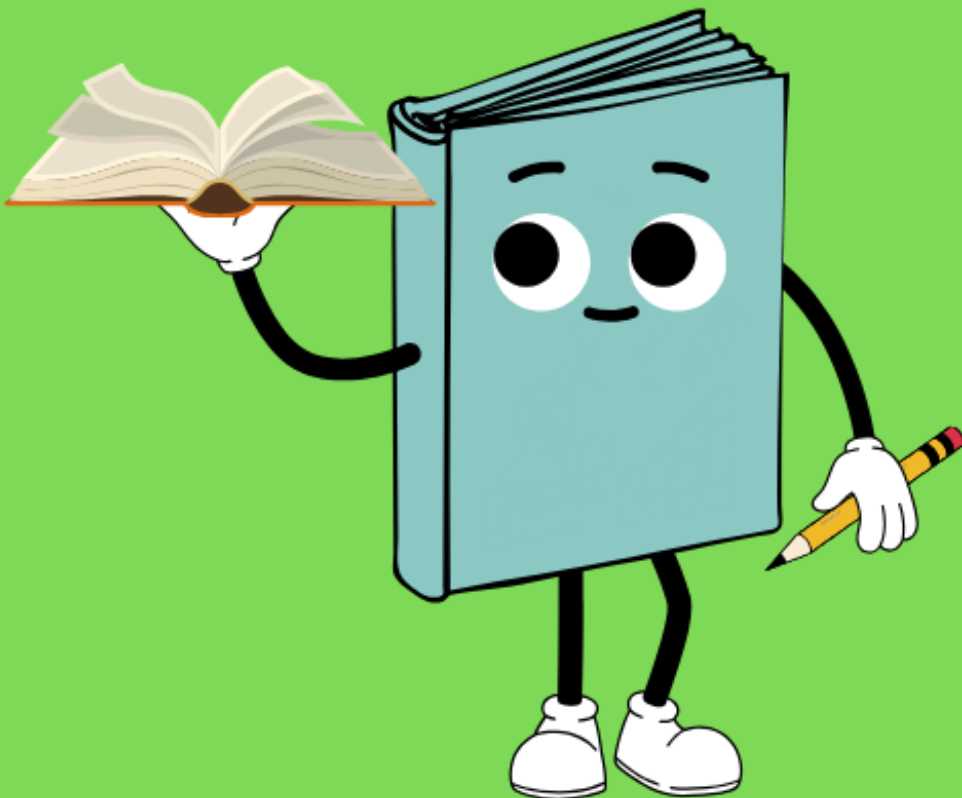


Word Nerd
Collaborative

**ELA ENGAGEMENT
GAME PLAN**



Y

A

W

2026

THANKS FOR SHOWING UP.



Dear Teacher Friend,

Somewhere along the way... things started to change. You might not have noticed it happening at first. It didn't come with a big announcement or a perfectly planned moment. It happened quietly, in the middle of regular days.

- That student who struggled to write a paragraph in September? Now they're filling a page.
- Students are using vocabulary words in conversation—without being prompted.
- A once-hesitant writer volunteers to share their work out loud.
- Kids are taking risks, raising their hands, trying—even when they're not 100% sure they're right.

And maybe one of the most beautiful shifts of all... They're starting to encourage each other. There are inside jokes now. A rhythm to your class. A sense of this is ours.

- Students who couldn't quite figure out how to work together in the fall?
- They're doing it now. (Even if it took... a while)
- That First Chapter Friday that sparked a little interest? Now you've got multiple students reading the same book.
- Lessons that felt clunky the first time around? They landed the second. Or the third.

And some of those things you worried about back in September? They worked themselves out. Or you found a better way. Or you let them go—and you're better for it.

- You found your rhythm. Even with the class that felt tricky at first.
- You made adjustments.
- You let go of what wasn't working.
- You kept showing up.

And here you are. At the beginning of the year, it can feel like everything matters all at once. But now, standing here in May, you can see it a little more clearly:

Growth happened. Not all at once. Not perfectly. But steadily. Meaningfully.

And even the things you can't see yet—the lessons that haven't fully clicked, the confidence still building, the skills still developing—those seeds are there. They will show up later. They always do.

So as you head into these final weeks, I hope you take a moment to look around and really see it. Not just what's left to do—but what's already been done.

Because somewhere along the way... you made a difference.

— AMANDA

THANKS

4

SHOWING UP

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EDITABLE
CANVA FILE



OPEN, THEN CLICK FILE
MAKE A COPY

OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT

NO JUNE/SUMMER Planning Session

Lunch Bunch Zoom (May 15th)

LINK: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84702864396>

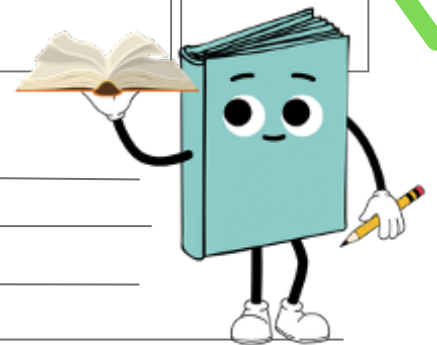
Word Nerd Collaborative Private Facebook Group

LINK: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/427913560232081>

May 2026

Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wednes.	Thurs.	Friday	Satur.
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15 Author Lunch Bunch	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24/31	25	26	27	28	29	30

Notes:





FIRST CHAPTER FRIDAYS

Friday, May 1st



Capture the Flag
by Kate Messner

Realistic Fiction /
Prose

Friday, May 8th

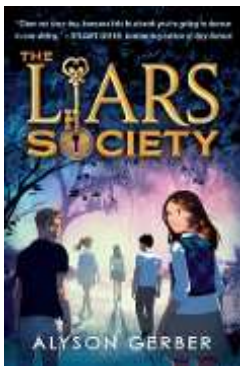


Secrets of the
Broken House

Realistic Fiction /
Prose

** INCLUDES AUTHOR INTERVIEW

Friday, May 15th

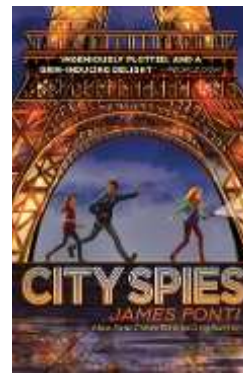


The Liars Society
(book 1)
by Alyson Gerber

Realistic Fiction
/ Prose

** INCLUDES AUTHOR INTERVIEW

Friday, May 22nd



City Spies
by James Ponti

Realistic Fiction
/ Prose

Friday, May 29th



Vanishing Act

Realistic Fiction/
Prose

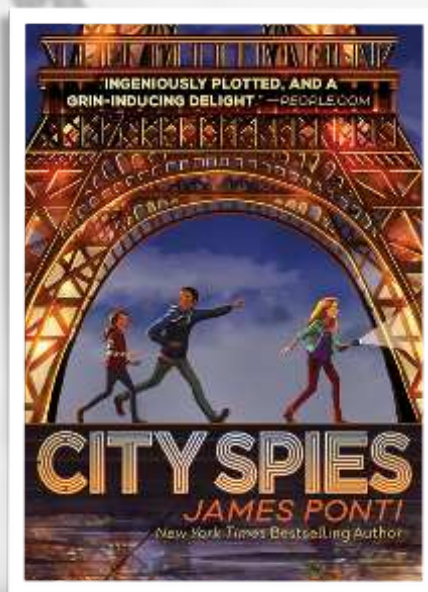
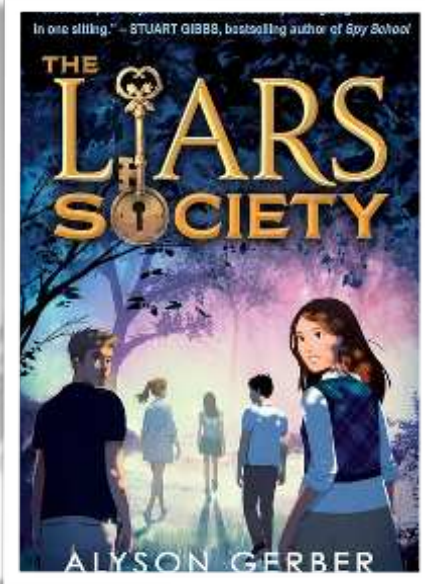
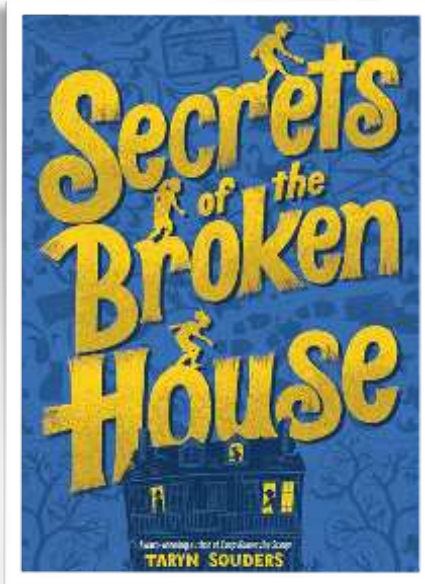
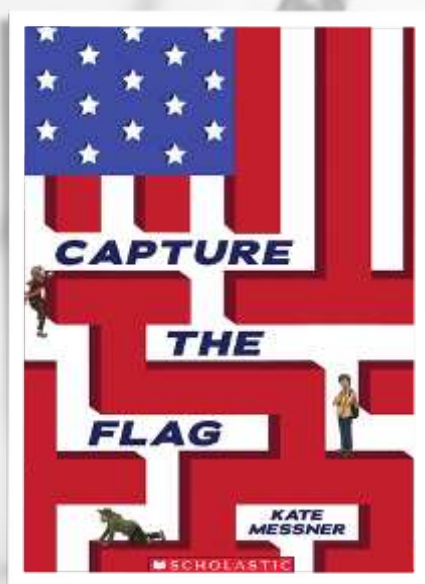
Lunch Bunch Attendees

Friday, May 15th!
11:15-11:45 am CST

Kate O'Shaunessy

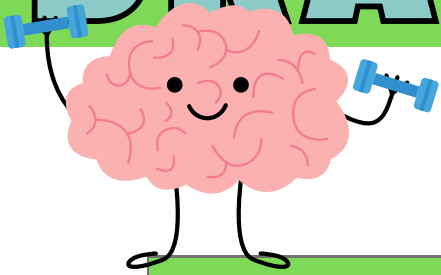
MAY

FIRST CHAPTER FRIDAYS



You gotta check them out!

BRAIN BREAKS



Help your students reset their brains and moods with a little break. Try a fun trivia game! Totally optional, but you can use the LEADERBOARD on page 25 to keep track of student teams and scores throughout the month.

Purple Trivia



Picture Detective (round 4)



World Cup Trivia



Outer Space Trivia



Candy Slogan



Did you know?

"Brain breaks benefit not only students but teachers, too. They help improve the pacing of your lesson while keeping you and your students refreshed, focused, and engaged."

-- [Reading Rockets Website](#)





Writing Prompts

Week 1

Monday
Phony Phonebooth

Tuesday
Grandpa's Secret

Wednesday
A Mysterious Setting

Thursday
Atypical Typewriter

Friday
Free Write Friday

Week 2

Monday
The Cookie Caper

Tuesday
Sunken Secrets

Wednesday
Crafty Characters

Thursday
Mission Moonlight

Friday
Free Write Friday

Week 3

Monday
Crack the Code

Tuesday
Destination Details

Wednesday
A Search for the Truth

Thursday
Phantom Fairgrounds

Friday
Free Write Friday

Week 4

Monday
Series Screenwriter

Tuesday
I'm Gonna Take My Chances

Wednesday
Mystery at the Beach

Thursday
Skyscraper Secrets

Friday
Free Write Friday

Week 5

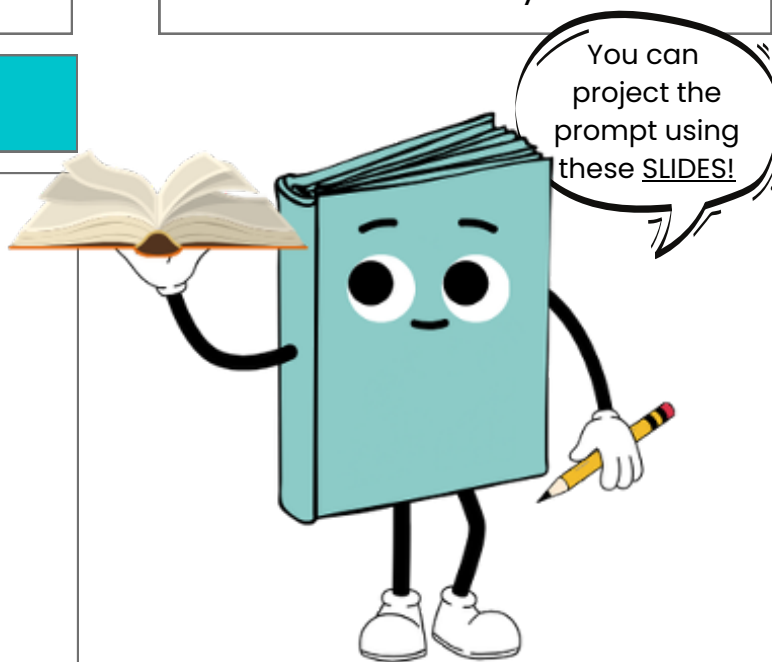
Monday
Townhall Tall Tales

Tuesday
Character Conundrum

Wednesday
Pick a Color, Any Color

Thursday
The Dastardly Dentist

Friday
Free Write Friday



LESSONS



May 2026

1 THE BEDROCK OF TRUTH

This 3 part short story mystery for middle schoolers will entertain your readers and polish up their reading skills. With this short story and its accompanying resources, you'll be able to: practice annotation skills, extend vocabulary, and do some creative writing. Read the story to see how a famous author, New York City, a cave, a newspaper article, four friends, and a set of clues combine to pull off a most excellent plot twist.

STANDARDS: CCSS: RL 6.3, RL 6.4, RL 6.5, RL 6.10, W 6.3, W 6.4, L 6.4, L 6.5, L 6.6, SL 6.2

2 END OF YEAR READING BAG

Use this fun and interactive end of the year reading reflection resource to help students: reflect on their past year of reading, identify favorites (books, authors, genres, formats, etc.), recognize and celebrate reading achievements, and make plans to continue reading in the future. It is important to take time to celebrate the reading wins and growth you've achieved this year and this lesson will help!

STANDARDS: CCSS: RL 6.1, RL 6.10, SL 6.4, SL 6.5, W6.4, W6.10, L 6.1 AND L 6.2

3 10 X 10 READING CHALLENGE

What if instead of focusing on a task some kids don't like to do (read), we shift the focus to something that they absolutely sit up and pay attention to... like a YouTube challenge? Thanks to guys like Mr. Beast and Dude Perfect, our kids are all about tasks phrased as CHALLENGES. If influencers can make sitting in a car/tree/pool floatie so long you pee your pants ... or the frustrating task of trying to make a golf ball land in a solo cup from 100 yards away... LOOK LIKE A TASK WORTH TRYING, we can make reading fun too.

STANDARDS: CCSS: RF 6.4 ABC, SL 6.1, SL 6.4



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

1 **WOULD YOU RATHER – 100 EDITION**

Looking for a high-energy, classroom-safe brain break that also supports persuasive writing skills? This month's edition of Would You Rather is packed with fun, debate-worthy questions featuring the number 100!! No prep. Just press play and let students think, move, and argue (politely!). This is the perfect, end-of-year activity that will be both FUN and EDUCATIONAL.

2 **MYSTERY QUOTE RESOURCE**

A mystery quote is hidden inside many of my First Chapter Friday videos. A quote from the story appears on the screen, one word at a time. Why? To increase student engagement! In this resource, I'll explain how you can use these quotes to increase student engagement as well as the inspiration behind the idea and ways to level up the activity in your classroom. You might be surprised to learn that HGTV and VH1 helped me come up with this strategy! Great for weekly use, sub days, summer reading programs and more.

3 **MYSTERY FCF PLAYLIST**

Are you looking for a great middle grade or YA mystery? Check out this playlist full of mysterious stories! Each video features a first chapter read aloud and some even include an interview with the author! Lean in, listen and give these great books a try! If you find one you like, head to your library and check out a copy so you can read the whole thing and learn who dunnit and all the other unsolved mysteries presented in these pages.

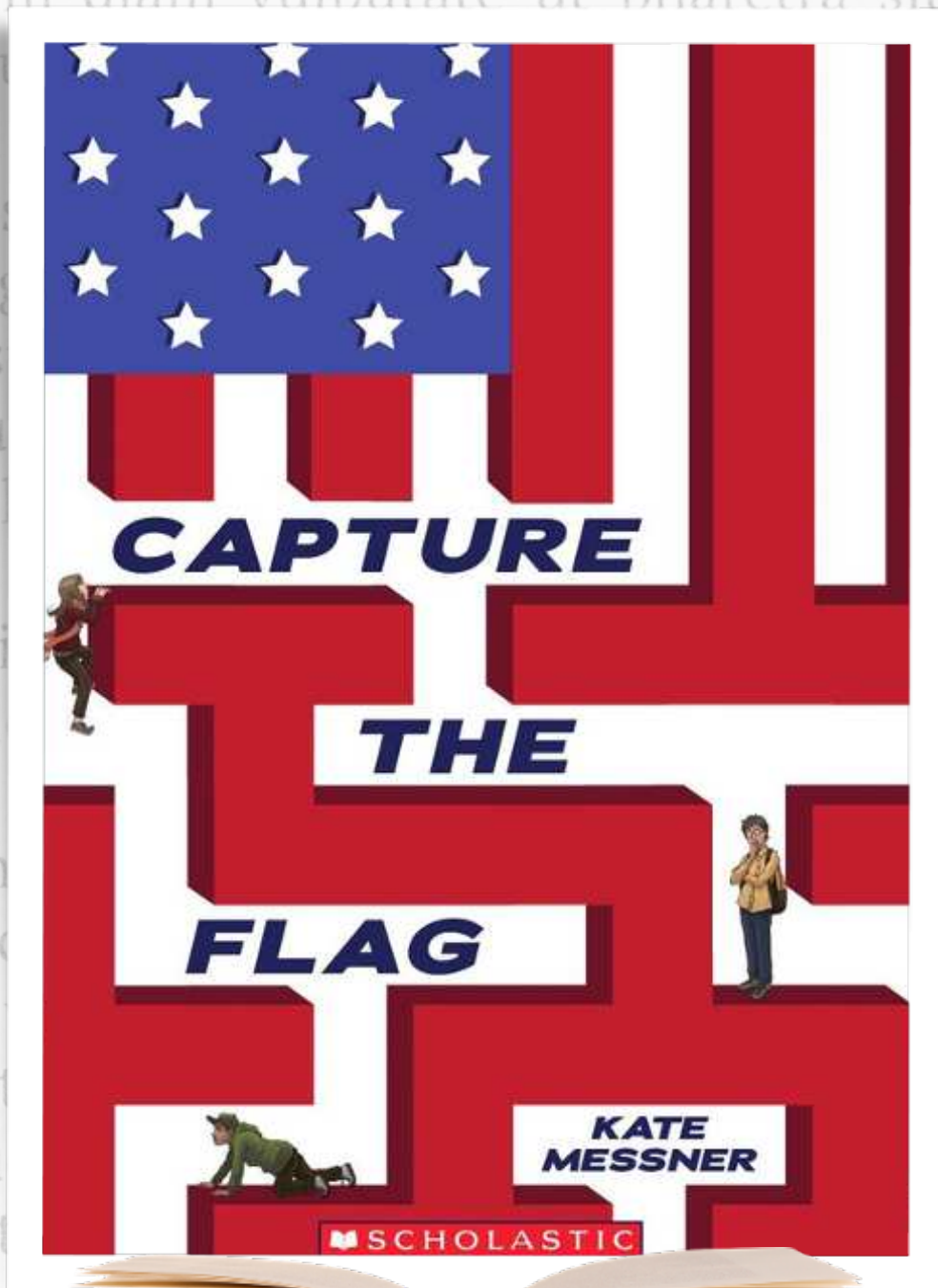


May 2026

FRIDAY SELECTIONS

CAPTURE THE FLAG

by Kate Messner



FIRST CHAPTER FRIDAY

Name _____

Date _____



Capture the Flag

by Kate Messner



Read Aloud Video

Here is a little background information about our First Chapter Friday title and its creator. Feel free to add your own notes and thoughts in the bottom box.

What's It About?

A stolen flag, a secret society, and three complete strangers . . . Anna, Jose, and Henry have never met, but they have more in common than they realize. Snowed in together at a chaotic Washington, DC, airport, they encounter a mysterious tattooed man, a flamboyant politician, and a rambunctious poodle named for an ancient king. Even stranger, news stations everywhere have just announced that the famous flag that inspired "The Star-Spangled Banner" has been stolen! Anna, certain that the culprits must be snowed in, too, recruits Henry and Jose to help find the thieves and bring them to justice. But when accusations start flying, they soon realize there's even more than a national treasure at stake. With unexpected enemies lurking around every corner, will the trio solve the heist before the flag is lost forever?

AR Reading Level: 4.5

Who Wrote It?

Kate Messner is passionately curious and writes books that encourage kids to wonder. She writes picture books, chapter books and books for middle schoolers. Before becoming a full-time writer, Kate was a TV news reporter as well as an educator who spent fifteen years teaching middle school English. She lives on Lake Champlain with her family and is trying to summit all 46 Adirondack High Peaks in between book deadlines. Kate's writing advice? "I think one of the most important things to do if you want to be a writer is to lead an interesting life. Go outside. Try new things. Talk to people, especially people whose lives are different



from yours. And don't pass up opportunities." You can learn more about Kate and her many books at her website: www.katemessner.com or in this videos' interview!

Lexile Level: 700L

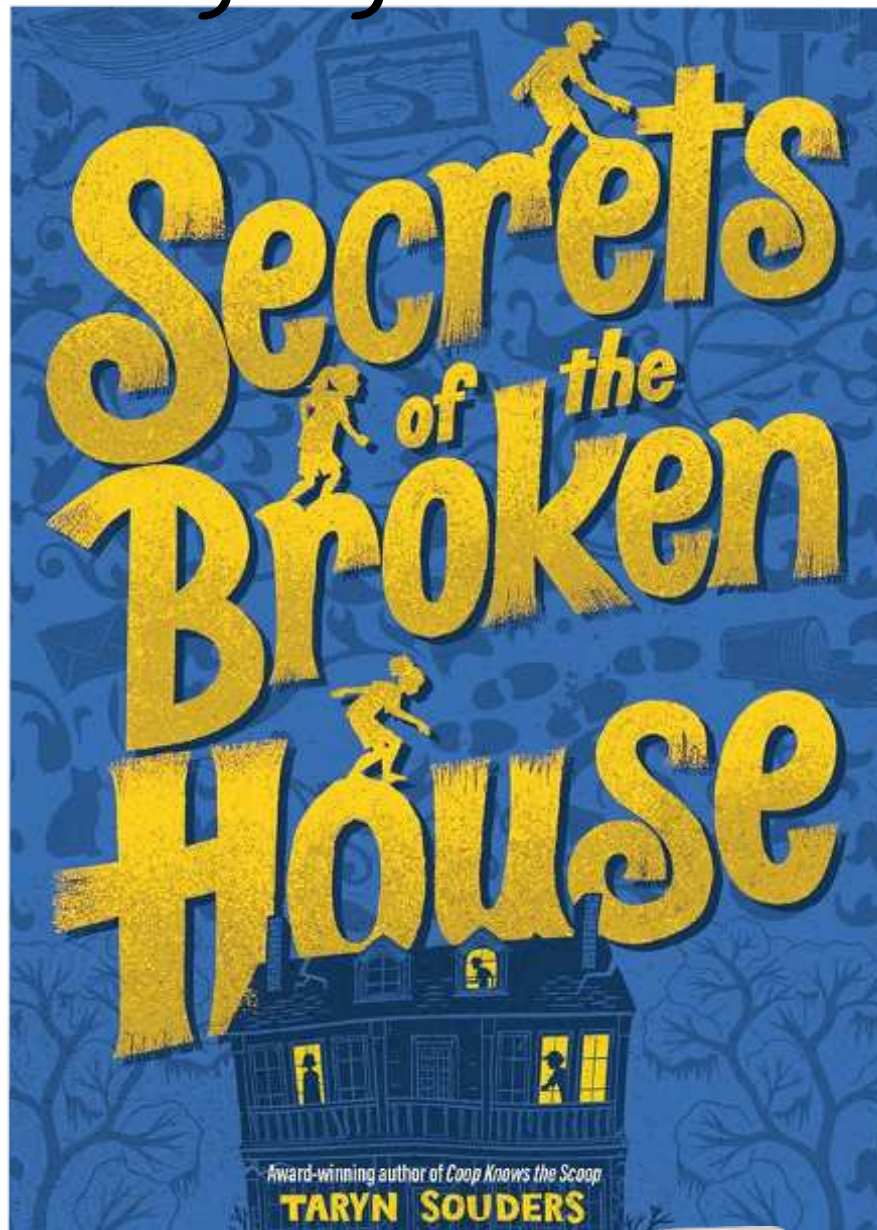
I want to read this book: YES / NO

☆☆ WHAT I THINK ☆☆



SECRETS OF THE BROKEN HOUSE

by Taryn Souders



FIRST CHAPTER FRIDAY

Name _____

Date _____



Secrets of the Broken House

by Taryn Souders



Here is a little background information about our First Chapter Friday title and its creator. Feel free to add your own notes and thoughts in the bottom box.



Read Aloud Video

What's It About?

In the small, southern town of Everson, goats can run for mayor, the mail is always late, and nothing all that bad ever happens. That is, until thirteen-year-old Tucker finds Miss Geraldine dead at the bottom of her stairs. At first glance, it looks like an accident. But Tucker has always had a knack for noticing details that others overlook, and the details surrounding Miss Geraldine's death just aren't adding up. Miss Geraldine was miserable and mean. Miss Geraldine was murdered.

The whole town seems to have reason to want her dead, which makes Tucker's search for the truth nearly impossible. The more he investigates for clues, the more danger he finds himself in, and the more he realizes that maybe Everson was never as safe as he once thought it was. Anyone could be the killer, and in a small town that loves to gossip, if Tucker isn't careful, he could be the next one to have an "accident".

AR Reading Level: N/A

Who Wrote It?

I was born in Dallas, Texas and lived all over before settling down in Florida with my husband, David, and our three kids. I never started out planning to be a writer—I was a middle school math teacher for a couple years. But, being a voracious reader as a kid gave me a love for words (and working with middle-schoolers gave me a sense of humor). It seemed like a good idea to combine the two (words and humor) and voila, a book was born.

Truthfully, my first book was a fluke. I sat down to write a poem about Moses and ended up writing a fraction book about a cow. Who knew? It worked so well



the first time, I've continued to try to write poetry and I end up with a book each time. Ok, Not really. But, I did enjoy the writing process so much, that I've kept with it and have enjoyed some success along the way.

Lexile Level: N/A

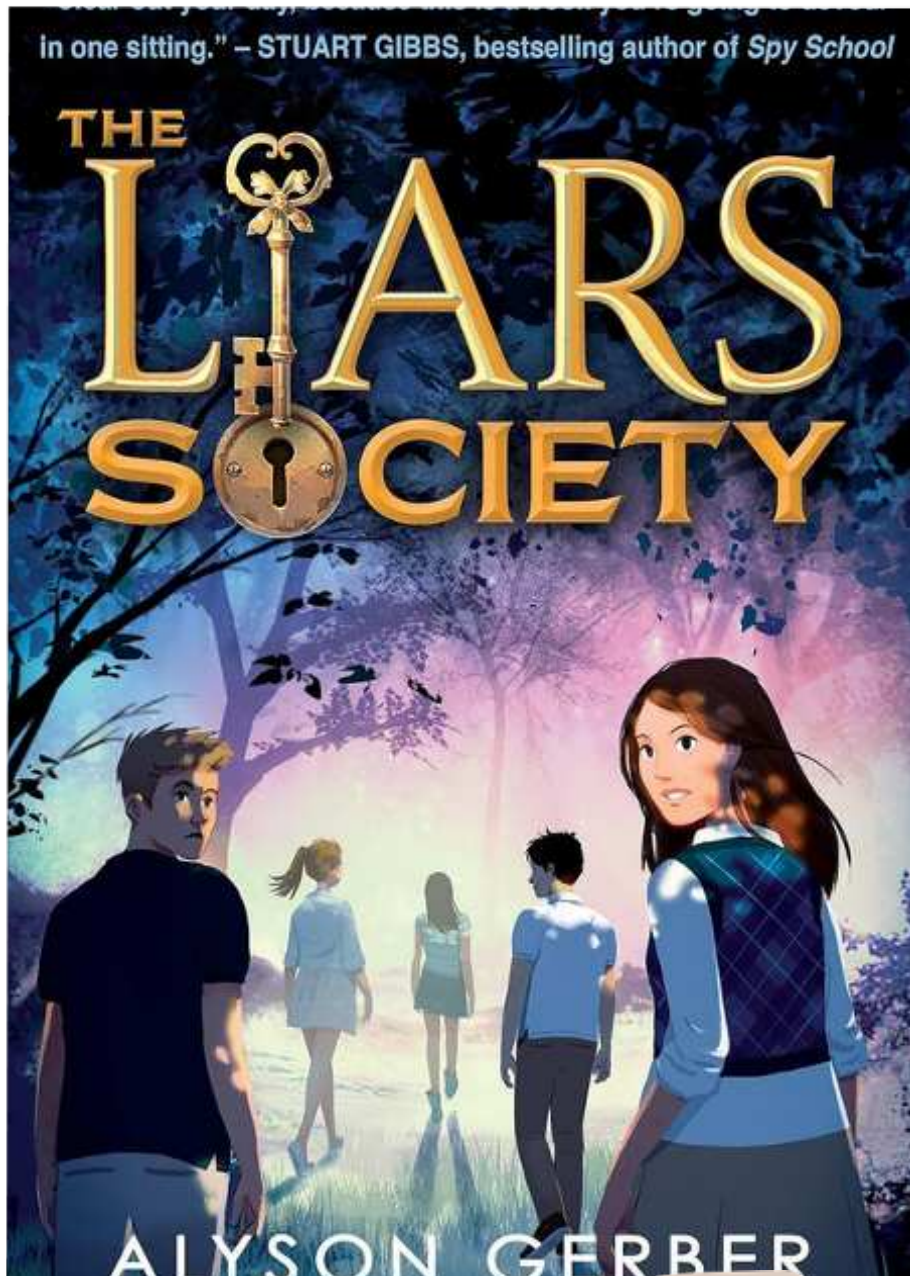
I want to read this book: YES / NO

☆ ☆ WHAT I THINK ☆ ☆



THE LIARS SOCIETY

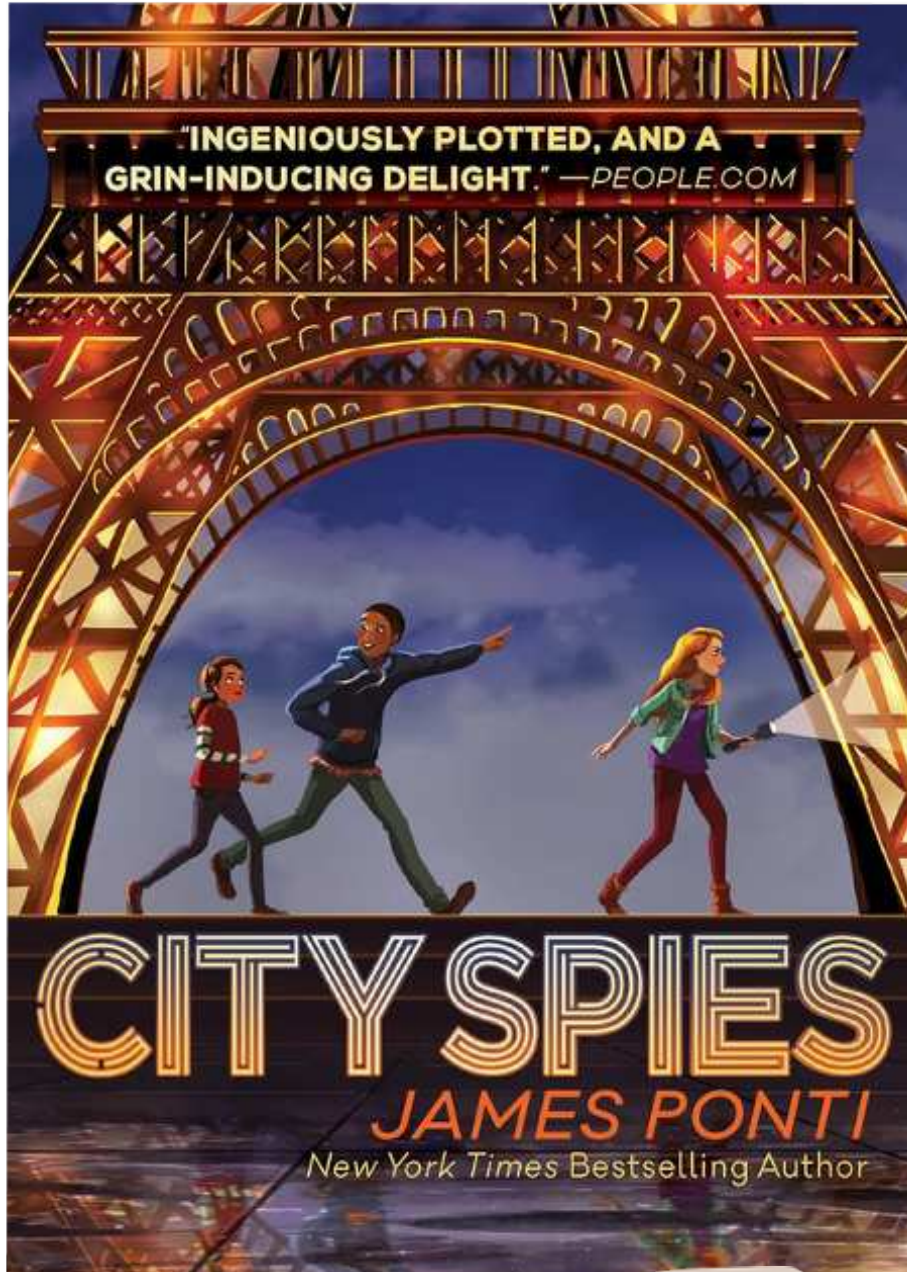
by Alyson Gerber



FIRST CHAPTER FRIDAY

CITY SPIES

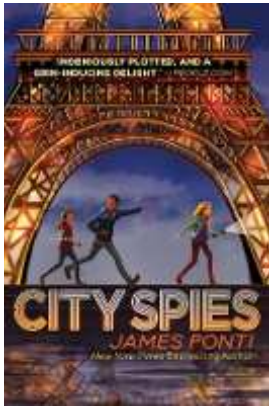
by James Ponti



FIRST CHAPTER FRIDAY

Name _____

Date _____



City Spies by James Ponti



Read Aloud Video

Here is a little background information about our First Chapter Friday title and its creator. Feel free to add your own notes and thoughts in the bottom box.

What's It About?

Sara Martinez is a hacker. She recently broke into the New York City foster care system to expose her foster parents as cheats and lawbreakers. However, instead of being hailed as a hero, Sara finds herself facing years in a juvenile detention facility and banned from using computers for the same stretch of time. Enter Mother, a British spy who not only gets Sara released from jail but also offers her a chance to make a home for herself within a secret MI6 agency. Operating out of a base in Scotland, the City Spies are five kids from various parts of the world. When they're not attending the local boarding school, they're honing their unique skills, such as sleight of hand, breaking and entering, observation, and explosives. All of these allow them to go places in the world of espionage where adults can't. Before she knows what she's doing, Sara is heading to Paris for an international youth summit, hacking into a rival school's computer to prevent them from winning a million euros, dangling thirty feet off the side of a building, and trying to stop a villain...all while navigating the complex dynamics of her new team. No one said saving the world was easy...

Who Wrote It?

Hi! My name's James and I'm the author of four book series, including City Spies and The Sherlock Society. I like to write books that mash together twisty mysteries, globe-trotting adventures, and laugh-out-loud comedy. As a kid, my favorite fictional characters were Indiana Jones, James Bond, and Encyclopedia Brown. As an adult, I try to put a little bit of each of them into everything I write. Thanks for stopping by. Happy Reading! - James

Learn more at: <https://www.jamesponti.com/>
Or check out more of James' books!!

AR Reading Level: 5.6 Lexile Level: 750L

I want to read this book: YES / NO

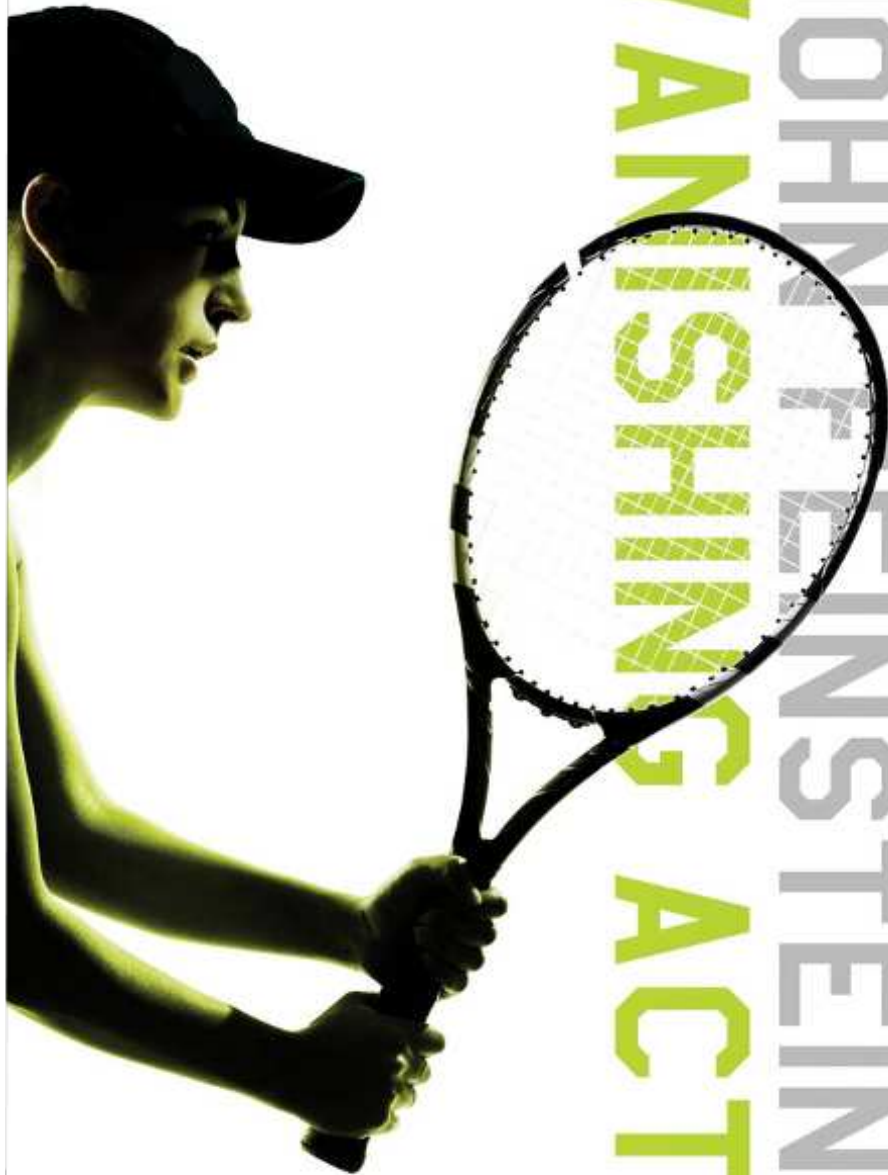
☆☆ WHAT I THINK ☆☆

Author:	James Ponti	
Due Date:	Title	Release Date
9/2/25	Sherlock Society Hurricane Helst	
2/4/25	City Spies London Calling	
9/3/24	The Sherlock Society	
2/6/24	City Spies Mission Manhattan	
2/7/23	City Spies City of the Dead	
2/7/22	City Spies Forbidden City	
9/16/21	City Spies Golden Gate	
8/10/20	City Spies	
9/25/18	Trapped!	
3/22/17	Vanished!	
8/23/16	Framed!	
10/6/15	Dead City Dark Days	
10/1/13	Dead City Blue Moon	
10/2/12	Dead City	



VANISHING ACT

by John Feinstein



FIRST CHAPTER FRIDAY

Name _____

Date _____



Vanishing Act

by John Feinstein

Here is a little background information about our First Chapter Friday title and its creator. Feel free to add your own notes and thoughts in the bottom box.



Read Aloud Video

What's It About?

New York Times bestselling author John Feinstein goes behind closed doors at the US Open . . . When teen sportswriters Stevie Thomas and Susan Carol Anderson score press passes to the U.S. Open they expect drama. They expect blistering serves, smashed returns and fierce competition. What they don't expect is kidnapping. Russian tennis phenom Nadia Symanova was supposed to win it all, but she never even made it onto the court. Now the whole stadium is in an uproar trying to find her. Can Stevie and Susan Carol get to Nadia before it's too late?

Book 2 of 6 in the Sports Beat Series



Who Wrote It?

John Feinstein was born in New York City. His dad was heavily involved in the arts, so he grew up surrounded by creative people. John has written 44 books, many of which have been on the New York Times bestsellers list. He currently writes for The Washington Post and Golf Digest and is a regular contributor to the Golf Channel, Comcast Sports Regional Networks, and he hosts a college basketball show and a golf show on SiriusXM Radio. Honestly, John is a little hard to track down. He doesn't have a website or social media. Most of this



information came from his publishing company's biography page and wikipedia. Maybe if you do some digging, you'll have better luck than I did!

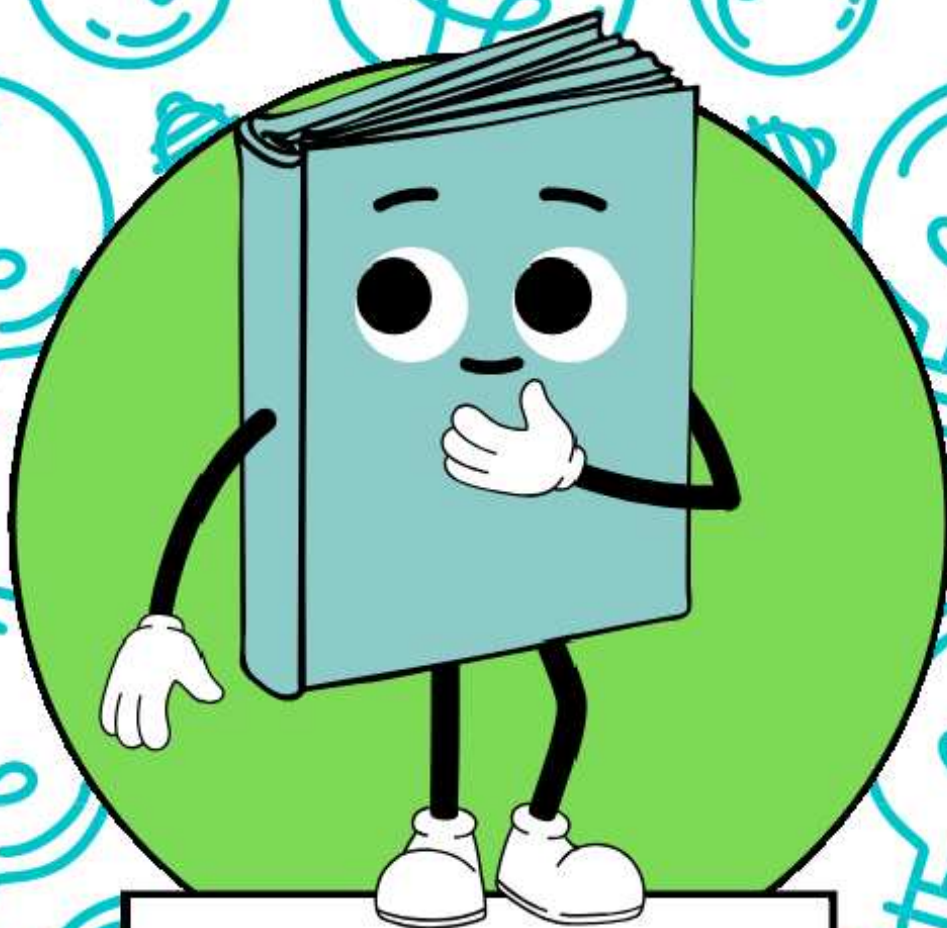
AR Reading Level: 4.8

Lexile Level: 760L

I want to read this book: YES / NO

☆☆ WHAT I THINK ☆☆





May 2026

23

BRAIN BREAKS

LINKS + ANSWER SHEETS/KEYS

How to do **TRIVIA**

FOR EACH BRAIN BREAK YOU WILL FIND:

1. Link to the YouTube video version (all around 8-11 minutes)
2. Student answer sheets
3. Modified student answer sheets for students of different ages/abilities
4. Printable question and answer sheets (to use with or without the video)
5. Answer key
6. List of additional considerations, applications and implementation ideas
7. ALL SORTS OF FUN!! :)

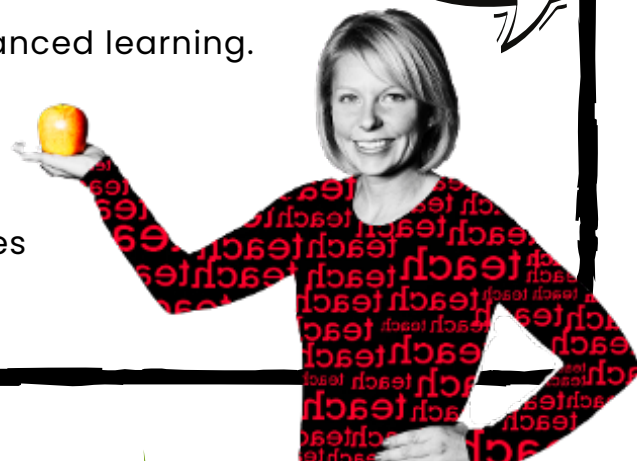
DIRECTIONS

1. Play the video showcasing 20-30 themed trivia questions.
2. Using the the provided printable worksheets, or scratch paper, have students record their guesses.
3. During the answer portion of the slideshow/video pause to allow students to share out or discuss their ideas/guesses with the whole class, in small groups or in partnerships.
 - a. This step is optional, but I find that if you want to get your students talking, it works great. If you need a few minutes of silence... you can ban conversation and it works just fine that way too!
4. Reveal final answers.
5. Total up scores
6. Record scores on the leaderboard (page 22)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/IDEAS

1. This activity can be used as a brain break, ice breaker or fun game.
2. In my classes we keep our teams the same for an entire quarter. We have a "leader board" where we keep a running score for all of our brain break games. This is great for team building or creating comradery in a classroom learning environment. :)
3. You can assign this to individuals (ie: in Google Classroom) to do on their own, or complete the challenge as a whole class activity using a screen and projector.
4. This activity can work well in person or via distanced learning.
5. Because the videos are on YouTube, this is an activity that students can easily try/repeat at home with family members. :)
6. Consider letting a classroom helper or leader be the "game show host" and call on classmates to share their ideas and reveal the answers.

Tired of the same old Brain Breaks? I've got you covered.



May Brain Break LEADERBOARD

In each square record either the # of points a team earned, or their place (1st, 2nd, etc.) The method you choose will determine whether the winner will be the team with the highest or lowest score.

TEAM #1

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Total

TEAM #2

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Total

TEAM #3

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Total

TEAM #4

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Total

TEAM #5

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Total

TEAM #6

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Total



Round 4 Answer Sheet

Starts at Min Mark 11:10

What everyday item is pictured
in each close up photograph?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____



Round 4 Answer Sheet

Starts at Min Mark 11:10

What everyday item is pictured
in each close up photograph?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

MODIFIED ANSWER SHEET



Round 4
Answer
Sheet

Starts at Min Mark 11:10



Round 4
Answer
Sheet

Starts at Min Mark 11:10

What everyday item is pictured in each close up photograph?

1. pizza or lava
2. sponge or human hair
3. bagel or a cave entrance
4. bacon or a cat tongue
5. waves on a beach or rice
6. shoe sole or golf ball
7. dental floss or tea bag
8. fruit snack or lipstick
9. ice or crinkled cellophane
10. watermelon or eyeball

What everyday item is pictured in each close up photograph?

1. pizza or lava
2. sponge or human hair
3. bagel or a cave entrance
4. bacon or a cat tongue
5. waves on a beach or rice
6. shoe sole or golf ball
7. dental floss or tea bag
8. fruit snack or lipstick
9. ice or crinkled cellophane
10. watermelon or eyeball

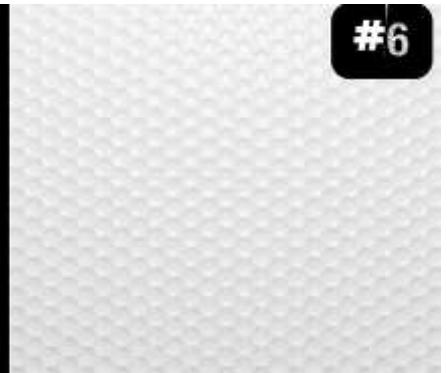


Video



Picture Detective Round #4

Name: _____





Video



Picture Detective Round #4

Name: _____



Record Your Answers Here:

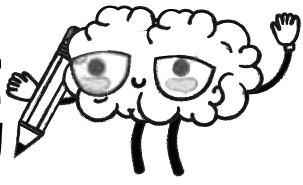
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____



Round 4 Answer Sheet

What everyday item is pictured in each close up photograph?

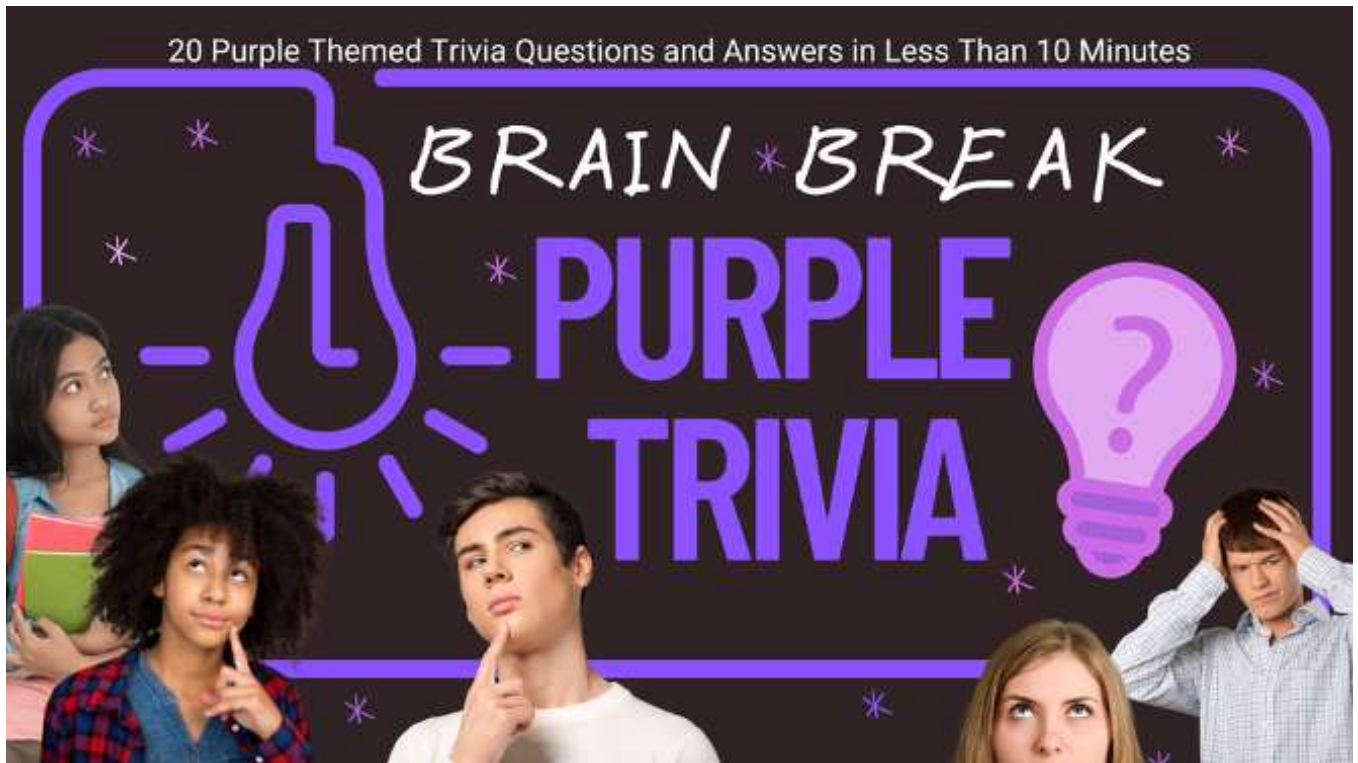
1. Pizza
2. Human Hair
3. Bagel
4. Cat tongue
5. Rice
6. Golf Ball
7. Tea bag
8. Lipstick
9. Ice
10. Watermelon



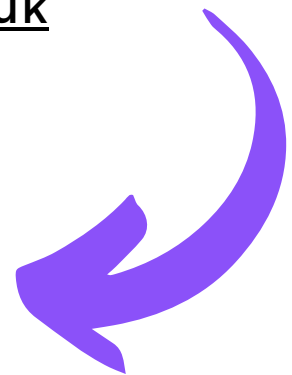
Trivia Game Video Link

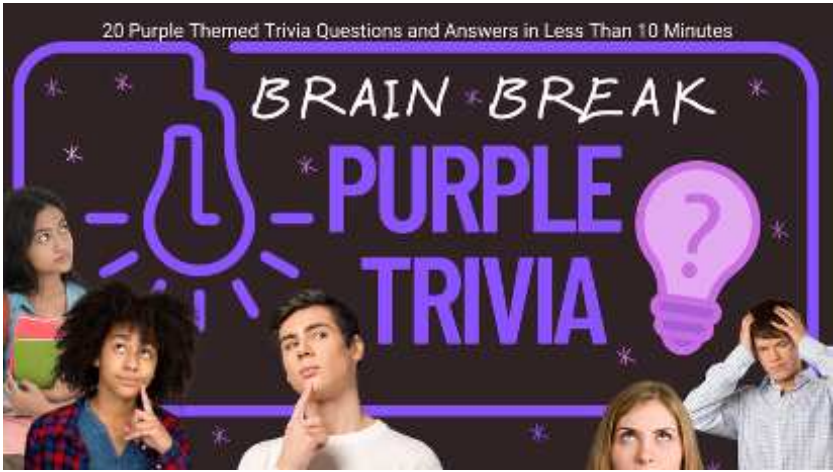
Use the below links to access the video for this activity.
Click the title, image or link to get to the video!

PURPLE TRIVIA BRAIN BREAK GAME



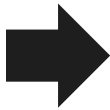
This link will take you to the YouTube Video of Purple Trivia questions: <https://youtu.be/G1gplsO-luk>





Purple Trivia Answer Sheet

Trivia Video

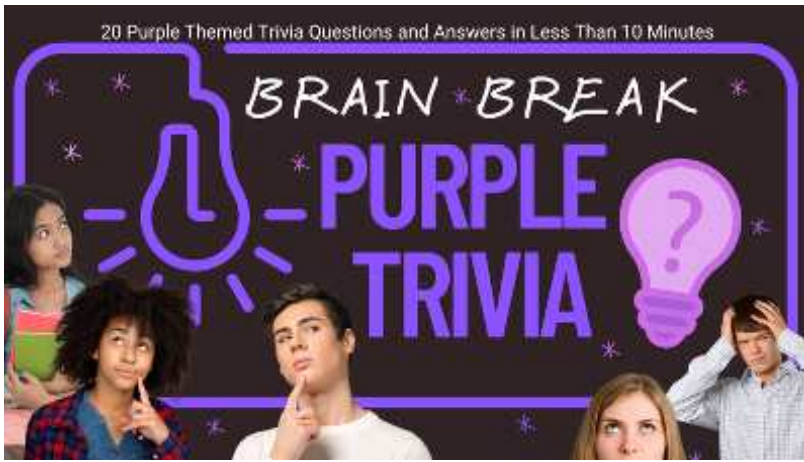


Directions:
Write your answers on the lines below.

Name/Team Name: _____

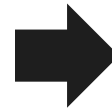
- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____
- 6. _____
- 7. _____
- 8. _____
- 9. _____
- 10. _____
- 11. _____
- 12. _____
- 13. _____
- 14. _____
- 15. _____
- 16. _____
- 17. _____
- 18. _____
- 19. _____
- 20. _____

How did you do?
Are you a PURPLE TRIVIA ROCKSTAR?!?!



Purple Trivia Answer Sheet

Trivia
Video



Directions:
Circle your answer for
each question below.

Name/Team Name: _____

1: _____ + _____ =
purple

2: A B C D

3: A B C D

4: A B C D

5: A B C D

6: A B C D

7: A B C D

8: A B C D

9: A B C D

10: A B C D

11: A B C D

12: True or False

13: A B C D

14: A B C D

15: A B C D

16: A B C D

17: A B C D

18: A B C D

19: A B C D

20: A B C D

How did you do?
Are you a PURPLE TRIVIA ROCKSTAR?!?!

Score: ____/20



Purple Trivia Brain Break Game

Trivia
Video

Name: _____



1 Purple is a perceptual color, meaning our brain creates it by mixing which 2 colors?

_____ + _____
= Purple



6 What sea creature is known for having purple varieties, being boneless, and extremely intelligent?

- a) Squid
- b) Octopus
- c) Sea Anemone
- d) Cuttlefish

2 Which ancient city was called the Land of Purple because it made purple dye?

- a) Egypt
- b) Greece
- c) Rome
- d) Phoenicia



7 What gemstone is a purple variety of quartz?

- a) amethyst
- b) jade
- C) amber
- D) opal

3 Which Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle wears a purple mask?



- a) Leonardo
- b) Raphael
- c) Donatello
- d) Michelangelo

8 What video game character is Luigi's rival and often wears purple overalls?

- a) Toad
- b) Bowser
- c) Waluigi
- d) Donkey Kong

4 which vegetable is often purple and sometimes called aubergine?

- a) grapes
- b) eggplant
- c) corn
- d) asparagus

9 What famous song by Prince features the color purple in its title? (Hint, it was also a movie!)

- a) Purple Road
- b) Purple Bus
- c) Purple Cat
- d) Purple Rain



5 What is the mascot for the NFL team in Minnesota that wears purple?

- a) Raven
- b) Lynx
- c) Viking
- d) Kraken

10 What British Military honor includes the word purple in its name?

- a) Purple Honor
- b) Purple Heart
- c) Purple Salute
- d) Purple Taps





Purple Trivia Brain Break Game

11 What animal was used to make purple dye in ancient times?

- a) Insect Shells
- b) Octopus Ink
- c) Sea Snails
- d) Bird Beaks



12 True or False: No words in the English Language Rhyme with the word Purple.

- a) True
- b) False

13 Which US State has purple needlegrass as it's official state grass?

- a) California
- b) Arkansas
- c) Maine
- d) Florida

14 Sheb Wooley an American rock singer, wrote which famous purple song?

- a) Purple Mountains Majesty
- b) Purple People Eater
- c) My Purple Pockets
- d) Purple Time in My Mind



15 During which festival are purple, green and Gold the official colors?

- a) Mardi Gras
- b) Holi Festival
- c) St. Patrick's Day
- d) Chinese New Year

16 What is the complementary color to purple on the color wheel?

— — — — —

17 What word below is a synonym for the color purple?

- a: indigo
- B: violet
- C: periwinkle
- d: All of the Above



18 Which K-Pop Demon Hunter Character wears her hair in a purple dragon Tail Braid?

- a: Mira
- b: Rumi
- c. Zoey
- d. Celine



19 What does the phrase purple prose mean?

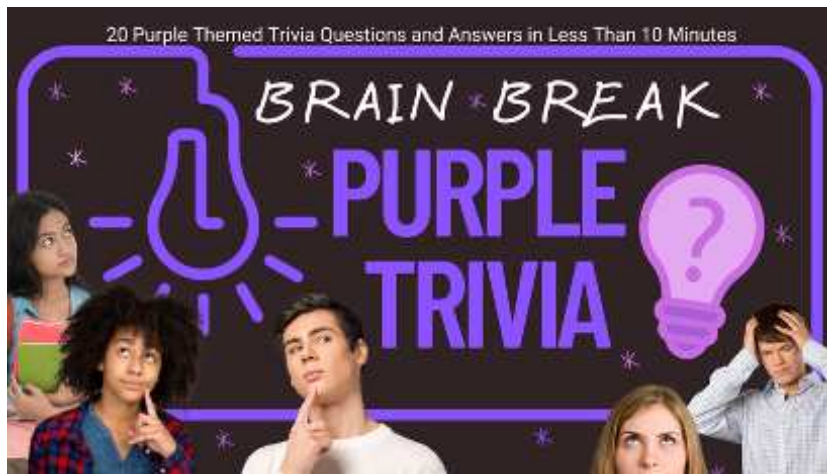
- a) Overly fancy
- b) Writing that is about royalty
- c) Writing that uses a lot of the color purple
- d) Writing that is very short and simple

20 which character from willy wonka and the Chocolate Factory turns purple after eating a piece of special gum?

- a: Augustus Gloop
- b: Veruca Salt
- c: Violet Beauregarde
- d: Mike Teavee

How did you do?
Are you a PURPLE TRIVIA
ROCKSTAR?!?!

Score: ___/20



Purple Trivia Answer Key

Directions:
If you'd like to check
student answers
without the video,
here is the answer key.

ANSWER KEY

1. Red + Blue
2. d) Phoenicia
3. c) Donatello
4. b) eggplant
5. c) Viking
6. b) octopus
7. a) amethyst
8. c) Waluigi
9. d) Purple Rain
10. b) Purple Heart
11. a) insect shells
12. True
13. a) California
14. b) Purple People Eater
15. a) Mardi Gras
16. Yellow
17. a) All of the Above
18. b) Rumi
19. a) Overly Fancy
20. c) Violet Beauregarde

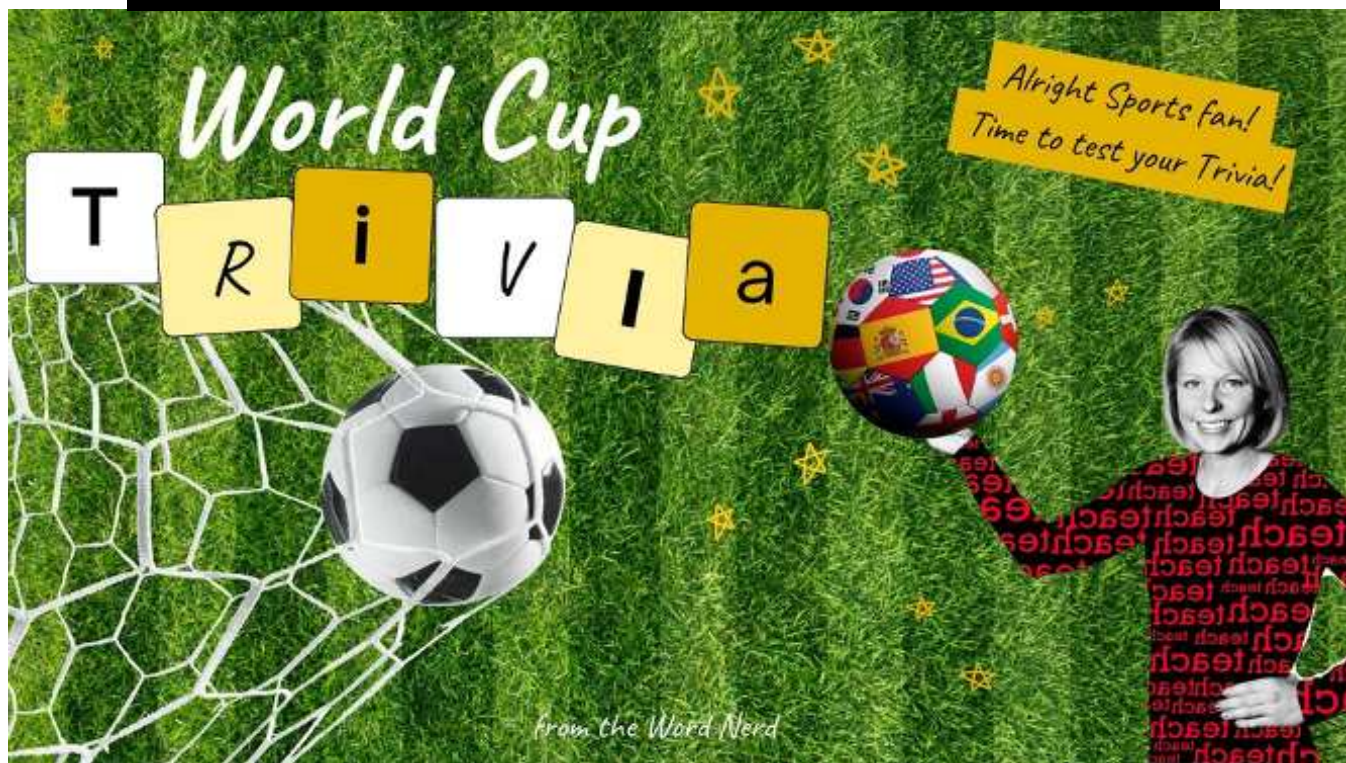
Thanks for playing!
Check out more Brain Breaks on YouTube!



Trivia Game Video Link

Use the below links to access the video for this activity.
Click the title, image or link to get to the video!

WORLD CUP TRIVIA VIDEO



This link will take you to the YouTube Video of World Cup Trivia questions: https://youtu.be/qdHM92idu7g?sub_confirmation=1





World Cup Trivia Answer Sheet

Directions:
Write your answers on
the lines below.

Trivia Video



Name/Team Name: _____

- | | |
|-----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 11. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 12. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 13. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 14. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 15. _____ |
| 6. _____ | 16. _____ |
| 7. _____ | 17. _____ |
| 8. _____ | 18. _____ |
| 9. _____ | 19. _____ |
| 10. _____ | 20. _____ |

How did you do?
Are you a the World Cup Trivia

CHAMPION?



World Cup Trivia Answer Sheet

Directions:
Write your answers on
the lines below.

Trivia Video



Name/Team Name: _____

1. A B C D
2. A B C
3. A B C D
4. True or False
5. A B C D
6. A B C D
7. Their coach or their shoes
8. A B C D
9. A B C D
10. A B C
11. A B C D
12. A B C D
13. A B C D
14. A B C D
15. True or False
16. A B C D
17. A B C D
18. True or False
19. A B C D
20. A B C

Score: ____/20

How did you do?
Are you a World Cup Trivia
CHAMPION?

www.amandazieba.com



World Cup Trivia



Trivia
Video

Are you a Soccer Trivia MVP? Take this Trivia quiz and see!



1 As of 2024, How many men's World Cup tournaments have been played?

- a) 8 b) 11 c) 30 d) 22



2 In what year was the first women's World Cup tournament held?

- a) 1987 b) 1907 c) 1991

3 How many World Cup s has the United States Men's National Soccer Team participated in? (As of 2024)

- a) 22 b) 13 c) 11 d) 18

4 True or False: The USMNT (US Men's National Team) didn't make it into the World Cup for forty consecutive years.

- a) True b) False

5 What player has scored the most goals in World Cup play?

- a) Miroslav Klose (Germany)
b) Ronaldo (Brazil)
c) Christian Pulisic (US)
d) Lionel Messi (Argentina)

6 Who won the 1st ever World Cup in 1930?

- a) Uruguay b) Argentina c) Italy d) Brazil

7 What did the Iranian national team lose a week before their 2018 World Cup match?

Their Coach or Their Shoes?

8 What team won the first women's World Cup tournament?

- a) China b) England c) Australia d) United States

9 What country has won the most men's World Cups, with 5?

- a) Germany b) Brazil c) Italy d) Mexico

10 What was the fastest goal in World Cup history?

- a) 6.2 seconds b) 10.8 seconds c) 14.7 seconds



11 Who is the youngest soccer player to win a World Cup tournament ?

- a) Pele b) Diego Maradona c) Kylian Mbappé d) Lionel Messi

12 Who was the first World Cup mascot?

- a) Striker b) Goleo c) World Cup Willie d) Zabivaka

13 The World Cup trophy was stolen in 1966. What was the name of the dog that helped recover it?

- a) Lassie b) Snoopy c) Sweeper d) Pickles

14 What is the most common score of a World Cup game?

- a) 4-3 b) 1-0 c) 2-1 d) 3-2

15 True or False: The USNMT (US Men's National Team) played in the 1974 World Cup final.

- a) True b) False

16 How many teams can qualify for a World Cup?

- a) 32 b) 24 c) 16 d) 36

17 What company has created every World Cup ball since 1970?

- a) Adidas
b) Nike
c) Reebok
d) New Balance

18 True or False: The stars above the crest on a player's uniform indicates how many World Cups the team has played in.

- a) True b) False

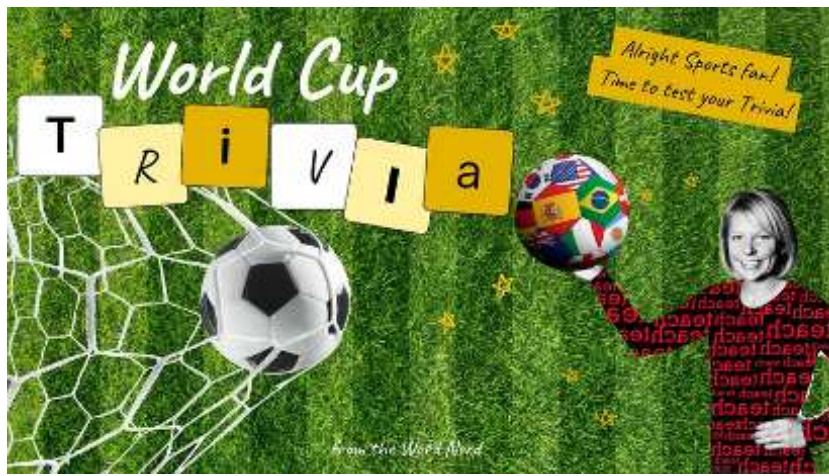
19 What is the name of the prize awarded to the player who scores the most goals in a single World Cup?

- a) Golden Goal b) Golden Boot
c) Silver Scorer d) Golden Gloves

20 What was the highest attendance for a World Cup Game?

- a) 105,000 people b) 279,000 people c) 199,000 people





World Cup Trivia Answer Key

Directions:
If you'd like to check student
answers without the video,
here is the answer key.

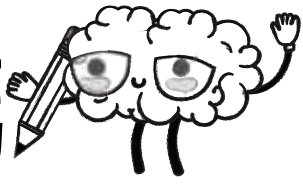
Trivia Video



ANSWER KEY

1. D) 22
2. C) 1991
3. C) 11
4. True
5. A) Miroslav Klose (Germany)
6. A) Uruguay
7. Their shoes
8. D) United States
9. B) Brazil
10. B) 10.8 seconds
11. A) Pele
12. C) World Cup Willie
13. D) Pickles
14. B) 1-0
15. False
16. A) 32
17. A) Adidas
18. False
19. B) Golden Boot
20. C) 199,000 people

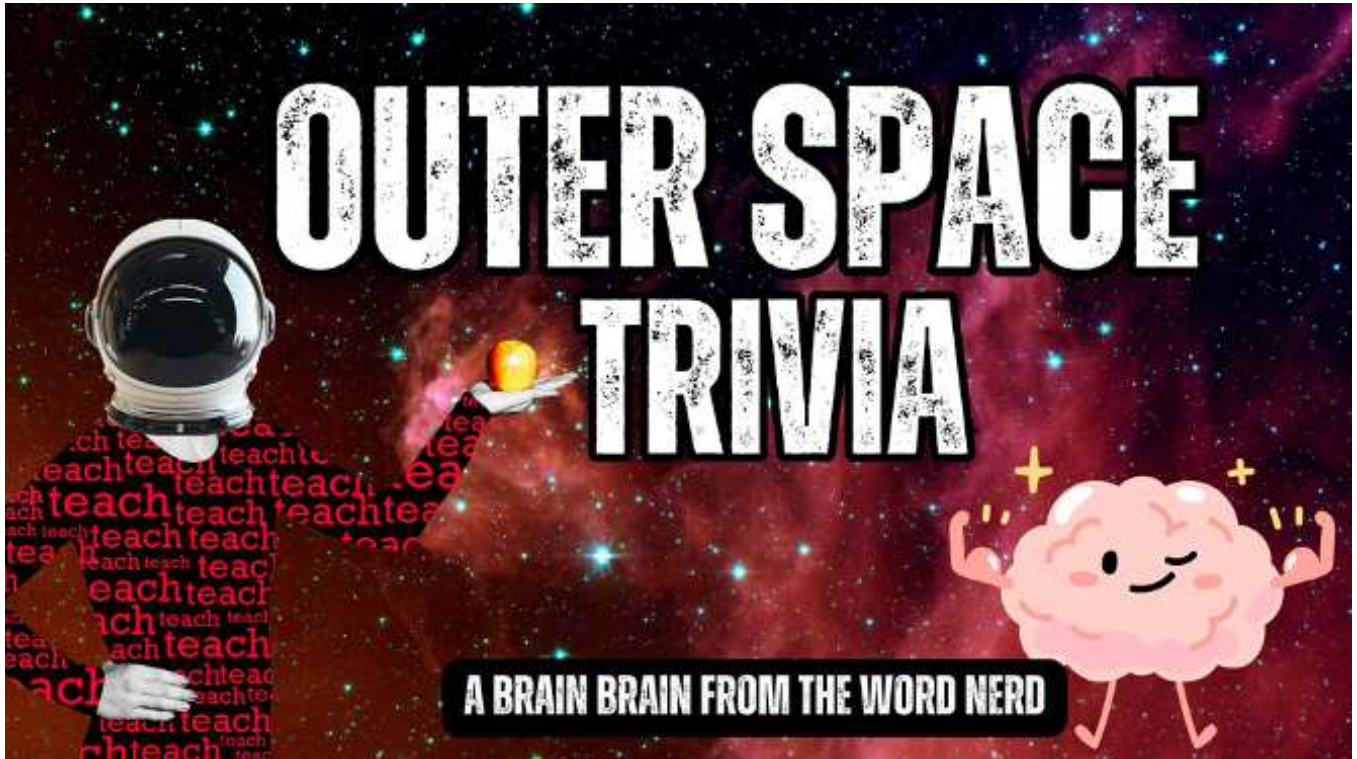
Thanks for playing!
Check out more Brain Breaks on YouTube!



Trivia Game Video Link

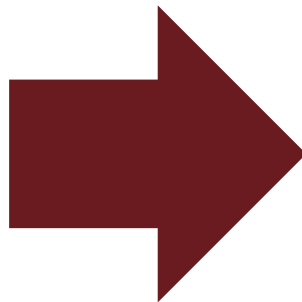
Use the below links to access the video for this activity.
Click the title, image or link to get to the video!

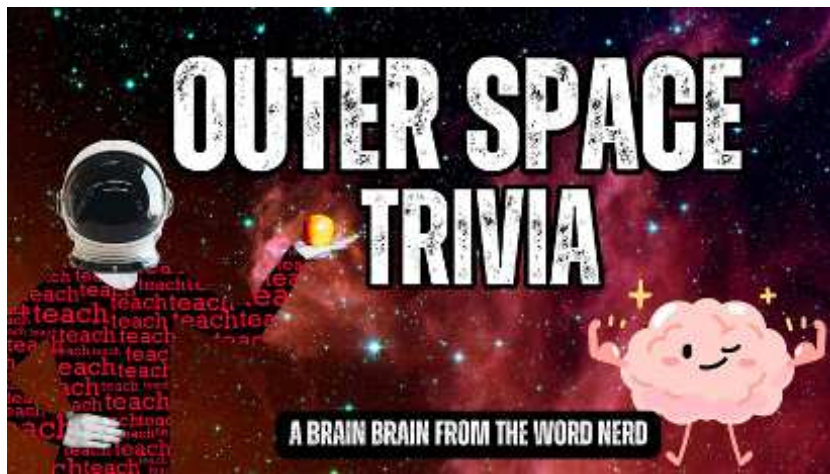
OUTER SPACE TRIVIA VIDEO



This link will take you to the YouTube Video of Outer Space trivia questions: https://youtu.be/x_zLRZawRcE

Or, use this QR code!





Outer Space Trivia Answer Sheet

Directions:
Write your answers on
the lines below.

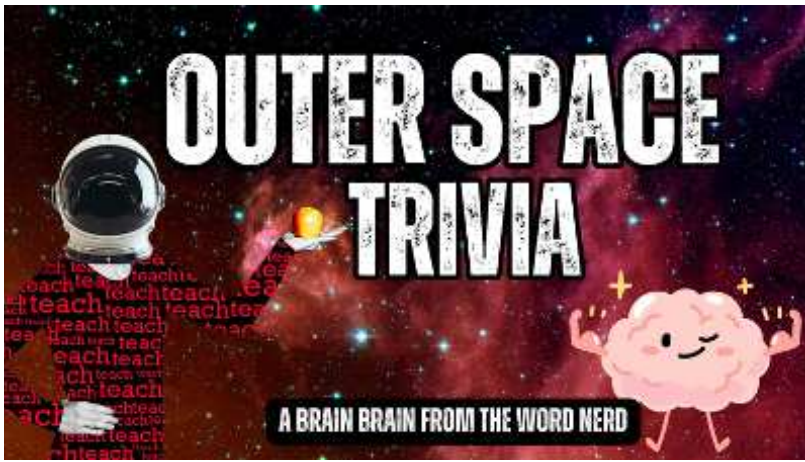
Video
Quiz -->



Name/Team Name: _____

- | | |
|-----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 11. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 12. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 13. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 14. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 15. _____ |
| 6. _____ | 16. _____ |
| 7. _____ | 17. _____ |
| 8. _____ | 18. _____ |
| 9. _____ | 19. _____ |
| 10. _____ | 20. _____ |

How did you do? Are you a STAR when
it comes to Outer Space Trivia?!?!



Outer Space Trivia Answer Sheet

Directions:
Write your answers on
the lines below.

Video
Quiz -->



Name/Team Name: _____

1: A B C D

11: A B C D

2: A B C D

12: A B C D

3: A B C D

13: A B C D

4: A B C D

14: A B C D

5: A B C D

15: A B C D

6: A B C D

16: A B C D

7: A B C D

17: A B C D

8: A B C D

18: A B C D

9: A B C D

19: A B C D

10: A B C D

20: A B C D

How did you do?
Are you a STAR when it
comes to Outer Space
Trivia?!?!?!?

Score: ____/20

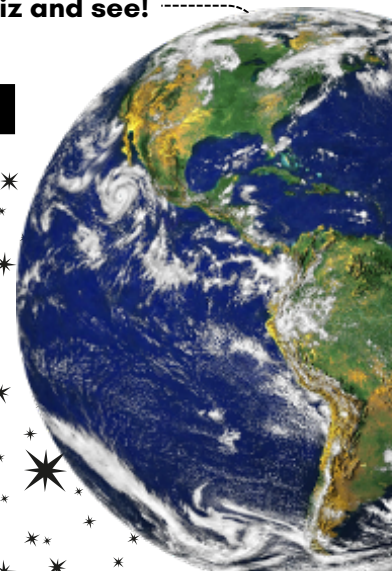
Are you a star when it comes to Outer Space Trivia? Take this Trivia quiz and see!



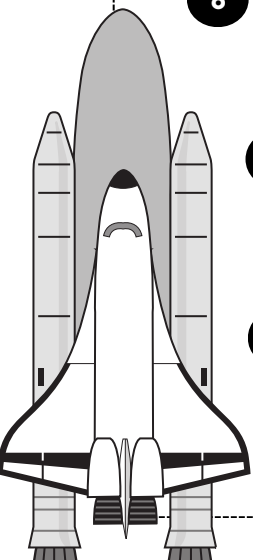
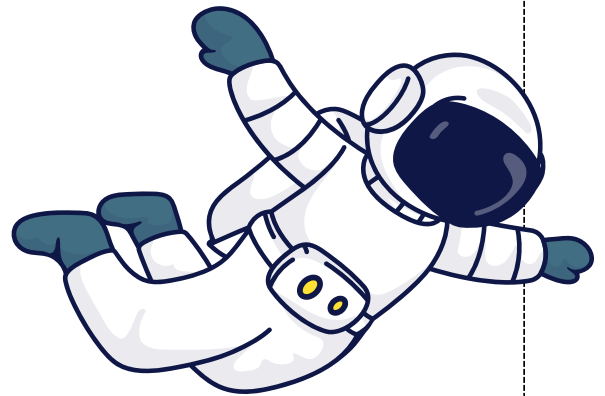
Trivia
Video

Name: _____

Outer Space Trivia



- 1 How many Earths could fit inside the sun?**
a) Ten b) One Hundred c) One Thousand d) One Million
- 2 What is the term for a star that has exploded?**
a) Super start b) Supernova c) Super sad d) Super stellar
- 3 What is the hottest planet in our solar system?**
a) Mercury b) Venus c) Earth d) Mars
- 4 what animated movie features a robot cleaning up Earth before befriending a space traveling human?**
a) Toy Story b) Jimmy Neutron c) Wall-E d) The Jetson's
- 5 Which planet is home to Olympus Mons, the tallest volcano in the solar system?**
a) Mars b) Jupiter c) Mercury d) Venus
- 6 What is the average temperature in outer space?**
a) 100 degrees Celsius b) 0 degrees Celsius
c) - 200 degrees Celsius d) - 450 degrees Celsius
- 7 When was NASA founded?**
a) 1949 b) 1958 c) 1963 d) 1965
- 8 How many astronauts can live on the International space station at one time?**
a) 4 b) 6 c) 8 d) 10
- 9 How long does it take for the International Space station to orbit earth**
a) 9 minutes b) 90 minutes c) 9 Days d) 9 months
- 10 Which NASA rover recently landed on Mars in 2021?**
a) Marshall b) Julius c) Perseverance d) Orby





11 How far away is the nearest black hole to earth?

- a) 1,000 light Years
- b) 250,000 light years
- c) 500,000 Light Years
- d) 1 million Light years

12 How long does it take for sunlight to reach the earth?

- a) 6 minutes
- b) 7 minutes
- c) 8 minutes
- d) 9 minutes

13 What is the coldest planet in our solar system?

- a) Uranus
- b) Jupiter
- c) Saturn
- d) Neptune

14 What is the name of the first artificial satellite launched into space?

- a) Explorer
- b) sputnik
- c) Aerial
- d) Asterix

15 Who was the first American woman to fly in space?

- a) Rosa Johnson
- b) Sally Ride
- c) Emily Calandrelli
- d) Mae Jemison

16 What celebrity paid for a private spaceflight and traveled with Blue Origin in 2021.

- a) William Shatner
- b) Jeff Bezos
- c) Justin Bieber
- d) Will Smith

17 What was the first sport played in outer space?

- a) football
- b) frisbee
- c) golf
- d) basketball

18 Who holds the title of "first human in space"?

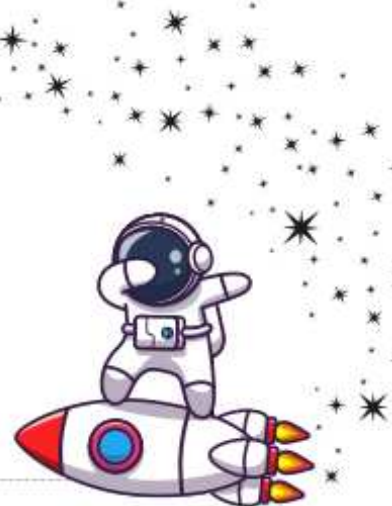
- a) Neil Armstrong
- b) Yuri Gagarin
- c) Alan Shepard
- d) John Glenn

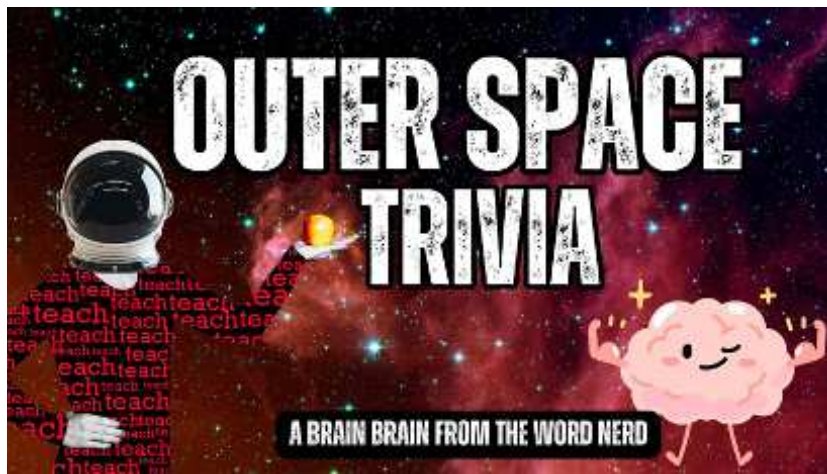
19 In Apollo 13 which famous line is uttered when a problem arises during the mission?

- a) Smoke and fire!
- b) Houston, we have a problem!
- c) We're in dire straits!
- d) Mission critical is in jeopardy!

20 What was the first private company to doc at the International space station?

- a) Space X
- b) Blue Origin
- c) Astroscale
- d) Virgin Galactic





Outer Space Trivia Answer Key

Directions:

If you'd like to check student answers without the video, here is the answer key.

Video
Quiz -->



ANSWER KEY

1. D) one million
2. B) supernova
3. B) Venus
4. C) Wall-E
5. A) Mars
6. D) -450 degrees Celsius
7. B) 1958
8. D) 10
9. B) 90 Minutes
10. C) Perseverance
11. A) 1,000 Light Years
12. C) 8 minutes
13. A) Uranus
14. B) Sputnik
15. B) Sally Ride
16. A) William Shatner
17. C) Golf
18. B) Yuri Gagarin
19. B) Houston, we have a problem!
20. A) Space X

Thanks for playing!
Check out more Brain Breaks on YouTube!

ELA Skills Brain Break

CANDY THEMED QUIZ GAME



CREATED BY THE WORD NERD

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Direct Instruction Sheet (Student Facing)

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Student Answer Sheets

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Answer Key



TAKEAWAYS

IN THIS ACTIVITY STUDENTS WILL WORK ON:

- Vocabulary
- Figurative language
- Author's purpose
- Argument/discussion
- Inference
- Author's Purpose
- Word Choice & Tone
- Message / Claim



SPARK STUDENT
ENGAGEMENT -
START WITH THE VIDEO!



Video Link



CREATED BY THE WORD NERD

DIRECTIONS

Welcome to the Candy Slogan Showdown! In this activity, you'll watch a video and test your thinking skills by analyzing real candy slogans.

What to Do:

- Watch the video and read each question carefully.
- Each question will stay on the screen for about 15 seconds.
- Choose the best answer and record it on your answer sheet.
- Think about what the slogan is really saying—not just what it literally means!

Tips for Success:

- Use context clues to figure out meaning
- Think about the message or claim the slogan is making
- Pay attention to word choice and tone
- Ask yourself: What is this slogan trying to make me think or feel?

When You're Done:

- Check your answers as a class or with the answer key
- Total your score
- Be ready to discuss your thinking!

STANDARDS IN ACTION

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.6-8.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in context

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.6-8.5

Demonstrate understanding of figurative language and word relationships

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.6-8.3

Use knowledge of language and its conventions to make meaning

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6-8.4

Analyze the meaning of words and phrases in a text

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6-8.6

Determine an author's purpose and point of view

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6-8.1

Engage effectively in collaborative discussions

THINK LIKE A WORD NERD

Before You Play: Let's Think Like a Word Nerd! Candy slogans might seem simple, but they are actually powerful examples of how language works.

Before we start, let's review a few key ideas:

Author's Purpose

Slogans are designed to persuade you.

Ask yourself:

- What is this slogan trying to make me think or feel?
- Why would this make me want the product?

Figurative Language

Slogans often don't mean exactly what they say.

Example:

- "Taste the Rainbow" doesn't mean you are actually eating a rainbow!

Look for:

- Metaphors
- Personification
- Exaggeration

Word Choice & Tone

Writers carefully choose words to create a feeling.

Ask:

- Does this sound fun? exciting? silly?
- Why did they choose that word instead of a simpler one?

Inference (Reading Between the Lines)

Good readers figure out what is implied, not just what is stated.

Ask:

- What is this slogan REALLY saying?
- What is left unsaid?

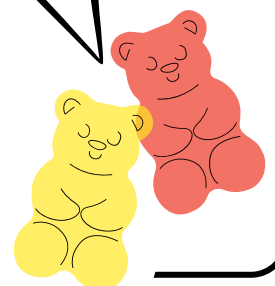
Claims & Messages

Slogans often make big claims in just a few words.

Ask:

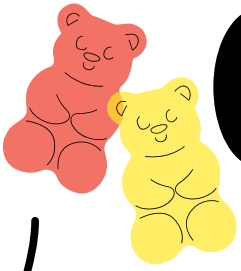
- What is the main idea or message?
- Do I believe it? Why or why not?

AS YOU WATCH
THE VIDEO, DON'T
JUST PICK AN
ANSWER—
THINK LIKE A
DETECTIVE AND
ANALYZE THE
LANGUAGE!



Name: _____

Date: _____



Candy Slogan SHOWDOWN



Watch the video and play along! Record your answers below.

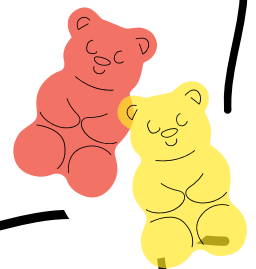
- 1 **“Crispety, cruchety, peanut-buttery!” Why does this slogan use made up sounding words?**
 - a) To confuse the audience
 - b) To make the candy sound more fun
 - c) To explain the ingredients
 - d) To make the slogan longer

- 2 **“Taste the rainbow” What does this slogan suggest?**
 - a) The candy is shaped like rainbows.
 - b) The candy is healthy.
 - c) The candy has many colorful flavors.
 - d) The candy controls the weather.

- 3 **“Melts in your mouth, not in your hands.” What problem is this slogan trying to solve?**
 - a) The candy is too big.
 - b) The candy is too sweet.
 - c) The candy is messy.
 - d) The candy has too many colors.

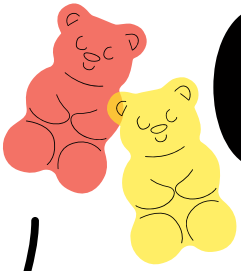
- 4 **“You’re not you when you’re hungry.” What is the main message of this slogan?**
 - a) Hunger can change how you act.
 - b) Candy is only for hungry people.
 - c) People should eat less candy.
 - d) Hunger is not important.

- 5 **“First they’re sour. Then they’re sweet.” Why is the sentence structure repeated?**
 - a) To make it longer.
 - b) To confuse the buyer.
 - c) To describe how the candy is made.
 - d) To emphasize the change in flavor.



Name: _____

Date: _____



Candy Slogan SHOWDOWN



Watch the video and play along! Record your answers below.

6 "Sometimes you feel like a nut, sometimes you don't" What does this slogan suggest?

- a) Candy lovers are crazy (nuts).
- b) People have different preferences at different times.
- c) Nuts are better than chocolate.
- d) Candy should be eaten daily.

7 "There's no wrong way to eat a Reese's" What is the purpose of this slogan?

- a) To persuade people they can enjoy it however they want.
- b) To explain how Reese's are made.
- c) To warn people about the danger of candy.
- d) To compare Reese's to other candy.

8 "Makes mouths happy" What type of language is being used here?

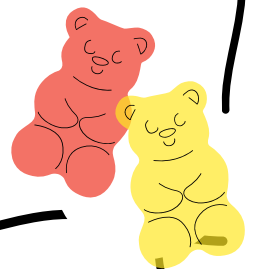
- a) Literal
- b) Scientific
- c) Figurative
- d) Historical

9 "Unwrap a smile" What does this slogan imply?

- a) The candy is hard to open.
- b) Eating the candy will make you feel happy.
- c) The wrapper is important.
- d) The candy is expensive.

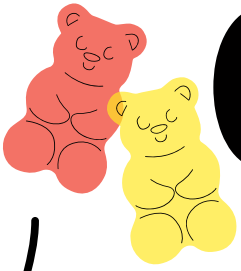
10 "Airheads have more fun" What is this slogan suggesting?

- a) Only certain people can eat this candy.
- b) Airheads are healthy.
- c) Eating Airheads makes life more fun.
- d) Candy is only for kids.



Name: _____

Date: _____



Candy Slogan SHOWDOWN



Watch the video and play along! Record your answers below.

11 "Gimme a break" What tone does this slogan use?

- a) Serious
- b) Confusing
- c) Angry
- d) Playful

12 "Unleash your senses" What does the word UNLEASH suggest?

- a) Holding back and not eating too many
- b) Letting go and enjoying the full experience
- c) Eating slowly and savoring the treat
- d) Ignoring your senses while eating

13 "Big on chocolate, not on fat" What is this slogan emphasizing?

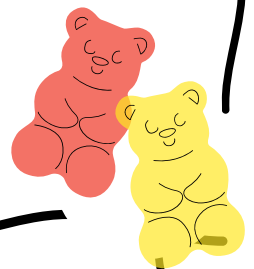
- a) The candy is large.
- b) The candy is healthier than expected.
- c) The candy is expensive.
- d) The candy had many flavors.

14 "Life's better the Milky Way" What is the claim being made in this slogan?

- a) This candy improves your life.
- b) Life is about outer space.
- c) Candy should be eaten daily.
- d) Milky Way is a planet.

How'd you do?
Are you a slogan superstar?

Score ___/15



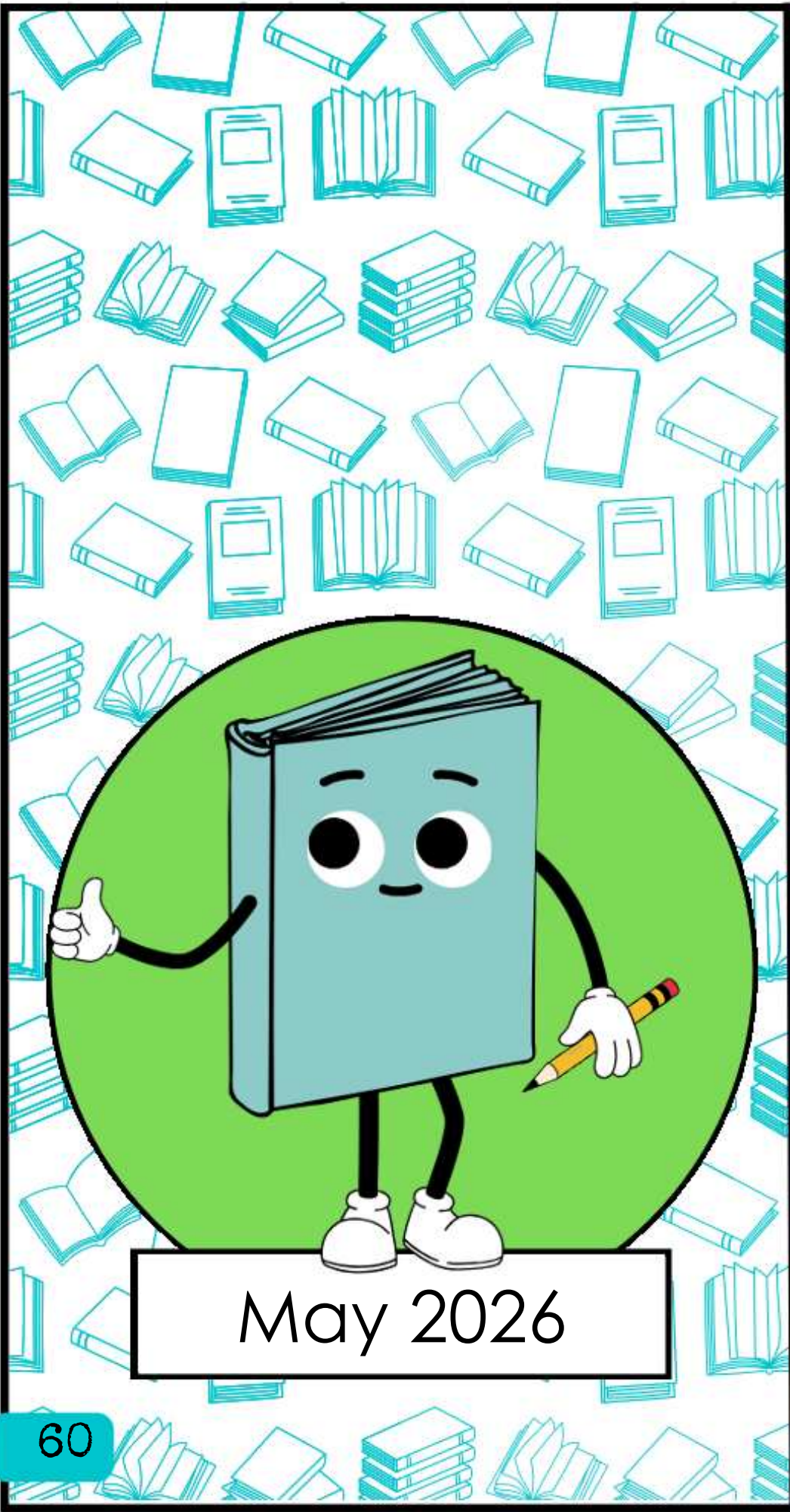
ANSWER KEY

1. **B - To make the candy sound more fun**
2. **C - The candy has many colorful flavors**
3. **C - The candy is messy**
4. **A - Hunger can change how you act**
5. **D - To emphasize the change in flavor**
6. **B - People have different preferences at different times**
7. **A - To persuade people they can enjoy it however they want**
8. **C - Figurative**
9. **B - Eating the candy will make you feel happy**
10. **C - Eating Airheads makes life more fun**
11. **D - Playful**
12. **B - Letting go and enjoying the full experience**
13. **B - The candy is healthier than expected**
14. **A - This candy improves your life**

Answers for #5 will vary. Feel free to use this rubric to evaluate student responses.

Task	0	1	2
Follows the prompt and stays on topic			
Uses correct grammar/capitalization/punctuation			
Thoughts are clearly presented and easy to follow			
Length is appropriate			
Format is correct (letter, fiction story, news article, diary entry, etc.)			

Total Points = ___/10



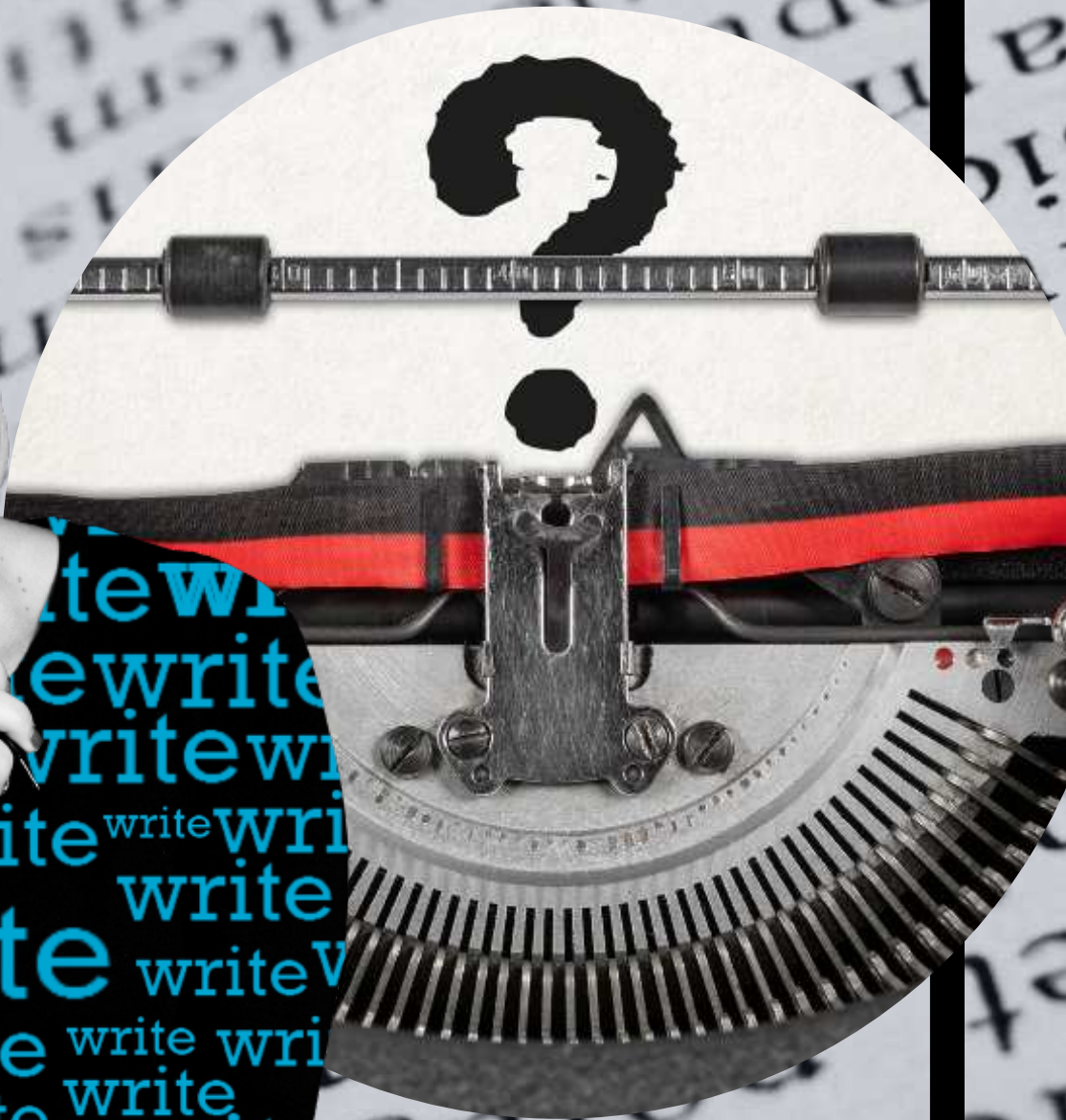
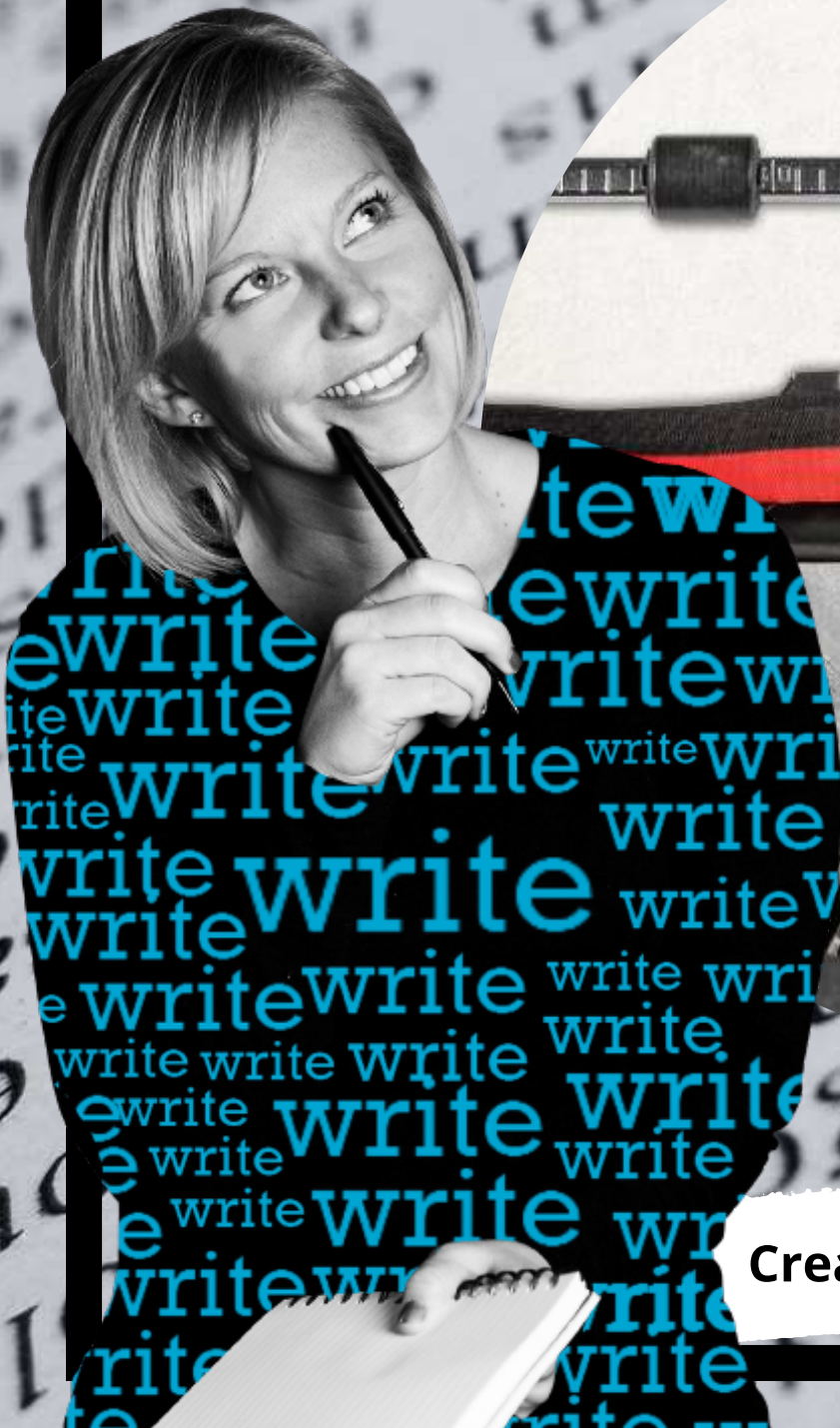
May 2026

WRITING PROMPTS



Mystery

Writing Prompts



Created by The Word Nerd

5

JOURNAL WRITING TIPS

- 1 Take a minute to think before you start writing. Review what makes a story a mystery. Print out [page 63](#) and give it to students so they can reference common mystery story components while they are writing.
- 2 Put your phone/chromebook/tablet away. Distractions can easily pull you out of the writing flow.
- 3 If you feel like you are stuck or have nothing else to say, but we still have writing time left, re-read what you have written. This might inspire more ideas. Or, you can go back and add in details to your response that you did not include the first time around.
- 4 You can always go back to the text/prompt/image for clues, reminders, ideas to add.
- 5 Before submitting your work, whisper read your work aloud to yourself. This will help you catch small, easy to fix errors.
- 6 Listen to an instrumental playlist to create a blanket of white noise that will help you focus on your task, rather than the distractions surrounding you. Try [this video!](https://youtu.be/aHVFkdZRC3g) (link: <https://youtu.be/aHVFkdZRC3g>)



MYSTERY

genre

The mystery genre is a type of fiction centered around solving a crime or puzzle, often involving a detective or amateur sleuth who uses clues, investigation, and deduction to uncover the truth. It typically features a suspenseful plot, a shocking crime, a crime solver, a villain, and a resolution to the mystery.



KEY COMPONENTS

- **A Puzzle to Solve:** Every mystery has a problem or question that needs solving—like a stolen item, a missing person, or a secret no one can figure out.
- **Clues and Red Herrings:** Writers drop hints (clues) to help readers solve the mystery—but they may also include red herrings, or tricky details meant to distract or mislead the reader or characters.
- **Rising Suspense:** Mystery stories are all about building tension! The stakes get higher, the clues pile up, and readers feel like they have to know what happens next.
- **A Smart (but Not Perfect) Sleuth:** The main character (a detective, investigator, or curious kid) uses their brain, instincts, and sometimes help from friends to figure things out—but they may make mistakes or hit dead ends too!
- **Suspects and Secrets:** There's usually a small group of characters with motives, secrets, or strange behavior. Readers must decide who's hiding something—and why.
- **A Twist or Big Reveal:** Mystery endings often have a surprise twist, like uncovering the real culprit or discovering an unexpected reason behind the mystery.
- **A Tight Timeline:** Mystery stories usually happen over a short amount of time—sometimes hours or days—so the action stays fast and focused.
- **One Clear Point of View:** Readers usually follow just one character (the sleuth!) so they can solve the case alongside them.



Use this rubric to first communicate your writing expectations to students and then to evaluate the writing products they create. Students and/or peers can also use this rubric to self/peer score/evaluate the pieces of writing.

The rubric can be found at the bottom of each prompt for easy access for both you and your students. There is also a page with 3 rubrics to print and cut for use with this or other writing tasks.

I assign 2 points if the task was completed and done well, 1 if the task was attempted but not mastered, and 0 if the task was not attempted at all.

Task	0	1	2
Follows the prompt and stays on topic			
Uses correct grammar/capitalization/punctuation			
Thoughts are clearly presented and easy to follow			
Length is appropriate			
Format is correct (letter, fiction story, news article, diary entry, etc.)			

Total Points = ___/10




MULTI-USE FORMS

The following pages will be used multiple times throughout the resources, but are included just once to save space in the file.

- Free Write Fridays
- Gem and Opportunity Feedback Sheets
- Writing Rubric Sheets



GEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES

My Name: _____
Name of classmate I am reviewing: _____
Date: _____

Title of Piece/Date Written: _____

 GEMS LIST SEVERAL THINGS THE WRITER DOES WELL.	 OPPORTUNITIES LIST OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE WRITER TO IMPROVE.
_____ _____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____

FINAL COMMENTS
WRITE ANY FINAL COMMENTS OR FEEDBACK HERE.

Task	0	1	2
Follows the prompt and stays on topic			
Uses correct grammar/capitalization/punctuation			
Thoughts are clearly presented and easy to follow			
Length is appropriate			
Format is correct (letter, fiction story, news article, diary entry, etc.)			

Total Points = ___/10



GEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES



My Name:

Name of classmate I am reviewing:

Date:

Title of Piece/Date Written



GEMS

LIST SEVERAL THINGS THE WRITERS DOES WELL

- .
- .
- .
- .
- .
- .
- .

OPPORTUNITIES



LIST OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE WRITER TO IMPROVE

- .
- .
- .
- .
- .
- .
- .

FINAL COMMENTS

WRITE ANY FINAL COMMENTS OR FEEDBACK HERE:

Task	0	1	2
Follows the prompt and stays on topic			
Uses correct grammar/capitalization/punctuation			
Thoughts are clearly presented and easy to follow			
Length is appropriate			
Format is correct (letter, fiction story, news article, diary entry, etc.)			

Total Points = ___/10

Comments:

Task	0	1	2
Follows the prompt and stays on topic			
Uses correct grammar/capitalization/punctuation			
Thoughts are clearly presented and easy to follow			
Length is appropriate			
Format is correct (letter, fiction story, news article, diary entry, etc.)			

Total Points = ___/10

Comments:

Task	0	1	2
Follows the prompt and stays on topic			
Uses correct grammar/capitalization/punctuation			
Thoughts are clearly presented and easy to follow			
Length is appropriate			
Format is correct (letter, fiction story, news article, diary entry, etc.)			

Total Points = ___/10

Comments:

WEEK 1 PROMPTS

Monday: Phony Phonebooth

Tuesday: Grandpa's Secret

Wednesday: A Mysterious Setting

Thursday: Atypical Typewriter

Friday: Free Write Friday



The prompts in this resource can be done in any order, but are organized into weekly collections.

 [Click here to access the SLIDES.](#) 

WEEK 2 PROMPTS

Monday: The Cookie Caper

Tuesday: Sunken Secrets

Wednesday: Crafty Characters

Thursday: Mission Moonlight

Friday: Free Write Friday





The prompts in this resource can be done in any order, but are organized into weekly collections.


 [Click here to access the SLIDES.](#) 


NAME: _____

WRITE A STORY THAT INCLUDES THESE KEY CHARACTERS

01  **YOU!**

02  **Mrs. Hanson** - Your neighbor who always seems to know everything!

03  **Claus the Cat** - Claus is always getting into mischief and this time he might have gone too far.

04  **Mr. Action** - An action figure that has spontaneously come to life and wants to be your sidekick.

▼ Rubric

Task	0	1	2
Follows the prompt and stays on topic			
Uses correct grammar/capitalization/punctuation			
Thoughts are clearly presented and easy to follow			
Length is appropriate			
Format is correct (letter, fiction story, news article, diary entry, etc.)			

Total Points = ___/10

Teacher Comments:

WEEK 3 PROMPTS

Monday: Crack the Code

Tuesday: Destination Details

Wednesday: A Search for the Truth

Thursday: Phantom Fairgrounds

Friday: Free Write Friday



The prompts in this resource can be done in any order, but are organized into weekly collections.

 [Click here to access the SLIDES.](#) 

NAME: _____

WRITING PROMPTS
FROM THE WORD NERD

CHOOSE A SETTING: WRITE A MYSTERY STORY...
AS YOU WRITE, WORK TO INCLUDE DESCRIPTIVE DETAILS



FROZEN WASTELAND



TROPICAL ISLAND



UNDISCOVERED CAVE

Handwriting practice lines consisting of 15 horizontal lines.

Rubric

Task	0	1	2
Follows the prompt and stays on topic			
Uses correct grammar/capitalization/punctuation			
Thoughts are clearly presented and easy to follow			
Length is appropriate			
Format is correct (letter, fiction story, news article, diary entry, etc.)			

Total Points = ___/10

Teacher Comments:

NAME: _____

Urban legend says the carnival coming to town is run by ghosts...

POV
Take the POV (perspective) of...

- Town Mayor
- Ghost Believer
- Ghost Non-Believer
- Carnival Owner



Rubric

Task	0	1	2
Follows the prompt and stays on topic			
Uses correct grammar/capitalization/punctuation			
Thoughts are clearly presented and easy to follow			
Length is appropriate			
Format is correct (letter, fiction story, news article, diary entry, etc.)			

Total Points = ___/10

Teacher Comments:

WEEK 4 PROMPTS

Monday: Series Screenwriter

Tuesday: I'm Gonna Take My Chances

Wednesday: Mystery at the Beach

Thursday: Skyscraper Secrets

Friday: Free Write Friday



The prompts in this resource can be done in any order, but are organized into weekly collections.

 [Click here to access the SLIDES.](#) 

NAME: _____

Mysterious Combo

Write a mystery story that creatively combines these two items...



[SALSA OR PASTA SAUCE]



HOW ARE THESE ITEMS CONNECTED? HOW DO THEY PLAY TOGETHER AND PLAY OUT IN YOUR MYSTERY?

▼ Rubric

Task	0	1	2
Follows the prompt and stays on topic			
Uses correct grammar/capitalization/punctuation			
Thoughts are clearly presented and easy to follow			
Length is appropriate			
Format is correct (letter, fiction story, news article, diary entry, etc.)			

Total Points = ___/10

Teacher Comments:

WEEK 5 PROMPTS

Monday: Townhall Tall Tales

Tuesday: Character Conundrum

Wednesday: Pick a Color, Any Color

Thursday: The Dastardly Dentist

Friday: Free Write Friday



The prompts in this resource can be done in any order, but are organized into weekly collections.

 [Click here to access the SLIDES.](#) 

NAME: _____

BREAKING NEWS: The dentist has a side business selling candy...

POV

Take the POV (perspective) of...

- Dentist
- Dental Office Secretary
- News Reporter
- Kid Patient

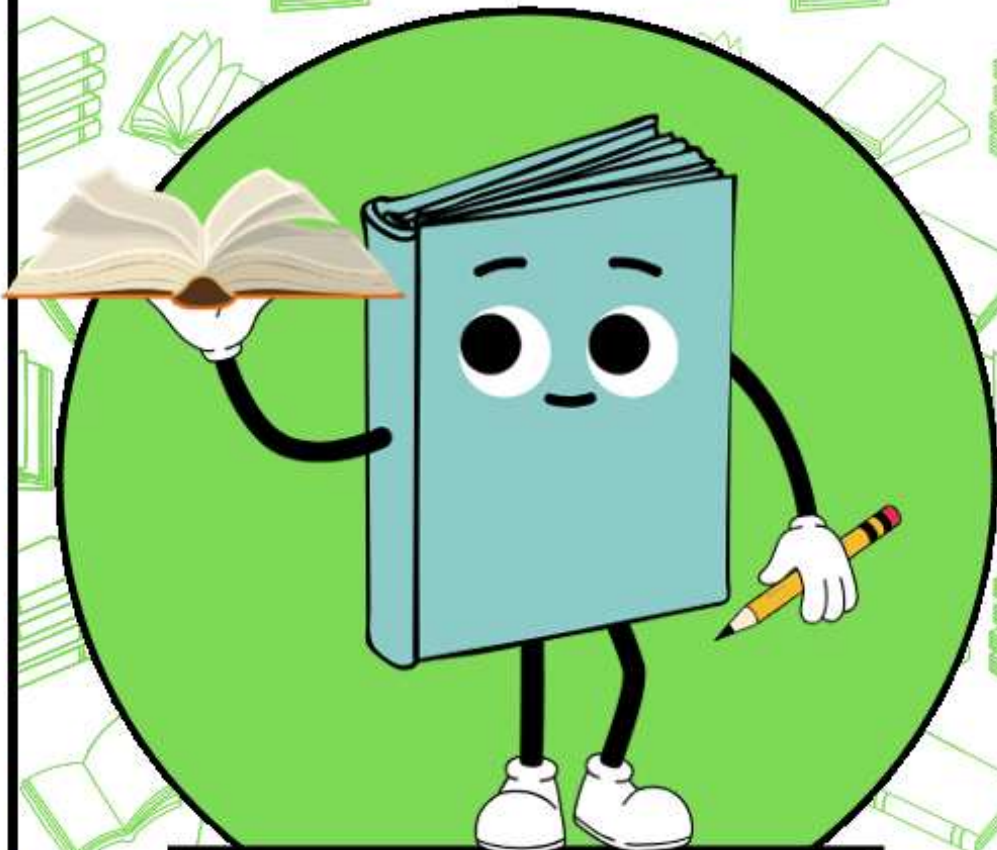
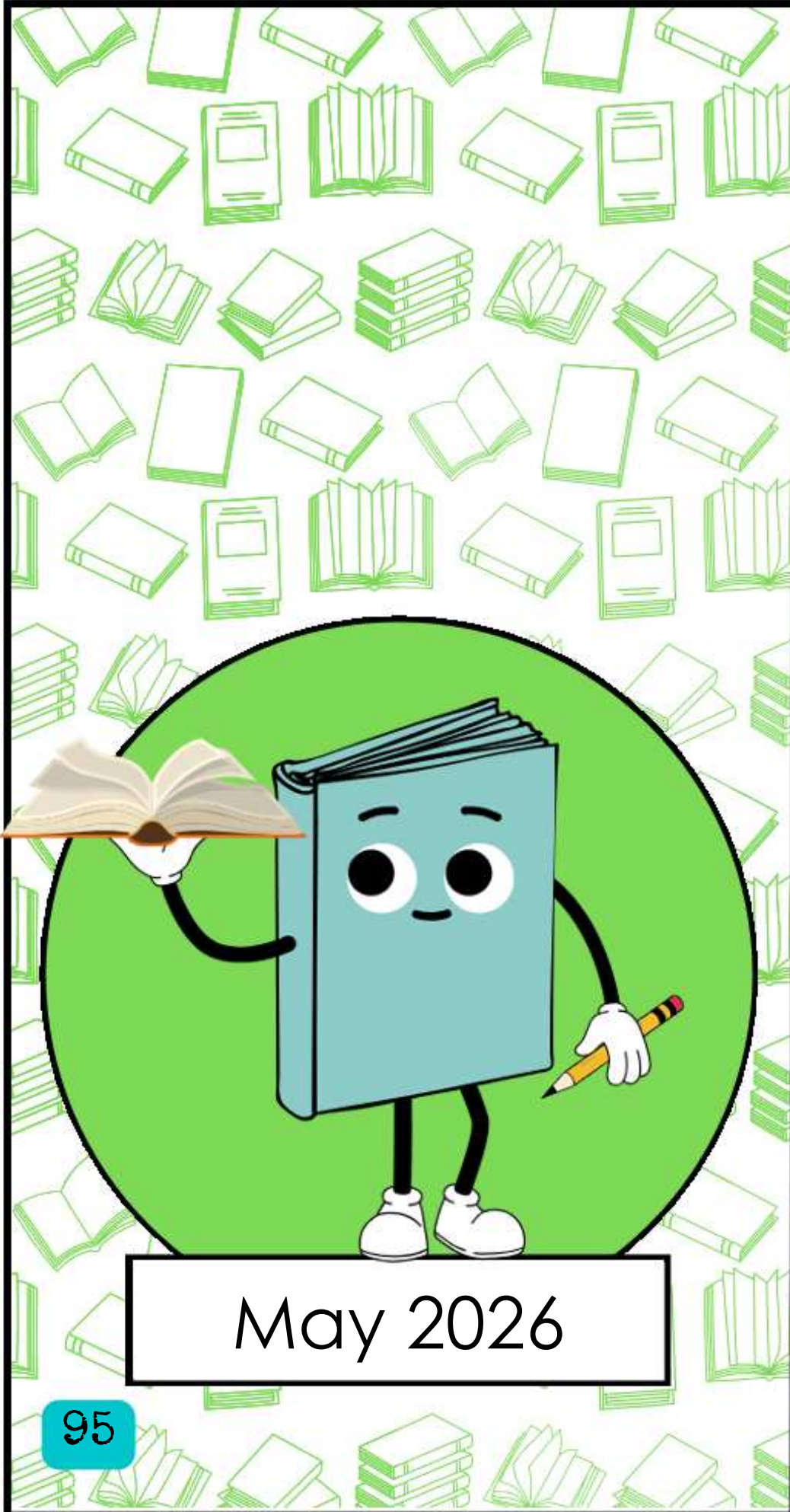


Rubric

Task	0	1	2
Follows the prompt and stays on topic			
Uses correct grammar/capitalization/punctuation			
Thoughts are clearly presented and easy to follow			
Length is appropriate			
Format is correct (letter, fiction story, news article, diary entry, etc.)			

Total Points = ___/10

Teacher Comments:



May 2026

LET'S MONS

The Bedrock of
TRUTH

BY AMANDA ZIEBA





The Bedrock of **TRUTH**

BY AMANDA ZIEBA

Hello Readers!

I invite you to join me on a literary adventure! This story includes a famous author, New York City, a cave, a newspaper article, four friends, clues, and an excellent plot twist. Follow along with your printed copy as I read the story aloud on YouTube!

With this short story and its accompanying resources, you'll be able to:

- Practice your annotation skills (instruction/printable included)
- Extend your vocabulary (slides included)
- Do some creative writing of your own (sheets + rubric included)

Related CCSS Standards

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.3

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

I hope you both enjoy the story and polish up your literacy skills.

Happy reading,

Amanda Zieba

Word Count: 4,006 words

ATOS Reading Level: 6.5

Great for instructional text!

*Psst!! These prompts contain
spoilers so avoid them until
you've read the story!*



The Bedrock of TRUTH

BY AMANDA ZIEBA

VOCABULARY

Preview the vocabulary words for each part of the story before you read. Ask students to make definition inferences using the context clues of the story sentences and images provided. Each vocab word is highlighted in the story text.



Access the vocab slideshow here:



Sample Slides

PART 1

1 acclaimed	6 facilitated
2 sabbatical	7 reveal
3 behemoth	8 eccentric
4 tomes	9 spelunking
5 prolific	10 adequate

THE BEDROCK OF TRUTH

PART 1

FAMOUS

ACCLAIMED

It had been six months since internationally acclaimed author Leo Rock disappeared.

THE BEDROCK OF TRUTH

PART 2

1 hokey	6 cryptic
2 consistent	7 shirking
3 acquired	8 recited
4 literary	9 sparse
5 narrow	10 corridor

THE BEDROCK OF TRUTH

PART 2

HOKEY

On the fourth Wednesday of every month, he and the other club members met at LaCaverna, an underground pub in the city. Although a little hokey, it felt right that they should meet there.

Hope TODAY
by Graham Green

DAD JOKES

THE BEDROCK OF TRUTH

PART 3

1 pupils	6 incredulous
2 dilated	7 anthologies
3 elderly	8 muses
4 sheepishly	9 rapt
5 improbable	10 fraud

THE BEDROCK OF TRUTH

PART 3

PUPILS

As her pupils dilated, her vision cleared and was drawn to the names etched on the ceiling and walls.

THE BEDROCK OF TRUTH



The Bedrock of **TRUTH**

BY AMANDA ZIEBA

VOCABULARY



Part 1 Vocabulary

- | | |
|-------------|---------------|
| 1 devoted | 6 facilitated |
| 2 acclaimed | 7 reveal |
| 3 behemoth | 8 eccentric |
| 4 tomes | 9 spelunking |
| 5 prolific | 10 adequate |

Access the vocab
slideshow here:



Part 2 Vocabulary

- | | |
|--------------|-------------|
| 1 hokey | 6 cryptic |
| 2 consistent | 7 shirking |
| 3 acquired | 8 recited |
| 4 literary | 9 sparse |
| 5 narrow | 10 corridor |

Part 3 Vocabulary

- | | |
|--------------|------------------|
| 1 pupils | 6 incredulous |
| 2 dilated | 7 anthologies |
| 3 elderly | 8 muses |
| 4 sheepishly | 9 fraud |
| 5 improbable | 10 commissioning |



The Bedrock of **TRUTH**

BY AMANDA ZIEBA

LEARN TO ANNOTATE!



Annotating is a fancy word that means taking what you are thinking about in your brain while you are reading and putting it down on the page. You don't want this to take too long and pull you out of the flow, so jot down these symbols or a quick note and then keep reading!

Annotation Symbols



Emojis - Note how do you feel while reading with an emoji. Also note, how does the character feel?



Hearts and Stars - mark your favorite or important parts with a heart or star, so you can easily find these sections again.



Exclamation points - if you find a part that shocks or surprises you, mark it with a !! Or a short phrase like WOW or HOLY COW!



Questions - when you have a question, write down a ?? or write out your full question.



Connections - note when you connect to the text or when it connects with another story or the real world

Underlining and circling important text/words are still more ways you can annotate.

Mark up the text so that when you come back to it, you can jog your memory to remember what you've already read without having to reread the entire text.

If you aren't thinking about anything while you are reading, that's your clue to STOP, go back and read again. Think of it like seeing the words play out like a movie in your brain. If you aren't seeing anything in your head, that's your sign to find a place free of distractions and try reading again.



The Bedrock of **TRUTH**

BY AMANDA ZIEBA

CREATIVE WRITING



Extend the story! Use these prompts to write your own adventure or mystery story! Be careful when you show/present these questions to students, because some contain spoilers.

Option #1 - Pretend Emerson and her friends are planning to meet up with Leona Rock one year later. They are supposed to deliver her a manuscript. What goes wrong? Does someone try to steal the manuscript? Do they face travel obstacles? Are they fighting about how to tell the story? Does Leona show up? You get to choose!

Option #2 - You are visiting a cave on a field trip or vacation. Write what happens while you are there. As you write, think about external conflicts (physical obstacles, weather outside the cave, etc.) and also internal conflicts (fear, distrust of your guide, etc.). Also, do your best to add in sensory details to heighten your character's emotions and your reader's reaction/response.

Option #3 - It is 20 years after Emerson met Leona in the cave. How have their lives progressed and changed? What are they doing now? Are they friends? Rivals/Competitors? Writing together? Are they famous?

Option #4 - Write a story that includes your own set of clues. Where will the clues lead? What will the item found mean to those who are looking for it? Think: is your story set in the past, present or future? How will the time period affect the delivery method of the clues?



The Bedrock of TRUTH

BY AMANDA ZIEBA

NAME: _____

CREATIVE WRITING PROMPT #1



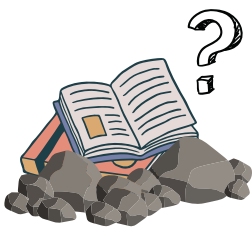
Pretend Emerson and her friends are planning to meet up with Leona Rock one year later. They are supposed to deliver her a manuscript. What goes wrong? Does someone try to steal the manuscript? Do they face travel obstacles? Are they fighting about how to tell the story? Does Leona show up? You get to choose!

▼ Rubric

Task	0	1	2
Follows the prompt and stays on topic			
Uses correct grammar/capitalization/punctuation			
Thoughts are clearly presented and easy to follow			
Length is appropriate			
Format is correct (letter, fiction story, news article, diary entry, etc.)			

Total Points = ___/10

Teacher Comments:



The Bedrock of
TRUTH

BY AMANDA ZIEBA

NAME: _____

CREATIVE WRITING PROMPT #2



You are visiting a cave on a field trip or vacation. Write what happens while you are there. As you write, think about external conflicts (physical obstacles, weather outside the cave, etc.) and also internal conflicts (fear, distrust of your guide, etc.). Also, do your best to add in sensory details to heighten your character's emotions and your reader's reaction/response.

▼ Rubric

Task	0	1	2
Follows the prompt and stays on topic			
Uses correct grammar/capitalization/punctuation			
Thoughts are clearly presented and easy to follow			
Length is appropriate			
Format is correct (letter, fiction story, news article, diary entry, etc.)			

Total Points = ___/10

Teacher Comments:



The Bedrock of TRUTH

BY AMANDA ZIEBA

NAME: _____

CREATIVE WRITING PROMPT #4



Write a story that includes your own set of clues. Where will the clues lead? What will the item found mean to those who are looking for it? Think: is your story set in the past, present or future? How will the time period affect the delivery method of the clues?

▼ Rubric

Task	0	1	2
Follows the prompt and stays on topic			
Uses correct grammar/capitalization/punctuation			
Thoughts are clearly presented and easy to follow			
Length is appropriate			
Format is correct (letter, fiction story, news article, diary entry, etc.)			

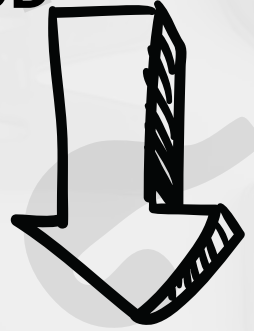
Total Points = ___/10

Teacher Comments:

LISTEN TO THE STORY READ ALOUD



The Bedrock of TRUTH



BY AMANDA ZIEBA





Room for
Annotations



The Bedrock of **TRUTH**

BY AMANDA ZIEBA

Listen Along!



Part 1

Emerson was the ultimate Leo Rock fan. No, more than a fan, she was a Leo scholar. A Leologist, she liked to call herself. No teeny-bopper fangirling or jersey chasing for her. Emerson was a hardcore, lifelong and incurable literary admirer of fiction author extraordinaire, Leo Rock.

Not only was she a member of several online fan forums and an attendee of the yearly convention devoted to all things Leo Rock, she had also won multiple Leo-Trivia competitions, both online and in person. Emerson was the first in line at Barnes and Noble each and every time a new book was released, even though history had taught her the author never showed up for signing appearances. She'd filled an entire moleskin notebook with her favorite Leo quotations and even had t-shirts made - in multiple colors. She wore them almost every day and when she'd walk the city streets, the white font was always visible. Keep Calm and Leo On. She, not-so-secretly, hoped that one day, Leo would see her and say hello. Because she'd been so loyal. Because she loved his stories so much. But he never did.

It had been six months since internationally **acclaimed** author Leo Rock disappeared. Died? Maybe? No one was really sure. To be fair, he was never all that visible to begin with. In a letter to the editor in The New York Times, the best-selling and award-winning author announced that he was taking an indefinite break, a career-ending **sabbatical**, a permanent vacation. He vowed he wasn't going to write another book. Ever. However, like everything else he'd ever written, there was more, a deeper layer, discoverable, if you were willing to look a little harder.

And where Leo Rock was concerned, Emerson was always willing. Her father, a poetry professor, had introduced her to the writings of Leo Rock when she was just six. The wandering fantasy tales wallpapered her imagination. The sound of her father's voice reading Leo's words filled her ears, her bedroom, her childhood. When she was old enough to tackle the **behemoth tomes** on her own, she read everything. And that's saying something.



The Bedrock of **TRUTH**



In his letter to the editor, Leo left hints. One final manuscript remained. If someone were to pull out the clues and follow them, the manuscript could be theirs. One last story from their favorite author. Why the world would need this final story when he had given them so many already, seemed almost baffling. But for his devoted fans, having one last bit of magic seemed not only fathomable, but desperately important.

In a follow up article, a Times staffer wrote that “his letter was the latest episode in a saga of mysteries surrounding the **prolific** author.” Because as spellbinding as his stories were, the fact that he wrote them entirely unseen was likened to modern day sorcery. Leo Rock had never given a face-to-face interview, nor answered questions over the phone. He had never done a public reading or **facilitated** a workshop. His picture never appeared in Time Magazine’s Most Influential People of the Year, although his name was on the list several times.

He once wrote a short story for The New Yorker in Times Square. He posted pictures online of his notebook and pen, amidst the crowds on the street, surrounded by neon signs and taxis. These pictures accompanied the article. But no one had ever claimed to see him. EVER. His publisher littered the internet with photos of his workspace and pages of his works in progress. He wrote everywhere. At his apartment, on airplanes, standing in line for coffee. But never, in any of these photos, did the master author **reveal** himself.

His fans would try to chase him, track him down, catch a glimpse of the genius at work. They’d hang out in his favorite haunts, try to spot a mysterious figure scribbling in Central Park or in a nameless coffee shop. They’d hang out on Avenue of the Americas, where all the major publishers had offices, but they were never successful in finding their adored writer. To be honest, it wasn’t a fair game of hide and seek. They had no idea what they were looking for in the first place.

He was everywhere and nowhere all at once.

Leo Rock’s lack of public appearance did nothing to discourage his fans. If anything, the odd and **eccentric** set of circumstances seemed to propel Leo’s fame even further. Some critics claimed his elusive behavior was purely a publicity stunt, while others speculated that his work was really a collection of several authors all writing together. These theories were debated and torn apart and reconstructed in publishing forums, academic circles, and pop culture gossip magazines. Even his publisher claimed to have never met him in person.



The Bedrock of **TRUTH**



The fans didn't care and continued to buy his books by the million. None of it mattered as long as he continued to produce their beloved tales. Because the fans didn't care, his publisher didn't care, and everyone carried on reading and discussing and loving the work of Leo Rock.

At some point, Emerson couldn't remember when exactly, but probably around middle school, when kids were mean, and bodies were weird, and everyone should really just be alone until all the hormones balanced out, Emerson picked up a pen. At first it was easy to see where Leo's stories stopped and hers began. Eventually, however, her skills and craft, long influenced by the master, dramatically improved. Emerson took Leo's characters on new adventures in new worlds, but eventually left them entirely behind as she created people and universes all her own. Leo's influence was always there, in inspiration at the very least, but by the time Emerson got to college, she was a darn fine writer all on her own.

This made her want to find Leo even more, to thank the author, face to face, for giving her the gift of story. When she read her idol's mysterious letter in *The Times*, she knew her chance had finally come.

At first Emerson's journey had mostly required mental sweat. As a graduate student at NYU, it wasn't a situation that was unfamiliar or uncomfortable. In addition to screenshotting the digital version of the article in *The Times* online, she bought multiple copies of the actual newspaper, carefully clipping the letter and keeping each copy in strategic places. One she kept glued in the notebook she carried everywhere, as a good creative writing student was bound to do. A second, she laminated and slid between the pages of her favorite book, obviously written by Leo, and a third was stored in the back of her teeny tiny New York City loft apartment closet, in a fire-proof safe. None of her extra efforts were necessary though, because her Ivy League brain managed to memorize the piece within a week of its publication.

But memorizing it had turned out to be the easy part. It took months to pull out, assemble, and organize the clues... which she was pretty sure were leading her to a cave. It took her even longer to be feel comfortable spelunking, especially since New York City was a little short on adequate landscape in which she could practice. There were several caves in upstate New York, but like a real New Yorker, Emerson didn't own a car. This small detail turned out to be a good thing because it led her to Garrett.

END OF PART 1



Room for
Annotations



The Bedrock of **TRUTH**

BY AMANDA ZIEBA

Listen Along!



Part 2

Garrett was the leader of the local caving club. On the fourth Wednesday of every month, he and the other club members met at La Caverna, an underground pub in the city. Although a little **hokey**, it felt right that they should meet there. It took Emerson three months' worth of meetings before she figured out Garrett was also a Leo Rock fan, and another six before she was willing to trust him with her clues.

"Of course, Leo would hide his final manuscript in a cave," Emerson said when she finally revealed to Garrett her real reason for joining his club. "His last name is Rock after all."

"Is," Garret said. "Not was? You think he's still alive?"

"It might be more of a desperate hope than a scientific belief."

"It also doesn't take a literary genius to see the **consistent** use of stone metaphors buried in his volume of work," Garret continued. Emerson blushed. "Ah, shoot," Garrett muttered. "Creative writing major?"

"Ah, creative writing graduate student actually," Emerson said and shrugged. "And it's alright. His most famous series uses the entrance of a cave as a portal to a parallel universe. You're right. It wouldn't take a genius of any brand to figure it out."

"But you know more than just the first clue," Garrett said, leading her further into the conversation.

Emerson nodded. Garrett ordered another round and although they were the only two who remained at the meeting, or maybe because they were the only two who remained, they carried on. The hints from the letter and the facts **acquired** through their lives of disciplined study piled up like boulders of truth, one after the other, tall enough to clearly mark the way.

Emerson would have gone on the quest to find Leo alone, but the author insisted that the adventure include other **literary** souls.



The Bedrock of **TRUTH**



Stories, after all, were meant to be shared. And with his clues, author Leo Rock assured that this particular story would not be a solo affair.

The road ahead maybe dark and
narrow, but you have nothing to fear.

As long as you bring your friends, you'll
be able to keep your head clear.

Four. Four friends. They needed two more adventurers. Garrett introduced Emerson to another fan, Ethan, a buddy he met in the dorms freshman year and also a rare geology and communications double major. When the three of them teamed up to write a cryptic piece of their own that was published in, The Washington Square Review, the NYU Graduate and Faculty Journal, Claudia followed their clues and found them one Wednesday, seated around the table at La Caverna.

They'd likely have never met in person had it not been for the clues or the quest, but once they found each other, it felt like they'd be together forever. Perhaps they already had been, only now, instead of occupying space in a shared fictional world, they were finally together, in the flesh.

On the three Wednesdays a month they weren't meeting with the caving club, the group, who all now lovingly adopted Emerson's self-declared title of Leologist, met to prepare for the ultimate quest. A quest that would take them to the largest cave in the United States, and hopefully, to a treasure worth more to them than their combined weight in gold.

But first, they had to graduate.

Emerson had barely made it across the stage and flipped her tassel before she was shirking out of dinner celebrations with her parents to jump in Garret's car and officially begin their quest. Fourteen hours and three pit stops later, they arrived, sleep deprived, but full of over-confident adrenaline and caffeine.



The Bedrock of **TRUTH**



When Emerson stepped up to the cave's entrance, she felt a cool blast of air brush over her bare arms. Goosebumps rose on her skin and she wasn't sure to blame the breeze or the endorphins coursing through her veins. She had known the cave would be cool, sixty degrees year-round the brochure boasted, but she couldn't imagine wearing anything other than her Keep Calm and Leo On shirt. She'd picked her favorite one, in green. Leo's favorite color. The color of all his book covers.

As she walked, she **recited** one of the clues.

*The bedrock of truth lies beneath the
reality you believe in.*

*New surprises await you, and my real
story will finally begin.*

Down and down they walked. After an hour of descent, the tourists had long since dropped out, and a half hour later even the serious spelunkers were getting **sparse**. Thanks to their training, and emboldened with the purpose of a noble quest, they felt confident despite the crushing darkness that surrounded them. When the path finally ended, Emerson stood face to face with a sheer rock wall. She ran her hands over its pockmarked surface searching for an opening. But there was nothing. They had reached a dead end.

"Now what?" Ethan asked.

Claudia began to dig in her pack, reaching for what Emerson already had memorized.

*When all seems lost look not to the sky,
but to the ground.
The way forward is there and what was lost
will soon be found.*



The Bedrock of **TRUTH**



Emerson bent down and let her hands explore the bottom of the wall, reading the surface with her fingertips like a blind man reads braille. And there, just as the clue instructed, was the thinnest of **corridors**, a crevice just big enough for a human to pass through. Emerson peered into the sliver of space that remained open between the floor of the cave and the wall that stretched upward.

“I’m going in,” Emerson announced. The others nodded silently.

“We’ll follow you once you are through,” Garrett said.

Emerson took a deep breath and nodded. “Sounds good. Stay calm,”

“And Leo on,” Garrett and the others completed.

Emerson slid forward on her belly. Pebbles and gravel pressed against her stomach, her thin t-shirt doing nothing to protect her from their sharp edges. She tried not to think about the crushing weight of rock surrounding her body and instead focused on the intensity of the light from her head lamp, waiting for it to diminish once it broke through into the next room.

The passage was long. Longer than any she and her friends had explored before. The darkness and fear and sound of the stone floor grating against her bare arms and toes of her boots almost convinced her to turn back. Maybe this whole thing, as real as she wanted it to be, was just a fairy tale she had written in her own mind. Maybe she had convinced the others to follow her on an imaginary quest. Maybe her hero worship and obsession had crossed the line to addiction.

Emerson’s heart suddenly felt like it would shatter her rib cage in its attempt to break free from this small and dark space. Simultaneously grieving and attempting to escape. Her heart needed... she didn’t know what it needed... except maybe some more space.

The thought of turning around and going all the way back was unbearable. Forward was the only solution, but she had to do it fast, or at least, faster. Emerson pulled with her arms and pushed with her toes, ignoring both the painful beating of her heart and the slices of skin she was surely removing from her cheeks and forearms. Faster and fast until finally she was through, until she was free.

When she made it to the other side, she saw she wasn’t alone.

END OF PART 2



Room for
Annotations



The Bedrock of **TRUTH**

BY AMANDA ZIEBA

Listen Along!



Part 3

In the middle of a giant cavern there was a desk, lit by a battery powered lantern. An old school typewriter also sat on the desk, and beneath it a pile of tin lunch boxes. Emerson could see the metallic red of Wonder Woman's W's glinting in the lantern light. But more importantly, hunched over the desk, was a figure, who was writing.

Emerson's heart, which hadn't yet resumed normal functioning, stopped all together.

She looked up and blinked rapidly, forcing her eyes to adjust. As her pupils dilated, her vision cleared and was drawn to the names etched on the ceiling and walls. The names of explorers past, others who had successfully made the trek and felt the need to leave their mark as proof. The last line of clues flooded her mind.

*I'll be where words surround me, for
with words I feel at home.*

*But do not leave me there forever, I've
decided it's time for my words to roam.*

"Leo!" Emerson suddenly shouted. Her voice echoed in the confined space. She jolted forward but was immediately jerked back by the ropes still attached to her companions on the other side of the rock wall. She fumbled to disconnect her carabiner, her nerves and thoughts all tumbling together in the dark. "You guys!" she shouted back the way she had come. "Leo's here. We did it! He's really here."

When she turned around, she saw that the person at the desk was standing. For a second, she thought that the shadows of the room were playing tricks on her. Because instead of seeing an elderly man with a wise beard (how could Leo Rock not have a beard? Emerson had often asked herself as she wandered New York looking for him), a woman stood at the desk.



The Bedrock of **TRUTH**



Emerson stared at her as they walked towards one another. She took in the woman's smart glasses and the long hair streaked with gray that poked out from an adventurer's helmet adorned with a head lamp. The woman smiled **sheepishly** and removed the helmet before jutting out her hand.

"Hello, I'm Leona Rock. It's nice to meet you."

Emerson let out all the breath in her lungs. Her head spun. Her world was turned upside down. "Hi," Emerson said. She reached out a shaking hand and numbly rested it in the hand of her hero. "I'm Emerson."

"You know," Leona said with a smile. "It seems **improbable**, but I was hoping it would be you."

"Me?" Emerson managed. "How- why? I mean, we've never met!"

"Not directly no, but I saw you all the time. In the city, in the park, in my favorite coffee shop. In fact, your shirt," Leona pointed. "Gave me some much-needed motivation and inspiration on some of my lowest days."

"You? Need motivation?" A tiny, **incredulous** laugh escaped Emerson's lips.

"You are like the most amazing writer ever!" To her own ears Emerson's praise sounded basic, elementary. Just how do you communicate a lifetime worth of gratitude in a single sentence?

Leona nodded. "For me, the words are always there, but some days I needed a reminder, some reassurance, to continue in the lifestyle I had chosen. Here, pull up a rock. Let me tell you." Leona gestured to the others, who had now made their way past the limestone wall, to join them. Just like children at a library, the four Leologists circled at her feet.

Leona took a breath and hesitated for only a second before plunging in.

"When I was just starting out, no one wanted my stories. Not journals, or contests or **anthologies**. Not publishers or agents or even my hometown newspaper. No one. The rejections built up and were threatening to crush me. But I only knew how to be a writer. I only wanted to be a writer. I just had to find a way. A new way. I stopped submitting for a while but kept writing. I worked hard on my craft, studied masterpieces by my favorite authors and kept writing. Writing, writing, writing. So much writing.



The Bedrock of **TRUTH**



“One day I wrote this amazing story. It came out in a flood, a gush of words, and they were great. I loved them. It was one of the only times I didn’t need to seriously edit my work. A true gift of the **muses**. In a rush, I sent it out to a fantasy literary journal. I made a rookie mistake that would forever change my life.”

The Leologists sat in **rapt** attention. Leona continued, “I forgot to include my name. All the editor had was my email. LeoRock[at]gmail[.]com. When he replied to say he was printing it, I was so excited I overlooked the byline. The story printed under the name Leo Rock. It went on to win an award. When it came time to submit another story, I decided to use the name Leo. And they took it, and the next one and the next. At first, I turned down interviews and in person meetings and photo shoots because I was afraid they’d think I was a **fraud**. They wouldn’t believe that a twenty something girl had written these deep and twisting fantasy stories they loved so much. What does a fresh college grad really know about truth and identity and fear, right?” She looked at them meaningfully, estimating that anyone who made it this far into the quest had likely been powered by brains and the burn of past underestimation. “Age, just like race and gender and stature, shouldn’t disqualify the stories anyone has to tell.”

Leona paused and looked around the cave, casting for how to begin the next chapter. “And then, I just liked being left alone, to create the worlds I wanted to live in, instead of playing a part in theirs. Your shirt,” she said, gesturing to Emerson. “Let me know that my unconventional choice was okay. That I was just being me. And that being me, was a fine thing to be. But I’m done with that now. I’ve been writing stories for twenty-five years. And I plan to be writing them for twenty-five more. But I’ve decided that I want to be a part of the real world too.” Leona reached down to grab one of the lunch boxes at her feet. She handed it to Emerson. “Inside these lunch boxes you’ll find my journals. They go back to when I was very young, six, maybe seven years old, and travel forward, all the way up until this morning. Also included are plenty of artifacts to prove the undeniable, albeit implausible, truth. They are my story. The final story in the life of Leo Rock. And I’d like you to tell it.”

Emerson looked at her, confused.

“I’m commissioning you, all of you,” Leona explained. “To write my biography. Work together; support one another. I’m sure you all have your own set of talents that will contribute to the final product.” Here she paused and Emerson could see through her tears that Leona was holding back her own. “Stories are so much better with friends.”



The Bedrock of **TRUTH**



The small band of fans waited while Leona added one more journal entry, detailing their meeting and the task of chronicling her life. They took a quick group picture with their hero and promised to meet Leona with a finished manuscript in Times Square one year from today.

“Where are you going? What will you be doing?” Emerson asked her. It came out as more of an accusation than she meant it to. Now that she'd finally found her, she wasn't ready to leave Leona Rock.

“Don't worry,” Leona said. “My days of hiding are over. I'll be in touch.”

They said goodbye, ferried the lunchboxes through the slim opening in the wall back to the rest of the cave, and then loaded their packs with their treasure trove. As Garrett, Ethan and Claudia began walking back toward the surface Emerson slid back through the opening one more time. “Is everything okay?” Leona asked.

Emmerson nodded. “I just didn't get a chance to do what I've always wanted to do.”

“What's that?” Leona asked.

“To say thank you. I don't know who I would be without your words. I know that sounds dramatic, I'm sorry.” Emerson blushed, suddenly self-conscious. “I'd just hate it if you never knew that. For me, yeah, but for so, so many other people too.”

Leona enveloped her in a hug and then pulled back to look her in the eyes.

“I didn't think I needed that,” Leona said. “I've told myself for so long that I didn't. But I guess the truth is, I did. Thank you. It was my pleasure.”

The women hugged each other once more and then Emerson left to catch up with the others.

An hour later Emerson and her friends climbed out of the cave completely covered in dirt. The daylight had faded, but their eyes were alight in a way even the sun couldn't rival.

They had a story to tell.

The End... for now.

END OF YEAR

Reading Recap Reflection

WRITTEN AND VIDEO INSTRUCTIONS INCLUDED!

TEMPLATES AND EXAMPLES INCLUDED!

my Reading Bag

Let's celebrate all the reading we did this year by filling our reading bag with books that remind of us where we've been on our reading journey!

Step 1

- Find a bag that exemplifies your personality!

Step 2

- Fill it with books, using the list below.

Book

- Fr
- B
- A
- 7

Reflection

Name: _____ GRADE/YEAR: _____

I AM PROUD THAT I _____

WHAT IS ONE THING YOU ARE PROUD OF THIS YEAR WHEN IT COMES TO READING?

favorite BOOK _____ favorite AUTHOR _____

Looking Ahead

IN THIS BOX, SET A READING GOAL THAT YOU HAVE FOR THE FUTURE AND ALSO ONE BOOK YOU'D LOVE TO READ THIS SUMMER.

favorite character _____

favorite series _____

favorite TV show _____

BOOKS I WANT TO READ _____



Example/Sample NAME: Amanca Zieba

I AM PROUD THAT I CONTINUED TO POST ON MY CHALLENGE WEEKLY!

NEW FAVORITE AUTHOR: KATHERINE MARSH

READING GOAL: TO READ 30 BOOKS THIS YEAR (I GOT MORE THAN I EVER MADE SCORES!)

MY FAVORITE FORMAT IS NOVEL IN VERSE.

BEST BOOK I READ THIS YEAR: THE GATHERING

THE HIGHLIGHTS BOOK I READ THIS YEAR WAS THE HUNTING PARTNER

THE HIGHLIGHTS BOOK I READ THIS YEAR WAS THE HUNTING PARTNER

THE HIGHLIGHTS BOOK I READ THIS YEAR WAS THE HUNTING PARTNER

THE HIGHLIGHTS BOOK I READ THIS YEAR WAS THE HUNTING PARTNER



PERFECT FOR FINAL WEEKS OF SCHOOL!

END OF YEAR

Reading Recap Reflection

DEAR TEACHER FRIEND,

I hope that you and your students have had an amazing year. I hope that together you have discovered new authors and series, fallen in love with characters and book formats, explored new genres and devoured countless pages filled with wonder, adventure, triumph and fun. I hope that you have grown, gained empathy, and achieved great things. Books are truly magical and I hope they have enhanced your classroom and school year. If you've brought me along on your reading journey, thank you! I'm grateful to have been a part of it! **NOW - IT'S TIME TO CELEBRATE ALL OF THAT READING GOODNESS!!**

You can use this resource to help students ...

- Reflect on their past year of reading
- Identify favorites
- Recognize achievements
- Make plans to continue reading in the future

I've included a variety of ways to implement the concept of a reading recap/reflection. Browse the options and then pick the one that you think will work best for you and your students.

In this resource you will find:

- Reading Recap Reflection 1 Pager
- Reading Bag Directions (written and video versions)
- Slides for Introducing Project and Sharing Completed Reading Bags
- Reading Bag Printable and Example

No matter how you use them, I hope you take time to celebrate the reading wins and growth you've achieved this year.

Happy teaching and happy reading!

- Amanda Zieba

(AKA: The Word Nerd)

P.S. Click **this link** and the, FILE MAKE A COPY to adjust any of the templates in this resource pack, and/or give access to your students so they can use the templates included to make an online version of their reading recap.

(Link: https://www.canva.com/design/DAGFHhkq3Zc/x-R_bv8EiHDRV3lW54LEkg/edit?utm_content=DAGFHhkq3Zc&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton)



END OF YEAR

Reading Recap Reflection

Want a little **DIRECTION**?

Watch [this video](#) to learn how to implement this lesson!



If you prefer a written description in lieu of a video, visit the previous page in this document.

As always, if you have any questions, just email me at wordnerd@amandazieba.com.

All my best teacher friend,
Amanda Zieba

Use these slides to introduce the project!



1



2



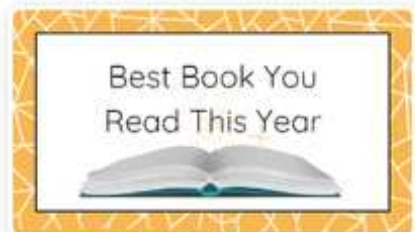
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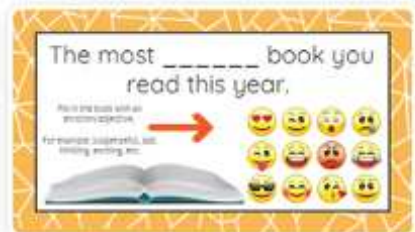
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7



8



9



10



11



12



13



14



15

Use these slides to share when the reading bags are complete.

Teachers, you can add your books to the slides so you can share your answers too! There are two sets of share slides, ones with the teacher share and ones without... so you can decide how you want to do it. :) You can also just fill your own reading bag with physical books. It's up to you!



25



26



27



28



29



30



31



32



33



34



35



36



37



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39



40



41



42



43

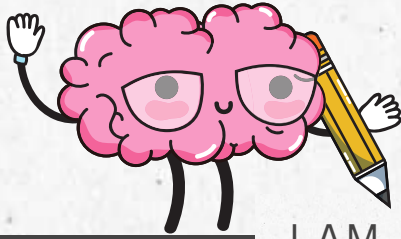


44

Reflection

Name: _____

GRADE/YEAR: ____



ON MY YEAR OF *Reading*

I AM *proud* THAT I ...

WHAT IS ONE THING YOU ARE PROUD OF THIS YEAR WHEN IT COMES TO READING?

Favorite BOOK

Favorite AUTHOR

Looking Ahead...
IN THIS BOX, WRITE A READING GOAL THAT YOU HAVE FOR THE FUTURE.

FAVORITE *Character*

Favorite SETTING

FAVORITE *genre or format*

BOOK I WANT to *read this summer*



My Reading Bag

Let's celebrate all the reading we did this year by filling our reading bag with books that remind of us where we've been on our reading journey!

Step 1

- Find a bag that exemplifies your personality and represents YOU!

Step 2

- Fill it with books, using the list below.

Book List

- Favorite book from childhood
- Best book you read this year
- A book featuring your favorite character
- A book featuring a very cool setting
- The most _____ book you read this year.
 - (Fill in the book with an emotion/adjective, for example: suspenseful, sad, thrilling, exciting, etc.)
- A favorite author
- A reading achievement you are proud of
- A reading goal for the future
- A book you want to read this summer

If you don't have access to the actual books on your list, get creative! You can draw the cover, write the title on a notecard, cut out cover images from book order forms, or print a picture from online. The most important part is that you are thinking about and celebrating what you have read and how you have grown as a reader! :)

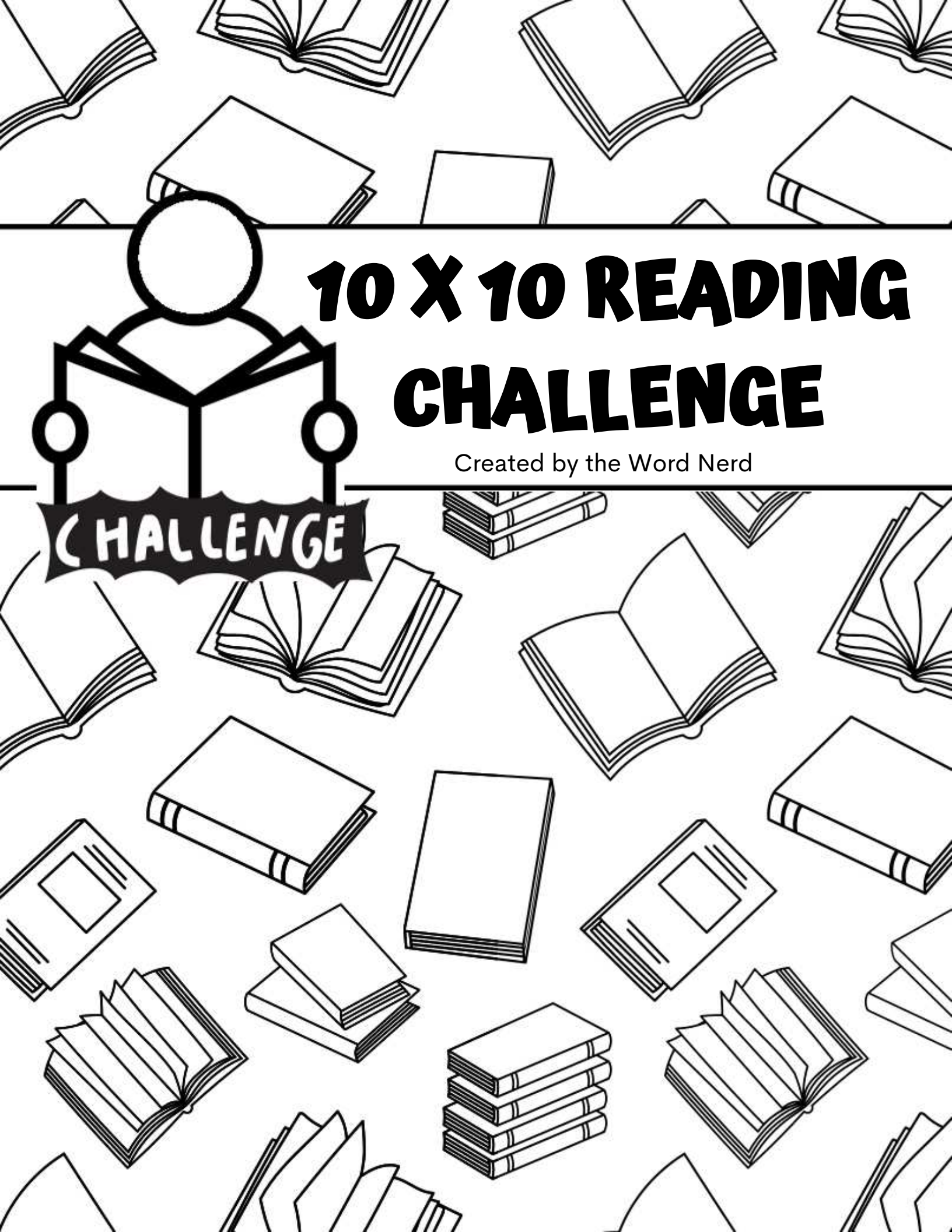


My Reading Bag

Book List

- Favorite book from childhood
- Best book you read this year
- A book featuring your favorite character
- A book featuring a very cool setting
- The most _____ book you read this year.
(Fill in the book with an emotion/adjective, for example: suspenseful, sad, thrilling, exciting, etc.)
- A favorite author
- A reading achievement you are proud of
- A reading goal for the future
- A book you want to read this summer

Favorite Childhood Book	Best book I read this year	Favorite Character
Coollest Setting	Most _____ book I read this year	Favorite Author
Reading Achievement	Reading Goal	A book I want to read



10 X 10 READING CHALLENGE

Created by the Word Nerd





10 x 10 Reading Challenge

Teachers, here are some additional considerations for this challenge.

Possible Listeners

- Family/Home: parents, siblings, extended family via phone or zoom, babysitter/nanny, family friend
- School: teachers, classmate/friend, librarian, principal, secretary, cafeteria worker, teacher's aide, student teacher, custodian, counselor, nurse, bus driver, therapy dog
- Community Members: neighbor, coach, public librarian, seniors at nursing home, high school mentor, religious leader (pastor/priest/rabbi),
- Creative Options: a pet, stuffed animal, self (recorded), Siri/Alexa

Reflection Questions

- Who did you feel most comfortable reading to and why?
- Who do you think enjoyed listening to you the most?
- Would you rather read aloud or silently?
- Would you rather read by yourself or someone else?
- How did having a "challenge" impact your motivation/desire to read?
- What surprised you during this experience—about yourself or your listeners?
- Which book or passage did you enjoy reading the most, and why?
- How did your confidence change from the first read-aloud to the last?
- What feedback (verbal or nonverbal) did you notice from your listeners?
- If you did this challenge again, what would you do differently?

** See next page for student reflection response sheet.

Possible Challenge Rewards

- bookmarks, stickers, bookish swag
- free book
- local/small business coupon (like the BookIt program of days gone by ...)
- additional recess or free time
- VIP Pass/Time in the cozy classroom reading nook
- Name on the Reading Wall of Fame
- Certificate or Badge



Name: _____

Class _____

Date: _____

TIME TO REFLECT

Think about the 10x10 Challenge and then respond to these question in complete sentences.

1 Who did you feel most comfortable reading to and why?

2 Who do you think enjoyed listening to you the most? Would you rather read by yourself or someone else?

3 What feedback (verbal or nonverbal) did you notice from your listeners?

4 Which book or passage did you enjoy reading the most, and why?

5 How did having a “challenge” impact your motivation/desire to read?

6 What surprised you during this experience—about yourself or your listeners?

7 If you did this challenge again, what would you do differently?

8 How did your confidence change from the first read-aloud to the last?

Name:

Class:

Due Date:



10 x 10 Reading Challenge

Challenge Directions: Read to a family member, pet, friend, neighbor, teacher, stuffed animal or out loud to yourself! Your goal is to read out loud for 10 minutes to 10 different people! Ready, set, READ!

1

Who?
When?

Initials

2

Who?
When?

Initials

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Who?
When?

Initials

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Initials

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Who?
When?

Initials

10

Who?
When?

Initials

Name:

Class:

Due Date:



Challenge

Challenge Directions: ??????????

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Initials

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Initials

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Initials

NAME: _____

My Reading Bag



My Reading Bag

I AM PROUD THAT I CONTINUED TO POST ON MY CHANNEL WEEKLY!

NEW FAVORITE AUTHOR:
KATHERINE MARSH

READING GOAL:
TO READ 50 BOOKS THIS YEAR MORE THAN I EVER HAVE BEFORE!

MY FAVORITE FORMAT IS NOVEL IN VERSE.

BEST BOOK I READ THIS YEAR:
BOOK I WANT TO READ THIS SUMMER:

I LIKE GRAPHIC NOVELS MORE THAN I USED TO.

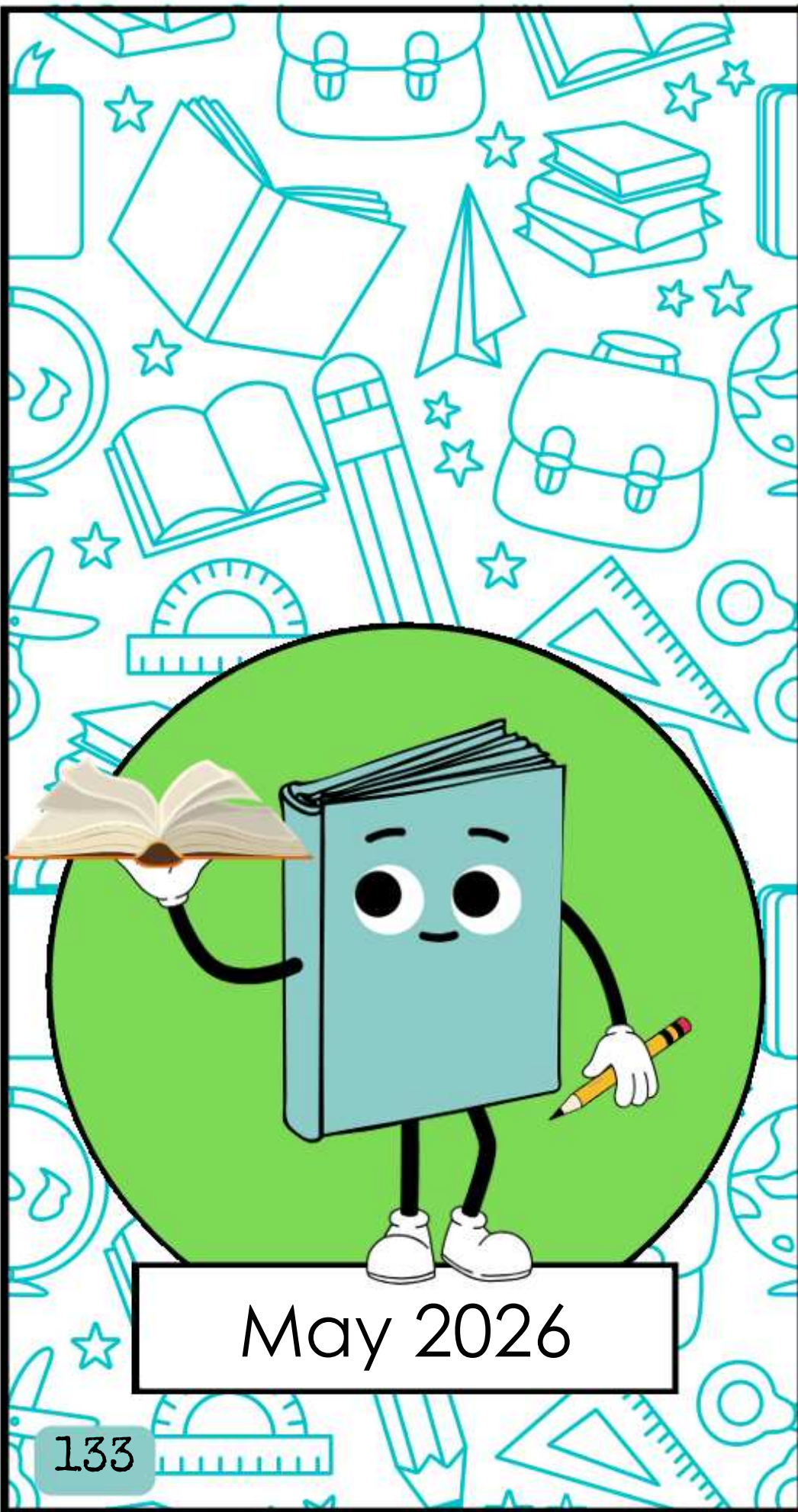
FAVORITE BOOK FROM CHILDHOOD

COOLEST SETTING:
RV/ROADTRIP TO MEXICO

THE FUNNIEST BOOK I READ THIS YEAR WAS
Guys Read: Funny Business by Jon Scieszka

FAVORITE CHARACTER: KITTY, RESOURCEFUL, WITTY, STRONG-WILLED, FAMILY FOCUSED, GOAL ORIENTED

Students can create their visual either online with Canva or with a printed copy of the previous page and using markers, drawn images, cut outs, etc.



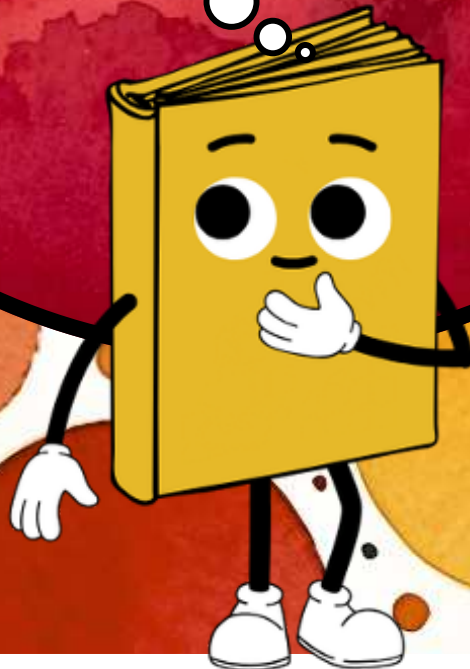
May 2026

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
BECAUSE YOU DESERVE THEM!

WOULD YOU RATHER

PERSUASIVE WRITING WORKSHEETS

1000
EDITION



CREATED BY THE WORD NERD

TAKEAWAYS

Even silly prompts (“Would you rather have pizza every day or ice cream every day?”) still help students practice the serious structure of argumentative writing—without the intimidation of “real” essay topics. This lowers the stakes while reinforcing core skills.

WE WANT STUDENTS TO BE ABLE TO:

- Choosing a side → Making a clear claim.
- Backing it up → Giving 2-3 strong reasons with evidence or examples.
- Using transitions → Showing relationships between ideas.
- Acknowledging the other side → Strengthening their argument.
- Concluding clearly → Wrapping up their reasoning in a persuasive way.



**SPARK STUDENT
ENGAGEMENT -
START WITH THE VIDEO!**



Video Link



CREATED BY THE WORD NERD

STANDARDS IN ACTION

W.6.1 – Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

- Students should learn to:
 - Make a claim → choose one option in their “Would You Rather?”
 - Give reasons → explain why they chose it.
 - Use evidence/examples → support their reasoning with logic, facts, or even life experience.
 - Acknowledge the other side → briefly explain why someone might choose differently, and why their choice is stronger.

W.6.1a – Introduce claims clearly, organize reasons and evidence.

- Skill Focus: Write an introductory sentence that states their choice.
- Ex: “I would rather be a ballerina than a weightlifter because it fits my personality and challenges me in new ways.”

W.6.1b – Support claim(s) with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

- Skill Focus: Develop 2–3 strong reasons with examples or explanations.
- Ex: “Dancing allows me to express myself creatively, and it’s also excellent exercise.”

W.6.1c – Use words, phrases, and clauses to clarify relationships among claims, reasons, and evidence.

- Skill Focus: Use transition words like for example, in addition, because, however, and therefore to guide readers.

W.6.1d – Establish and maintain a formal style.

- Skill Focus: Write in a clear, academic voice (not “texting language”), even if the topic is silly.
- Ex: “I’d choose...” instead of “Because it’s cool.”

W.6.1e – Provide a concluding statement or section.

- Skill Focus: Wrap up by restating the claim and leaving a final thought.
- Ex: “For these reasons, being a ballerina would be a better fit for me than being a weightlifter.”



BUILD YOUR CASE

You've made your choice... now it's time to convince someone else to agree with you! Use this organizer to help plan and write your persuasive paragraph. Strong persuasive writers make a claim, give clear reasons, support their ideas, and wrap it all up like a pro!

FOLLOW THESE STEPS!

Step 1: Make Your Claim

Write a strong opening sentence that clearly states your answer to the Would You Rather question.

Example: I would rather live in a treehouse than on a boat because I love nature and dislike water.

Step 2: Give Your Reasons

List 2-3 strong reasons why you chose your answer. Add examples or explanations for each one.

Step 3: Use Transitions

Use words like because, for example, in addition, also, however, even though to connect your ideas and make your writing flow.

Step 4: Think About the Other Side

Can you think of why someone might choose the other option? Briefly explain why your choice is still the better one.

Example: Some people might say... But I think...

Step 5: Wrap It Up

Write a conclusion sentence that restates your choice and leaves the reader convinced.

Example: That's why I would definitely rather live in a treehouse!

WOULD YOU RATHER?

Name: _____



VIDEO



Video Link

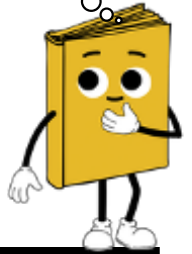
Directions: As you watch the video, circle your preferred choice and then follow the physical cue on screen!

1. Would you rather eat 100 gummy bears or potato chips?
2. Would you rather ride 100 miles in a golf cart or motorcycle side car?
3. Would you rather find 100 ants or flies in your house?
4. Would you rather see 100 movies in the theater or 100 concerts in person?
5. Would you rather get 100 voicemails or text messages?
6. Would you rather visit 100 cities or restaurants?
7. Would you rather spend 100 days in sweatpants or without sweatpants?
8. Would you rather travel 100 years in the future or 100 years in the past?
9. Would you rather have 100 pair of shoes or 100 hoodies?
10. Would you get 100 paper cuts or slivers?

Respond: Which would you rather match up do you have the strongest feelings about? Why?

Name: _____

Date: _____



100 Edition

Would You Rather...

eat 100 gummy bears or potato chips?

Use this space to brain-dump ideas, list reasons, or otherwise plan your response.



Handwriting lines for the response area

▼ Rubric

Task	0	1	2
Follows the prompt and stays on topic			
Uses correct grammar/capitalization/punctuation			
Thoughts are clearly presented and easy to follow			
Length is appropriate			
Format is correct (letter, fiction story, news article, diary entry, etc.)			
Total Points = ___/10			

Comments:

Name: _____

Date: _____



100 Edition



Would You Rather ride...

100 miles in a golf cart or motorcycle side car?

Use this space to brain-dump ideas, list reasons, or otherwise plan your response.

Large empty rectangular box for writing a response.



Series of horizontal lines for writing a response.

▼ Rubric

Task	0	1	2
Follows the prompt and stays on topic			
Uses correct grammar/capitalization/punctuation			
Thoughts are clearly presented and easy to follow			
Length is appropriate			
Format is correct (letter, fiction story, news article, diary entry, etc.)			
Total Points = ___/10			

Comments:

Name: _____

Date: _____

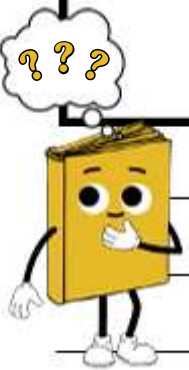
100 Edition

Would You Rather...

see 100 movies in the theater or 100 concerts in person?



Use this space to brain-dump ideas, list reasons, or otherwise plan your response.



Large rectangular box for writing a response to the prompt.

Series of horizontal lines for writing a response.

▼ Rubric

Task	0	1	2
Follows the prompt and stays on topic			
Uses correct grammar/capitalization/punctuation			
Thoughts are clearly presented and easy to follow			
Length is appropriate			
Format is correct (whether fiction story, news article, diary entry, etc.)			
Total Points = ___/10			

Comments:

Name: _____

Date: _____

100 Edition



Would You Rather...

get 100 voicemails or text messages?

Use this space to brain-dump ideas, list reasons, or otherwise plan your response.



Handwriting practice lines consisting of multiple horizontal lines for writing a response.

▼ Rubric

Task	0	1	2
Follows the prompt and stays on topic			
Uses correct grammar/capitalization/punctuation			
Thoughts are clearly presented and easy to follow			
Length is appropriate			
Format is correct (letter, fiction story, news article, diary entry, etc.)			
Total Points = ___/10			

Comments:

Name: _____

Date: _____

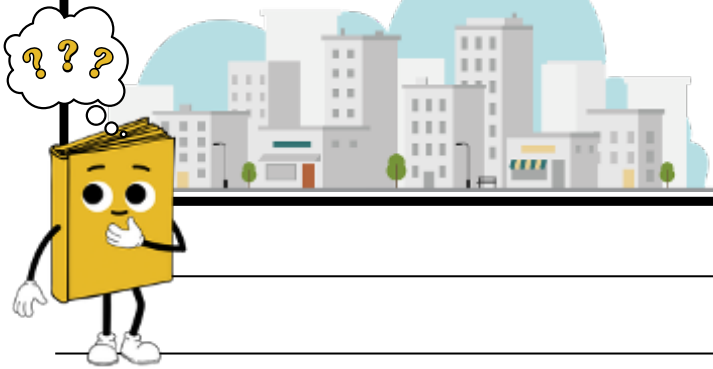
100 Edition

Would You Rather...

visit 100 cities or restaurants?



Use this space to brain-dump ideas, list reasons, or otherwise plan your response.



Large rectangular area with horizontal lines for writing a response.

▼ Rubric

Task	0	1	2
Follows the prompt and stays on topic			
Uses correct grammar/capitalization/punctuation			
Thoughts are clearly presented and easy to follow			
Length is appropriate			
Format is correct (letter, fiction story, news article, diary entry, etc.)			
Total Points = ___/10			

Comments:

Name: _____

Date: _____

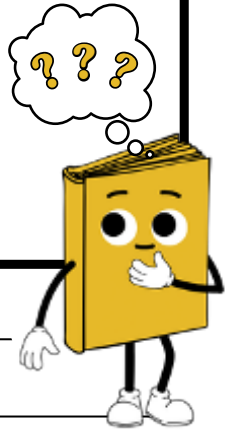
100 Edition

Would You Rather...

spend 100 days in sweatpants or without sweatpants?



Use this space to brain-dump ideas, list reasons, or otherwise plan your response.



Large empty rectangular box for writing a response to the 'Would You Rather' question.

▼ Rubric

Task	0	1	2
Follows the prompt and stays on topic			
Uses correct grammar/capitalization/punctuation			
Thoughts are clearly presented and easy to follow			
Length is appropriate			
Format is correct (letter, fiction story, news article, diary entry, etc.)			
Total Points = ___/10			

Comments:

Name: _____

Date: _____

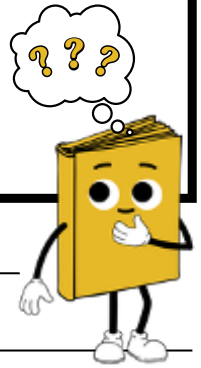
100 Edition

Would You Rather...

have 100 pair of shoes or 100 hoodies?



Use this space to brain-dump ideas, list reasons, or otherwise plan your response.



Handwriting lines for the response.

▼ Rubric

Task	0	1	2
Follows the prompt and stays on topic			
Uses correct grammar/capitalization/punctuation			
Thoughts are clearly presented and easy to follow			
Length is appropriate			
Format is correct (letter, fiction story, news article, diary entry, etc.)			
Total Points = ___/10			

Comments:

Name: _____

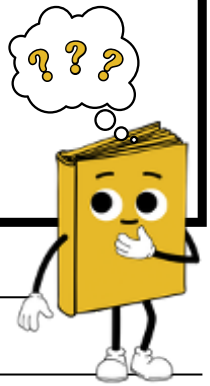
Date: _____



100 Edition

Would You Rather... get 100 paper cuts or 100 slivers?

Use this space to brain-dump ideas, list reasons, or otherwise plan your response.



Large empty rectangular box for writing a response.

Series of horizontal lines for writing a response.

▼ Rubric

Task	0	1	2
Follows the prompt and stays on topic			
Uses correct grammar/capitalization/punctuation			
Thoughts are clearly presented and easy to follow			
Length is appropriate			
Format is correct (letter, fiction story, news article, diary entry, etc.)			
Total Points = ___/10			

Comments:

COMING SOON

Check back to my store, channel or the membership each month for more Would You Rather Brain Breaks!

TOPIC LINE UP:

- August: Back to School
- September: Sci-Fi and Fantasy
- October: Scary Edition
- November: Sports Edition
- December: Winter Edition
- January: Gross Stuff!
- February: Fun Stuff!
- March: Body Adaptations
- April: Around the World
- May: 100 of ...
- June: Summer Edition



**EACH WOULD YOU RATHER SET
WOULD INCLUDES AN INTERACTIVE
VIDEO AND PRINTABLE WRITING
WORKSHEETS**

WANT MORE??!?

I'VE GOT YOU!

CHECK OUT THESE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FROM THE WORD NERD!

- Free week of Word Nerd Collaborative Lessons Sample
- Free First Chapter Friday Start Up Kit
- Learning with the Word Nerd YouTube Channel
- More First Chapter Friday Student Engagement Worksheets (over 200!)
- Free Brain Breaks on YouTube

Email me with questions or requests anytime!

WordNerd@amandazieba.com



HAPPY TEACHING!

First Chapter Friday

Mystery Quote



First Chapter Friday

Mystery Quote

Included in this Resource:

- What is a Mystery Quote and How Do I Use It? ([video link](#))
- 2 sided student engagement worksheet to use during The Word Nerd's First Chapter Friday Videos
- Printable Mystery Quote "answer sheets" for students to record the mystery quote while listening to the video. Students can turn in their answers for a drawing. Suggested prizes may be: choice seating, first dibs on the book that was read aloud, candy, "School Bucks", etc.
 - I would do one of these two (either 2 sided sheet or prize sheet... otherwise it might be too much and become tedious for the students which would detract from the goal of engaging them.
 - I would also choose to do either this mystery quote activity or one of the other student engagement worksheets I've created... again, we don't want to just give busy work. I think it would be a great idea to continually mix it up to keep things fresh. For example: Do a mystery quote sheet one week, a mindfulness coloring sheet (from the April Pre-Planned Calendar) the next, an original FCF worksheet (novel specific or generic) the week after that, or an author interview worksheet the next. This way this weekly routine won't get stale and stagnant and you can reach a variety of types of learners in your classroom.



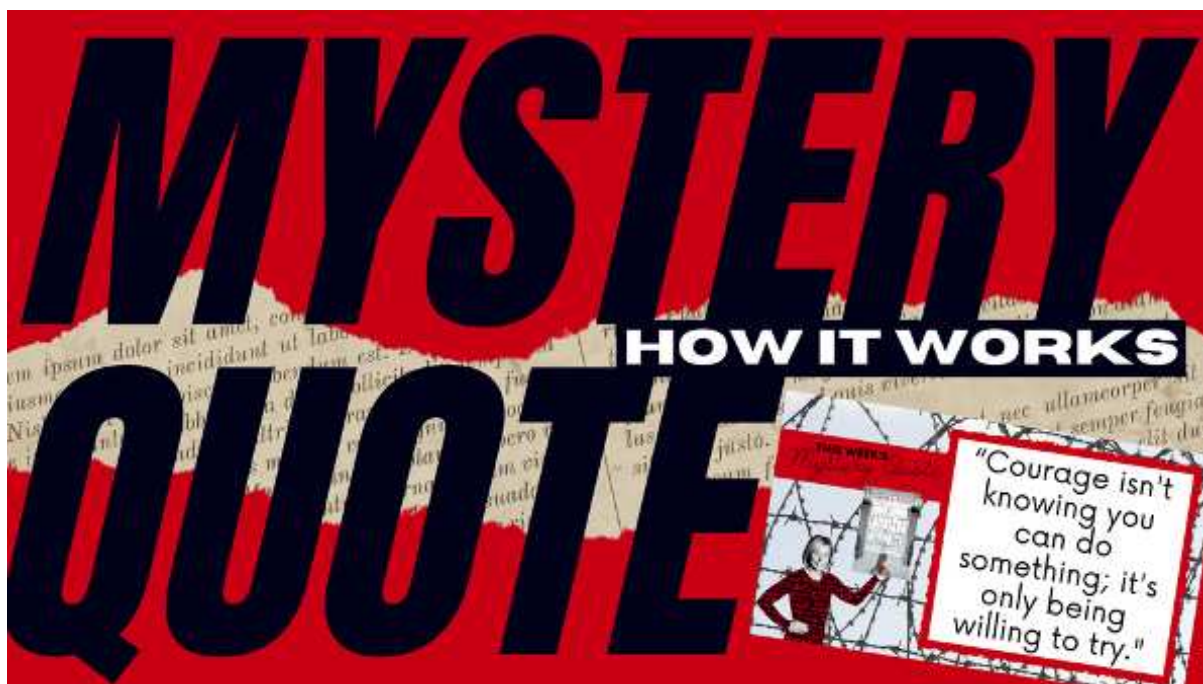
- Leaderboard Printable
- Links to the First Chapter Friday Playlist

First Chapter Friday

Mystery Quote



Watch this [quick video](#) to learn all about the Mystery Quote hidden in my First Chapter Friday videos and how to use it in your classroom.



I have over 120 First Chapter Friday Read Aloud Videos on my channel. MOST have Mystery Quotes hidden inside. If a mystery quote is included, it will be noted on the video thumbnail image, in the video description box and also within the first 30 seconds of the video.



Videos that do not have mystery quotes were likely made in the first half of 2021 (before I began adding them) or in a graphic novel read aloud when there is already a lot going on, on screen. I hope your students enjoy this added layer to my videos and that it further engages them in the wonderful ritual that is First Chapter Fridays.

Name _____

First Chapter Friday

Mystery Quote

As you listen to the read aloud, watch the screen to learn the mystery quote, one word at a time. Write it here:



○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Book Title: _____

I think this quote relates to:
(check as many as apply)

- The book's theme
- A lesson the character learns
- My life: _____
- Our curriculum (ELA/Reading lesson)
- Another book I have read: _____
- Other: _____



I want to continue reading this book.



I do not want to continue reading this book.

Name _____

First Chapter Friday

Mystery Quote

My rating of this book's beginning:



○ ○ ○ ○ ○

I rate this book's beginning ___ stars because

Emotions I felt as I listened to this chapter:

- Happy Intrigued Hopeful Disgust Nervous Joyful
Focused Sad Frustrated Confident Jealous Bored
Excited Fear Angry Entertained other: _____

The elements of this book's beginnings that drew me in or pushed me away were... because...

Name _____

First Chapter Friday

Mystery Quote

As you listen to the read aloud, watch the screen to learn the mystery quote, one word at a time. Write it here:

Book Title: _____

Quote: _____

Then turn this paper into your teacher for a chance to win a prize!

Name _____

First Chapter Friday

Mystery Quote

As you listen to the read aloud, watch the screen to learn the mystery quote, one word at a time. Write it here:

Book Title: _____

Quote: _____

Then turn this paper into your teacher for a chance to win a prize!

First Chapter Friday Mystery Quote LEADERBOARD

Color in a square for each quote correctly written. The 1st team to fill their boxes wins!

TEAM #1

TEAM #2

TEAM #3

TEAM #4

TEAM #5

MYSTERY BOOK FCF PLAYLIST

Are you looking for a great middle grade or YA mystery? Check out this [playlist](#) full of mysterious stories! Each video features a first chapter read aloud and some even include an interview with the author! Lean in, listen and give these great books a try! If you find one you like, head to your library and check out a copy so you can read the whole thing and learn who dunnit and all the other unsolved mysteries presented in these pages.



13 MYSTERIOUS READING RECS

In case you need to copy and paste this link for students, here it is:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9FMJS7DSQGc&list=PLpVe6VlpCwJbmCUW_sqaBtErvoLVQ9TMJ

