

It's a Mystery

FOCUS QUESTION

What skills can people use to solve a mystery?

NOTICE AND WONDER

Look at the three texts you will read in this lesson.
What do you notice? What do you wonder?
Discuss your ideas with a partner.

WHAT MAKES A MYSTERY

A mystery is a type of story with a puzzling problem. The story ends when enough information has been gathered to solve the problem. Discuss the meaning of each word and why it might be important in telling a mystery.

characters

plot

solution

setting

problem

clues

The word ____
means ____.

That word is related to
mysteries because ____.



The Lost Medals

by Jo Pitkin



The Glitter Trap

by Brooks Benjamin




The Case of the Missing Plant

by Amira Shea





THE LOST MEDALS

by Jo Pitkin

- 
- 1 Antonio and his older brother Javier sat on the front steps of their house, looking for something to do on a sunny Saturday afternoon. Antonio pointed to a sign across the street: *Community Yard Sale*.
 - 2 “Let’s go take a look, Javier,” Antonio said. “Remember the comic books we bought there last year?”
 - 3 “How could I forget?” Javier laughed as he stood up. “You read them out loud to me for weeks!”
 - 4 As the brothers wandered down the block, they examined tables piled high with used books, fancy plates, tools, and toys. Antonio picked up a **cazuela** just like the one his grandmother had and shook it. *Thunk!*
 - 5 “There’s something inside!” he exclaimed. Antonio turned to the seller. “How much for it?”


* * *

- 6 Antonio pried the pot’s lid off and found a faded envelope. Inside the envelope were two tarnished medals and a folded piece of paper. The paper listed a recipe written in Spanish. Antonio put it aside. Then, the boys cleaned the darkened medals. Each had the outline of a baseball player and these words: *Garcia, Miami High School, 1964*. Who was Garcia? Was this person a famous player? Antonio and Javier wanted to find out. 

Stop & Discuss

What mystery do Antonio and Javier want to solve?

Underline the question in the text that needs to be answered in order to solve the mystery.

- 7 After school on Monday, the boys went to Miami High School's Media Center to look through the 1964 yearbook. There, in the sports photos, was the baseball player's full name: *Rafael Garcia*. In 1964, Garcia had been the captain of the baseball team. Antonio thought, *If I'd lost my winning medals, I'd definitely want them returned.*
- 8 Antonio and Javier searched online for information about where the medal winner could be today. They typed *Rafael Garcia, Miami, and baseball player* into the search engine. The headline of a recently published news article flashed on screen: "Moving with Miami's Champ." Rafael Garcia taught exercise classes at a nearby community center. The brothers smiled and bumped their fists.
- 9 The next weekend, the brothers visited the center. They walked by a room where a man who resembled the person in the news article photo was leading an exercise class. Once the class was over, Antonio introduced himself and explained why he had come.
- 10 "**Hijole!**" cried Mr. Garcia as he stared at his medals for the first time in years. "I lost them when my family moved."
- 11 "We also found this," Antonio said, giving him the recipe.
- 12 Mr. Garcia stared at the paper, his eyes shining with tears. "**Mi abuela** sent me our family's *tres leches* recipe. Somehow, it got lost, too." He smiled at the boys. "Thank you for finding a way to bring back these priceless memories." 

hijole = wow

mi abuela = my grandmother



Stop & Discuss

How does Mr. Garcia feel about getting his medals and the recipe back?

Underline details in the text that are clues.



Summarize a Story

- When you **summarize**, you retell the most important parts of a story in your own words.
- **Key details** are important pieces of information you must include in a summary so that a person reading your summary can understand the story.

Reread/Think

Reread "The Lost Medals." First, write the names of the characters and the settings of the story in the chart. Then, write key details from each part of the story.

Characters

Settings

Beginning (Problem
Introduced)

Middle (Actions to
Solve Problem)

End
(Problem Solved)

Talk

Tell your partner why you included each key detail in the Beginning, Middle, and End sections of your chart. Decide with your partner whether you should add or take out any details.

In the beginning, ____.

In the middle, ____.

In the end, ____.

I included this detail because ____.

I did not include this detail because ____.

Write

Use the information from your chart to summarize “The Lost Medals.” Include key details from the story in your summary.

In the Beginning _____

In the Middle _____

In the End _____

WRITING CHECKLIST

- ☐ I included the names of important characters.
- ☐ I included the settings.
- ☐ I included the problem that had to be solved.
- ☐ I told how the problem was solved.
- ☐ I used correct spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.



The Glitter Trap

by Brooks Benjamin


blurring = making unclear and difficult to see


Stop & Discuss

Why does Sumiko think someone is stealing her books?

Tell your partner what clues in the text support your response.

Sumiko thinks someone is stealing her books because ____

- 1 Sumiko rubbed away the sleep **blurring** her vision, but when she looked at her bookshelf again, it was the same. Books were shoved in upside-down and sideways, with some on the floor and others missing completely. It was the third time this week she'd found her perfectly organized bookshelf a total mess.
- 2 Sumiko stormed to her little brother's side of the room. Toshi often borrowed her stuffed animals—if borrowing meant hiding them under his bed. Sure enough, two stuffed animals were squished underneath.
- 3 “Toshi!” Sumiko yelled.
- 4 Toshi ran into the room. “Yeah?”
- 5 Just as Sumiko was about to accuse Toshi of stealing her books, it occurred to her that he was only four. He couldn't even read yet.
- 6 “Did you need something, Sis?”
- 7 Sumiko stared into Toshi's innocent eyes. “It's nothing. Forget it.”
- 8 Sumiko knew it was time to rethink. Someone was taking her books, and she would need evidence in order to figure out who was doing it. Detectives in the books she read always used tape to pull fingerprints off stuff, so Sumiko grabbed the tape dispenser off her desk and pressed a strip of sticky tape along the edge of the bookshelf. 

- 9 “Whatcha doing?” Toshi asked.
- 10 “Finding evidence.”
- 11 “Eddi-vets?”
- 12 Sumiko smiled. “Evidence. Like clues.”
- 13 “Like cat hair?” Toshi pointed to a clump of orange fur on the tape Sumiko just pulled off the shelf.
- 14 “Bandit!” Sumiko yelled. Bandit was always knocking stuff down. Of course, he never put things back, but maybe he had an **accomplice**.
- 15 Sumiko stormed across the hall and into her older sister’s room, where Bandit was stretched out next to Tomoko on the bed. Toshi followed Sumiko in.
- 16 “Um, why are you in my room?” Tomoko asked.
- 17 “Finding eddi-vets,” Toshi replied.
- 18 Sumiko marched to Tomoko’s bookshelf where she immediately found some of her own books mixed in with her sister’s. “*You’ve* been taking my books!”
- 19 “No, I haven’t,” Tomoko said. “Now get out of my room!”
- 20 Sumiko left with her books, wondering how she could prove her sister was the thief. She decided to set a trap. She began by sprinkling green glitter over the tops of the books on her bookshelf.
- 21 The next morning, Sumiko found a trail of glitter leading from her bookshelf into Tomoko’s room. She peeked at her sleeping sister’s hands and feet. To her surprise, there was no trace of glitter. 



accomplice = someone who helps another do a crime




Stop & Discuss

Why is Sumiko surprised to find no glitter near her sister?

Discuss your response with your partner.



- 22 Toshi walked in holding out a piece of banana.
“Want some?”
- 23 Something sparkled on the banana. Sumiko’s eye followed Toshi’s hand, up his arm, and across his shirt. He was covered in glitter!
- 24 “Toshi, did you steal my books?”
- 25 “No,” he said, finishing his banana. “I borrowed them.”
- 26 “Why didn’t you say anything the whole time I was looking for the thief?”
- 27 “Because I wasn’t a thief,” blinked Toshi.
- 28 “You can’t borrow people’s stuff without asking! And you put my books back in the wrong places and left some in Tomoko’s room!”
- 29 “I just wanted to read like you,” Toshi said softly.
- 30 “Toshi, you can’t take my books, but maybe we can read them together,” Sumiko said.
- 31 “Yay!” Toshi clapped, sending glitter everywhere.
- 32 Sumiko sighed. Although her trap had helped solve a mystery, she now had another problem to solve: how to clean up all this green glitter. 

Stop & Discuss

Which sentence would Toshi agree with?

Check the answer that **best** explains his reasoning.

- ☐ Borrowing is what makes someone a thief.
- ☐ Borrowing is okay but only from your sister or brother.
- ☐ Borrowing and taking are two different things.



Summarize a Story

- A summary is brief because it only includes key details.
- Not all details are key details. A detail is less important if it is not necessary for understanding the text.

Reread/Think

Reread "The Glitter Trap." Write the names of the characters and setting of the story in the chart. Then write key details from each part of the story.

Characters

Setting

Beginning

Middle

End



Talk

What key details did you include in your chart? Choose one and tell why it is important for understanding the story.

One key detail is ____.

This detail helps readers understand that ____.

Write

Use the information from your chart to summarize "The Glitter Trap." Include key details from the story in your summary.

WRITING CHECKLIST

- ☐ I included the names of important characters.
- ☐ I included the setting.
- ☐ I included the problem that had to be solved.
- ☐ I told how the problem was solved.
- ☐ I used correct spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.



The Case of the Missing Plant

by Amira Shea

abruptly = suddenly and without warning

- 1 Josephine and Thomasina strode through the thick grass of their grandmother's yard to her garden shed. Granny was hosting a yard sale, and the sisters could keep any money they made selling her old clay pots.
- 2 Thomasina stopped **abruptly** at the garden. "Oh no!" She pointed at a patch of bare earth among the scarlet tomatoes, green okra, and yellow squash. Granny's beloved pigeon pea plant was *gone*.
- 3 Everyone knew that their grandmother had a way with plants. Some people believed stems and leaves just sprung up around her wherever she walked. But it was love and attention that made Granny's garden grow. So, it was strange that anything would be missing—especially the prized plant of Granny's garden.
- 4 Josephine squatted to inspect the empty spot where the pigeon pea plant had once been.
- 5 "No animal prints or holes," Josephine stated, still looking at the ground. "This can only mean one thing."





scanned = looked around to find something

sheepishly = in an embarrassed way

- 6 “What?” Thomasina asked.
- 7 “Only a human could’ve taken the plant,” Josephine concluded.
- 8 Thomasina nodded and stepped carefully in the garden, looking for clues. There, behind the okra, was a yellow garden glove with a palm tree on it. However, Granny wore dark blue gloves. So, there *was* a plant thief!
- 9 “We should tell Granny,” Thomasina said.
- 10 “No,” Josephine said. “Let’s not worry her. We’ll find the thief ourselves.”
- 11 That afternoon, as people arrived, the girls **scanned** the crowd. Josephine suddenly grabbed her sister’s elbow.
- 12 “Look at the apron Mrs. Mavis is wearing,” Josephine whispered. “It has the same palm tree as the glove we found!” The sisters moved closer and overheard Mrs. Mavis chatting about a new pigeon pea plant. They raced inside to tell Granny, who listened patiently. The sisters were breathless by the time they were done.
- 13 Smiling, Granny said, “I grew that plant as a present for Mrs. Mavis. She just moved here from Barbados. When she looks in her yard, she’ll be reminded of home.”
- 14 “We’re sorry, Granny,” Thomasina said **sheepishly**. “We shouldn’t have thought the worst.”
- 15 “You may have reached the wrong conclusion, but you had the right reason—to look out for your granny.” Granny reached out and brought both girls in for a hug.



Respond to Text

Reread/Think

Reread "The Case of the Missing Plant." Choose the best response to each question.

1. Which detail would be **most** important to include in a summary?

- A. The grass in Granny's yard is thick.
- B. Josephine looks for animal prints.
- C. The girls find a garden glove on the ground.
- D. Granny enjoys spending time in the garden.

2. Which detail is an important part of the mystery?

- A. The sisters are eager to sell clay pots.
- B. The sisters discover a plant is missing.
- C. The sisters are excited to meet Mrs. Mavis.
- D. The sisters like spending time with their grandmother.

3. Fill in the blanks to summarize what happens in paragraphs 8–10.

The sisters discover a clue with a _____ on it.

They don't want to _____ Granny, so they

decide to _____ on their own.

4. What is the solution to the mystery?

- A. Granny says the plant was a gift.
- B. Mrs. Mavis says she took the plant without asking.
- C. The plant was sold at the yard sale by accident.
- D. The sisters learn that an animal dug up the plant.



Reread/Think

- 5.** Why does Thomasina speak “sheepishly” to Granny in paragraph 14?
- A.** She is afraid that Mrs. Mavis will be angry with them.
 - B.** She feels sad that she cannot solve the mystery.
 - C.** She feels badly about accusing Mrs. Mavis of stealing.
 - D.** She is happy the missing plant has been found.

Write

How do Josephine and Thomasina solve the mystery? Use details from the text and your own words to summarize what happened.

[illegible]

WRITING CHECKLIST

- ☐ I answered the question.
- ☐ I included key details from the story.
- ☐ I used my own words to tell what happened.
- ☐ I used complete sentences.
- ☐ I used correct spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.



Respond to the Focus Question

What skills can people use to solve a mystery?

Reread/Think

Choose one text from the lesson to reread.

TEXT: _____

What did you learn from the text you chose about how people solve mysteries?

1. _____

2. _____

Talk

What is the most important thing you learned about solving problems from these stories?

I learned ____ from ____.

One skill a good problem solver has is ____.

WHAT WE LEARNED

Discuss how you would respond to this question. Take notes in the chart.

What skills can people use to solve a mystery?

Take notes on what you learned from talking to the other students in your group.

Skills for Solving Mysteries

Write

What have you learned from these mysteries that could help you solve a problem or answer a question? Use details from all three stories in your response.