   a. Include an illustration, title, and student’s name as author and illustrator on the front cover;
b. Write a dedication on the first page of the book; and
c. Write a short biography by the student on the back page.
   A drawing or photograph may be included.
7. Draw creative and appropriate illustrations;
8. Arrange text on pages in a readable, sequential manner; and
9. Print or type text neatly and legibly.

Oral Report
1. Students will practice reading their book to learn confidence and clear expression.
2. Students will read their mystery picture book to the class or to a small group in a clear, expressive voice.
3. Students will also read their book to their first grade buddy.
Rubric for Mystery Picture Book Project

Reading Standard: Reading and identifying elements of a mystery genre story.

Writing Standard: Following the writing process to write a fictional narrative in the mystery genre.

Listening and Speaking Standard: Making oral presentations.

Project: Writing and creating a mystery children's picture book
1. Wrote a story with a mystery plot. ______
2. Included elements of the mystery genre. ______
3. Created and developed interesting main and secondary characters. ______
4. Included a descriptive setting. ______
5. Used correct spelling and punctuation. ______
6. Followed directions. ______
7. Displayed creative illustrations. ______
8. Arranged text on pages in an organized manner. ______
9. Printed or typed text neatly and legibly. ______
10. Met all due dates. ______

Oral Presentation:
1. Read story in a clear voice. ______
2. Read in an expressive voice. ______
3. Showed practice and confidence in reading. ______

Rubric Key: + exceeds grade level
✓ at grade level
— approaching grade level

Final Assessment: 4 exceeding grade level standard
3 at grade level standard
2 approaching grade level standard
1 below grade level standard
The Detective’s Dictionary

**alibi** - an excuse that a suspect uses to show that he or she was somewhere other than at the scene of the crime when the crime was committed

**clue** - a fact or object that helps to solve mysteries

**crime** - an act that is against the law

**detective** - a person who investigates mysteries and gathers information

**evidence** – something that helps prove who committed the crime

**mystery** - something that is secret and unknown

**red herring** – a false lead that throws the investigator off track

**sleuth** - another name for a detective

**suspect** - a person who is believed to have *possibly* committed the crime

**victim** - someone who is harmed or suffers some loss because of the crime

**witness** - someone who saw the crime being committed and can provide some information
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Detective Words</th>
<th>Crime</th>
<th>Mystery</th>
<th>Suspect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clue</td>
<td>Evidence</td>
<td>Sleuth</td>
<td>Witness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alibi</td>
<td>Detective</td>
<td>Red Herring</td>
<td>Victim</td>
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</table>
# Detective Word Definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Term</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>an act that is against the law</td>
<td>a fact or object that helps to solve mysteries</td>
<td>an excuse that a suspect uses to show that he or she was somewhere other than at the scene of the crime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>something that is secret and unknown</td>
<td>something that helps prove who committed the crime</td>
<td>a person who investigates mysteries and gathers information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a person who is believed to have possibly committed the crime</td>
<td>another name for a detective</td>
<td>a false lead that throws the investigator off track</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>someone who saw the crime being committed and can provide some information</td>
<td></td>
<td>someone who is harmed or suffers some loss because of the crime</td>
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Set up the beginning of your mystery. Decide on a crime and who has done it. Who are the suspects (characters)? Who will work to solve it? How do the other characters respond to the crime?

Where did the crime take place?

List the clues. Who reveals them? Who discovers them?

What are the distractions for the person trying to solve the mystery?

List the order of the plot — when does each clue or distraction appear?

What is the conclusion of the mystery?
## Detective Case Report

### Characters
- Detectives
- Suspects

### Setting
- Where does the story take place?

### Clues
- **Clues (in order)**
  1. 
  2. 
  3. 
  4. 

- **Who discovered it?**

*List additional clues on back if necessary*

### Red Herrings
- What are the distractions for the person trying to solve the mystery?

### Conclusion
- What is the conclusion of the mystery?
- What is the **evidence** that helped the detective/s crack the case?
**STORY MAP FOR SOLVE-IT STORIES**

Complete the following table with a partner while you read a Solve-It Story from MYSTERYNET’S KIDS MYSTERIES (http://kids.mysterynet.com/).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of Solve-It Story</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main character</td>
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<td>Secondary character</td>
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<td>Setting (where and when)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Problem</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Main events</td>
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<td>Climax</td>
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<tr>
<td>Solution</td>
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<tr>
<td>Example of suspense</td>
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<tr>
<td>Specific clues the author gives</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
### Suspect List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suspect’s Name</th>
<th>Reason the Character is Suspicious</th>
<th>Check this box if the character is no longer a suspect</th>
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Mystery Writing

What is a mystery?

A mystery is something that is not easily explained or described. Mystery stories often contain a puzzle or problem that needs to be solved.

Start at the Beginning

Before you write a mystery story, you need to have an idea. Is there a mystery at your school? Do you know of strange happenings in your town? If so, you could use that as the basis of your story.

The Characters

Once you have a basic story line, you need to figure out who will be involved. Decide who the main character (the "detective") is and what he or she is like.

Spend some time thinking about this character. What does he or she look like, sound like, etc?

Then, decide who the minor characters will be and what role they will play. How are these characters related to the main character? They could be friends, enemies, family. How is each character related to the mystery?

The Plot

Decide what the mystery is, how the main character becomes involved in the mystery and what the outcome of the story will be.

When you're writing a mystery, it's important to know how you are going to end it before you start writing so that you can leave accurate clues along the way.
Mystery Writing (cont’d)

The Setting

Where will the story take place? Picture it in detail. Sometimes it helps to write out a description of the setting as well before you begin writing. You want your readers to feel like they are a part of the story, so writing vivid details of the setting in the story will help them become a part of the mystery.

The Clues

List the clues you will use in your story. Actually, make two lists.

First, make a list of actual clues.

Then, make a list of red herrings. Red herrings are fake clues that are meant to make the readers suspect wrong characters.

Red herrings are important because they make the mystery more difficult to solve.

The Hook

All great stories have great beginnings. You want something exciting, suspenseful or interesting to happen at the beginning of the story to draw in your readers and make them want to figure out the mystery.
Mystery Writing Questions

Answer the following questions about mystery stories:

1. Which of the following does not describe a mystery?
   a. Not easily explained
   b. Contains a puzzle
   c. Involves a problem that needs solving
   d. A strange school

2. List three possible topics that you might use to write a mystery story:
   a. __________________________________________
   b. __________________________________________
   c. __________________________________________

3. According to the worksheet, who is the detective in the story?
   __________________________________________

4. Why do you need to know what the end of the story will be before you begin writing?
   __________________________________________

5. What is a red herring?
   __________________________________________

Write Your Own Mystery

Follow the steps above and write a mystery story of your own.
Mystery Writing Answers

Answer Key

1. d
2. answers will vary
3. the main character
4. so you can leave accurate clues
5. a fake clue meant to mislead the readers