

OUT OF ALL THE THINGS I DO...

Do you know what is my favorite? It's making things. It's creating... whether it's an entirely new story or a fun social media post... making a space feel new with creative interior design additions... I JUST LOVE MAKING STUFF. CREATING CONTENT. Hands down it's my favorite part of my work-life.

And for this month's pre-planned calendar I got to make you a BUNCH of new things... and it brought me SO MUCH JOY. I made you (and your students)...

- A 5 week set of MYSTERY WRITING PROMPTS
- New songs to include on an instrumental playlist
- A 10 x 10 Reading Challenge
- A new FCF (Olivetti) and corresponding Mystery Book FCF playlist

I can't wait for you to dive into this PDF and explore all the things (both the new and the old!). Hopefully, with these lessons, books, resources and writing prompts in hand, you'll be able to close this school year out with a spectacular bang... one that your students will both remember and enjoy.

One quick thing before I let you go wander and explore? Can you help me plan for next year by filling out this survey? I'd love to hear from each and every one of you!

Thanks in advance and happy teaching!



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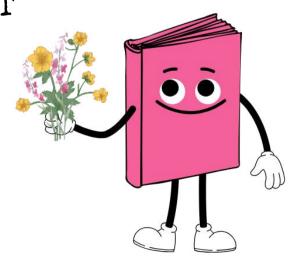


OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT

June Monthly Planning Session Zoom Link (May 18) $\sqcup |NK|$

May Lunch Bunch Zoom Link (May 15) LINK

Word Nerd Collaborative Private Facebook Group - LINK



May 2025

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	Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wednes.	Thurs.	Friday	Satur.
					1	2	3
	4	5	6	7	8	0	10
	11	12	13	14	May Author Lunch Bunch	16	17
	June Monthly Planning Session	19	20	21	22	23	24
	25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Notes:		

4

MAY

First Chapter Fridays

** Each book cover image and title is hyperlinked to the FCF Video on YouTube **

Friday, May 2nd



<u>Coop Knows</u> <u>the Scoop</u> by Taryn Souders

Realistic Fiction Mystery Prose

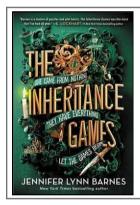
Friday, May 9th



<u>Vanishing Act</u> by John Feinstein

Realistic Fiction Sports-Mystery Prose

Friday, May 16th



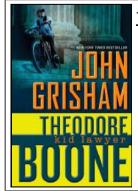
The Inheritance
Games
by Jennifer Lynn
Barnes

Realistic Fiction Mystery Series Prose

Friday, May 23rd



Friday, May 30th



<u>Theodore Boone:</u>

<u>Kid Lawyer</u> by John Grisham

Realistic Fiction Mystery Prose

Lunch Bunch Attendees

Taryn Souders - YES! John Feinstein - ? Jennifer Lynn Barnes - ? Allie Millington - ? John Grisham - ?



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 24 to keep track of student teams and scores throughout the month. Each week's brain break title and image are linked to the video on YouTube.

Picture Detective Trivia (Rounds 1-4)



This single video includes all 4 rounds of the trivia for this month. Use one a week! The answer sheets can be found on pages 30-49.

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



Week 1

Monday Phony Phonebooth

Tuesday Grandpa's Secret

Wednesday A Mysterious Setting

Thursday Atypical Typewriter

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 2

Monday The Cookie Caper

Tuesday Sunken Secrets

Wednesday Crafty Characters

Thursday Mission Moonlight

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

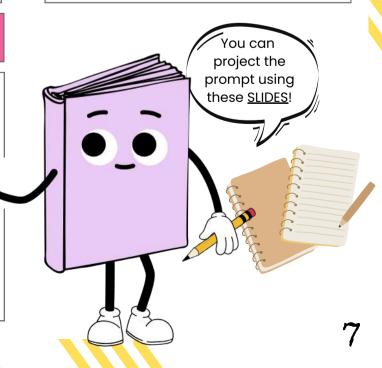
Monday Townhall Tall Tales

Tuesday Character Conundrum

Wednesday Pick a Color, Any Color

Thursday The Dastardly Dentist

Friday Free Write Friday



LESSONS

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. Download 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

O 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

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. I'm sure there are a hundred ways we could give this a try, but here is one I came up with.

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

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

November is National Mystery Month. Use these supplemental resources to help you inspire, engage and elevate the writers in your classroom!

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 VHI helped me come up with this strategy! Great for weekly use, sub days, summer reading programs and more.

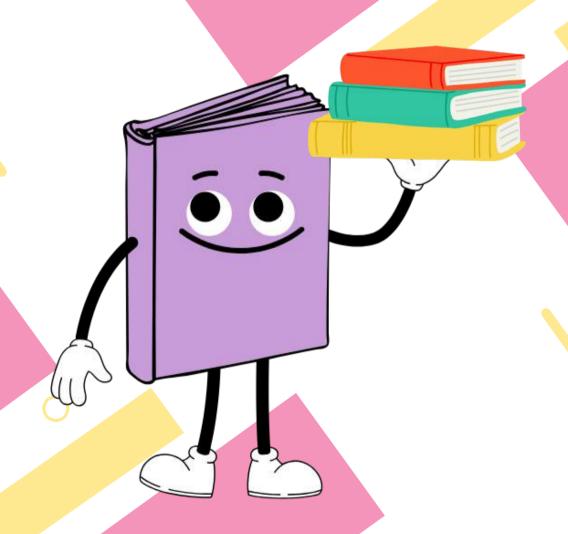
2 MYSTERY FCF PLAYLIST

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.

3 INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC PLAYLIST

Sometimes when we are creating something new we need a little auditory stimulation and inspiration! Try using these new musical playlists during your next writing prompt or project work session. To really level up the experience, dim the lights and use a essential oil diffuser to engage additional senses. 5 playlists are listed.

FIRST CHAPTER FRIDAY SHEETS

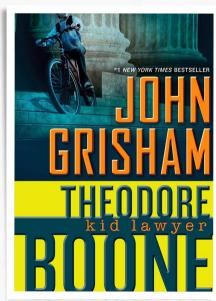


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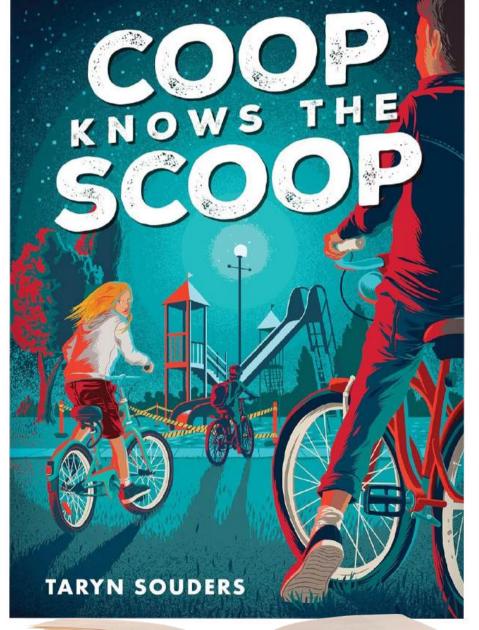
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Coop Knows the Scoop by Taryn Souders

own notes and thoughts in the bottom box.

Here is a little background information about our First
Chapter Friday title and its creator. Feel free to add your



Read Aloud Video

What's It About?

The whole town is talking about what's buried beneath the playground...
Windy Bottom, Georgia is usually a peaceful place. Coop helps his mom at her café and bookstore, hangs out with his grandpa, bikes around with his friends Justice and Liberty, and is determined to live up to his dad's legacy. Windy Bottom is full of all kinds of interesting people, but no one has ever caused a problem. Until now.

And somehow, Gramps is taking all the blame! It seems like there are a lot of secrets that were buried in their small town after all...

Will Coop and his friends get to the bottom of the mystery and clear Gramps's name before it's too late? You will love Coop and his adventures if you are looking for:

- Mystery books for kids 9-12
- Heartfelt and quirky stories for young readers
- Kids detective books
- 5th grade mystery books

Who Wrote It?

Date

Includes

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.

AR Reading Level: 4.4

Lexile Level: 610L

I want to read this book: YES / NO

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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?

Date

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

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JENNIFER LYNN BARNES

Name

Date

The Inheritance Games by Jennifer Lynn Barnes

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?

Avery Grambs has a plan for a better future: survive high school, win a scholarship, and get out. But her fortunes change in an instant when billionaire Tobias Hawthorne dies and leaves Avery virtually his entire fortune. The catch? Avery has no idea why or even who Tobias Hawthorne is. To receive her inheritance, Avery must move into sprawling, secret passage-filled Hawthorne House, where every room bears the old man's touchâ€'and his love of puzzles, riddles, and codes. Unfortunately for Avery, Hawthorne House is also occupied by the family that Tobias Hawthorne just dispossessed, This includes the four Hawthorne grandsons: dangerous, magnetic, brilliant boys who grew up with every expectation that one day, they would inherit billions. Heir apparent Grayson Hawthorne is convinced that Avery must be a con-woman, and he's determined to take her down. His brother, Jameson, views her as their grandfather's last hurrah: a twisted riddle, a puzzle to be solved. Caught in a world of wealth and privilege, with danger around every turn. Avery will have to play the game herself just to survive.

Who Wrote It?

Jennifer Lynn Barnes (who mostly goes by Jen) is the author of more than a dozen critically acclaimed young adult novels. She has advanced degrees in psychology, psychiatry, and cognitive science, including graduate degrees from Cambridge University, where she was a Fulbright Scholar, and Yale University, where she received her Ph.D. in 2012. Jen wrote her first published novel when she was nineteen-years-old and sold her first five books while still in college. In additional to writing YA novels, Jen has also written original pilot scripts for television networks like USA and MTV, and she is one of the world's leading experts on the psychology of fandom and the cognitive



science of fiction and the imagination more broadly. Jen is an Associate Professor at the University of Oklahoma, where she holds a dual appointment in Psychology and Professional Writing.

AR Reading Level: 4.7

Lexile Level: 640L

I want to read this book: YES / NO

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Olivetti by Allie Millington



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 and Author Interview Coming Soon! ©

What's It About?

Being a typewriter is not as easy as it looks. Surrounded by books (notorious attention hogs) and recently replaced by a computer, Olivetti has been forgotten by the Brindle family—the family he's lived with for years. The Brindles are busy humans, apart from 12year-old Ernest, who would rather be left alone with his collection of Oxford English Dictionaries. The least they could do was remember Olivetti once in a while, since he remembers every word they've typed on him. It's a thankless job, keeping memories alive. Olivetti gets a rare glimpse of action from Ernest's mom, Beatrice—his used-to-be most frequent visitor—only for her to drop him off at Heartland Pawn Shop and leave him helplessly behind. When Olivetti learns Beatrice has mysteriously gone missing afterward, he believes he can help find her. He breaks the only rule of the 'typewriterly code' and types back to Ernest, divulging Beatrice's memories stored inside him. Their search takes them across San Francisco—chasing clues, maybe committing a few misdemeanors. As Olivetti spills out the past, Ernest is forced to face what he and his family have been running from, The Everything That Happened. Only by working together will they find Beatrice, belonging, and the parts of themselves they've lost.

Who Wrote It?

Allie Millington is the author of heartfelt books for the young and young at heart. Allie started her writing career all the way back in third grade, when she won a reflections contest with a story about a heroic pencil. From there, with the help of encouraging teachers and a steady diet of waffles, she began her long journey of sharing stories told from unique perspectives and chasing wild What If ideas. As with most journeys, there were bumps and stubbed toes along the way—including receiving hundreds of rejection letters which she turned into her Rejection Collection, It was around this time that her husband gifted her a special typewriter, who turned out to have quite a lot to say. When Allie isn't writing, she's likely thrifting for treasures, foraging in the woods, or hanging out and visiting elementary kiddos &



middle schoolers in their classrooms.
Allie lives near Atlanta, Georgia, with her husband, their dog Crumpet. You can find her on instagram @allieinink or possibly in her pillow fort.

AR Reading Level: Unavailable

Lexile Level: Unavailable

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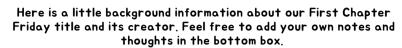
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Theodore Boone: Kid Lawyer (Book 1)

by John Grisham





Read Aloud Video

What's It About?

In the small city of Strattenburg, there are many lawyers, and though he's only thirteen years old. Theo Boone thinks he's one of them. Theo knows every judge, policeman, court clerk—and a lot about the law. He dreams of being a great trial lawyer, of a life in the courtroom. But Theo finds himself in court much sooner than expected. Because he knows so much maybe too much—he is suddenly dragged into the middle of a sensational murder trial. A coldblooded killer is about to go free, and only Theo knows the truth.

The stakes are high, but Theo won't stop until justice is served.

The thrilling young mystery series from internationally bestselling author John Grisham!

Book 1 in a series of 7!

Who Wrote It?

John Grisham is the author of fortyseven consecutive #1 bestsellers, which have been translated into nearly fifty languages. His recent books include The Judge's List, Sooley, and his third Jake Brigance novel, A Time for Mercy, which is being developed by HBO as a limited series. Grisham is a two-time winner of the Harper Lee Prize for Legal Fiction and was honored with the Library of Congress Creative Achievement Award for Fiction. When he's not writing, Grisham serves on the board of directors of the Innocence Project and of Centurion Ministries, two national organizations dedicated to



exonerating those who have been wrongfully convicted. Much of his fiction explores deepseated problems in our criminal justice system. John lives on a farm in central Virginia.

AR Reading Level: 5.2

Lexile Level: 840L

I want to read this book: YES / NO

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BRAIN BREAK SHEETS



MAY 2025



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 24)

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.



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.

	1				
TEAM 1#	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Total
TEAM 2	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Total
1EAM #3	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Total
1EAM #4	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Total
TEAM 5#	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Total
TEAM 9#	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Total

BRAIN BREAK







4 Rounds, 1 video + answer sheets and a whole lotta fun!



BRAIN BREAK

INCLUDED IN THIS RESOURCE

- 1 <u>Canva Slide Show</u> including all four rounds of the brain break/ice breaker/game
- Link to the YouTube video version of the game (all 4 rounds in one video). Link:
 https://youtu.be/wmbulETuXfY
 AS OF

AUGUST

2024!!!

- Student answer sheets
- Modified student answer sheets for students of different ages/abilities
- Printable answer sheets to use with or w/o the video
- Answer keys
- List of additional considerations, applications and implementation ideas
 - ALL SORTS OF FUN!!:)



BRAIN BREAK

TIRED OF THE SAME OLD BRAIN BREAKS? I'VE GOT YOU COVERED.

DIRECTIONS

- 1. For each round, play the <u>slideshow</u> or <u>video</u> showcasing 10 super close up images of everyday objects.
- 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 partnerships. (This step is optional, but I find that if you want to get your students talking, it works great. If you need 6 minutes of silence... you can ban conversation and it works just fine that way too!)
- 4. Reveal final answers.

BRAIN BREAK

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- 1. This activity can be used as a brain break, ice breaker or fun game.
- 2. In the video, each image initially shows for 10 seconds.
- 3. If you are in a writing unit that requires thesis statements and evidence, you could have student work to verbally support their ideas/guesses using a similar format. (I believe the object is ____ based on ___, __ and ___.)
- 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 at home with family members. :)
- 6. Modified answer guessing sheets available for younger students or those with differing abilities.
- 7. Printable answer sheets that you can use with or without the video are included as well.
- 8. Consider letting a classroom helper or leader be the "game show host" and click through the slides/press play & pause, and call on classmates to share their ideas and reveal the answers.
- 9. In my classes we keep our teams the same for an entire quarter and 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. :)

Picture Detective Links

Use the below links to access this activity in a variety of ways.



This link will take you to a single Canva Slides show that contains all four rounds of the game.





YOUTUBE VIDEO







Round 1 Answer Sheet

What everyday item is pictured in each close up photograph?



What is it?

PICTURE DETECTIVE

BRAIN BREAK

What everyday item is pictured

in each close up photograph?

Round 1

Answer

Sheet

MODIFIED ANSWER SHEET





Round 1 Answer Sheet

What everyday item is pictured in each close up photograph?

- 1. snake skin or butterfly wing
- 2. strawberry or ladybug shell
- 3. toothbrush or rug
- 4. planet in space or egg
- 5. apple stem or cinnamon stick
- 6. cereal (corn flakes) or scab
- 7. polluted lake or cup of coffee
- 8. flower petal or onion
- 9. soap foam or cloud
- 10. crocodile or algae (weeds)





Round 1 Answer Sheet

- 1. snake skin or butterfly wing
- 2. strawberry or ladybug shell
- 3. toothbrush or rug
- 4. planet in space or egg
- 5. apple stem or cinnamon stick
- 6. cereal (corn flakes) or scab
- 7. polluted lake or cup of coffee
- 8. flower petal or onion
- 9. soap foam or cloud
- 10. crocodile or algae (weeds)



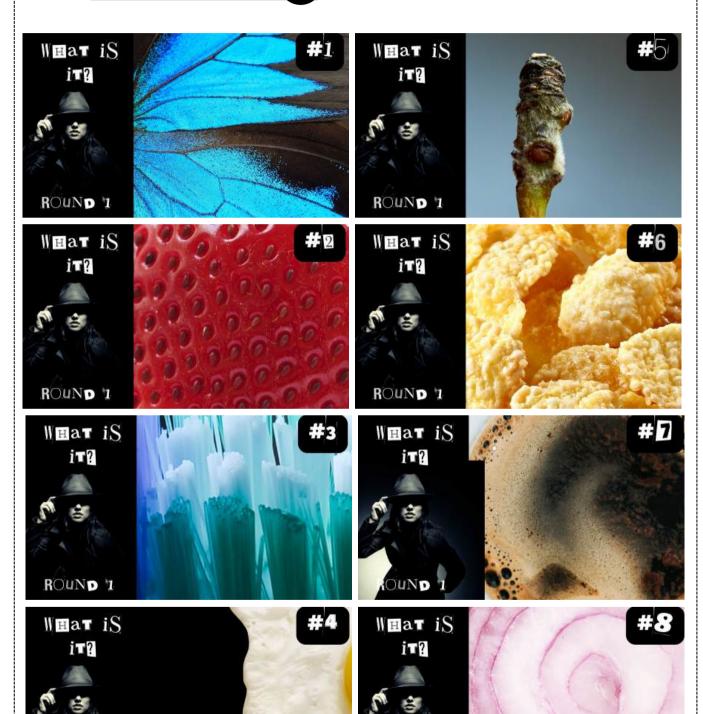
Video

ROUND 1



Picture Detective Round #1

Name: ______



ROUND 1





Picture Detective Round #1

Name:







Record Your Answers Here:

1.	
2.	
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Round 1 Answer Sheet

- 1. Butterfly Wing
- 2. Strawberry
- 3. Toothbrush
- 4. Egg
- 5. Apple Stem
- 6. Cereal (Corn Flakes)
- 7. Cup of Coffee
- 8. Onion
- 9. Soap Foam
- 10. Crocodile





Round 2 Answer Sheet

Starts at Min Mark 4:00

What everyday	item	is p	ictu	red
in each close ι	ıp ph	oto	grap	h?

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Round 2 Answer Sheet

Starts at Min Mark 4:00

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MODIFIED ANSWER SHEET





Round 2 Answer Sheet

Starts at Min Mark 4:00

What everyday item is pictured in each close up photograph?

- 1. clam shell or oreo cookie
- 2. cigarette or sea plant
- 3. mud or chocolate
- 4. grass or paint brush
- 5. cactus or watermelon rind
- blonde beard or spaghetti noodles
- 7. honey or candle wax
- chameleon skin or pea seed shell
- human hands or wrinkled sheets
- 10. lizard skin or cantaloupe





Round 2 Answer Sheet

Starts at Min Mark 4:00

- 1. clam shell or oreo cookie
- 2. cigarette or sea plant
- 3. mud or chocolate
- 4. grass or paint brush
- 5. cactus or watermelon rind
- blonde beard or spaghetti noodles
- 7. honey or candle wax
- chameleon skin or pea seed shell
- human hands or wrinkled sheets
- 10. lizard skin or cantaloupe





Picture Detective Round #2

	BRAIN BREAK
Video	2 2
	A SAME







Picture Detective Round #2

Name: _____





Record Your Answers Here:

1.	
2.	
	_
6.	·
8.	
9.	
10.	



Round 2 Answer Sheet

- 1. Oreo cookie
- 2. Cigarette
- 3. Chocolate Bar
- 4. Bird Feather
- 5. Cactus
- 6. Spaghetti Noodles
- 7. Honey
- 8. Chameleon
- 9. Human Hands
- 10. Cantaloupe





Round 3 Answer Sheet

Starts at Min Mark 7:35

What everyd	lay it	em i	is pi	ictu	red
in each clos	se up	pho	otog	grap	h?

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Round 3 Answer Sheet

Starts at Min Mark 7:35

1.	
9.	

MODIFIED ANSWER SHEET





Round 3 Answer Sheet

Starts at Min Mark 7:35

What everyday item is pictured in each close up photograph?

- 1. fancy skirt or orange
- 2. tennis shoe or softball
- 3. bike tire or vinyl record
- 4. bird feather or corduroy pants
- 5. elephant trunk or jacket sleeve
- 6. remote control sensor or tail light
- 7. pinecone or turtle shell
- 8. bullet or key
- 9. dragonfly wing or bubble
- 10. mushroom or fingerprint





Round 3 Answer Sheet

Starts at Min Mark 7:35

- 1. fancy skirt or orange
- 2. tennis shoe or softball
- 3. bike tire or vinyl record
- 4. bird feather or corduroy pants
- 5. elephant trunk or jacket sleeve
- remote control sensor or tail light
- 7. pinecone or turtle shell
- 8. bullet or key
- 9. dragonfly wing or bubble
- 10. mushroom or fingerprint





Picture Detective Round #3

Name: ______

WHAT iS WHAT iS ? ? OUND ROUND 3 # 2 WHAT iS WHAT iS ? ? OUND 3 ROUND 3 WHAT iS WHAT iS ? ? ROUND 3 OUND 3 WHAT iS WHAT iS ? ? ROUND 3 ROUND 3





Picture Detective Round #3

Name: ______

Video	F





Record Your Answers Here:

1.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	



Round 3 Answer Sheet

- 1. Orange
- 2. Tennis Shoe
- 3. Vinyl Record
- 4. Bird Feather
- 5. Cactus
- 6. Tail Light
- 7. Pinecone
- 8. Key
- 9. Dragonfly Wing
- 10. Mushroom





Round 4 Answer Sheet

Starts at Min Mark 11:10

What everyday item is pictured in each close up photograph?

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Round 4 Answer Sheet

Starts at Min Mark 11:10

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0	

MODIFIED ANSWER SHEET





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





Round 4
Answer
Sheet

Starts at Min Mark 11:10

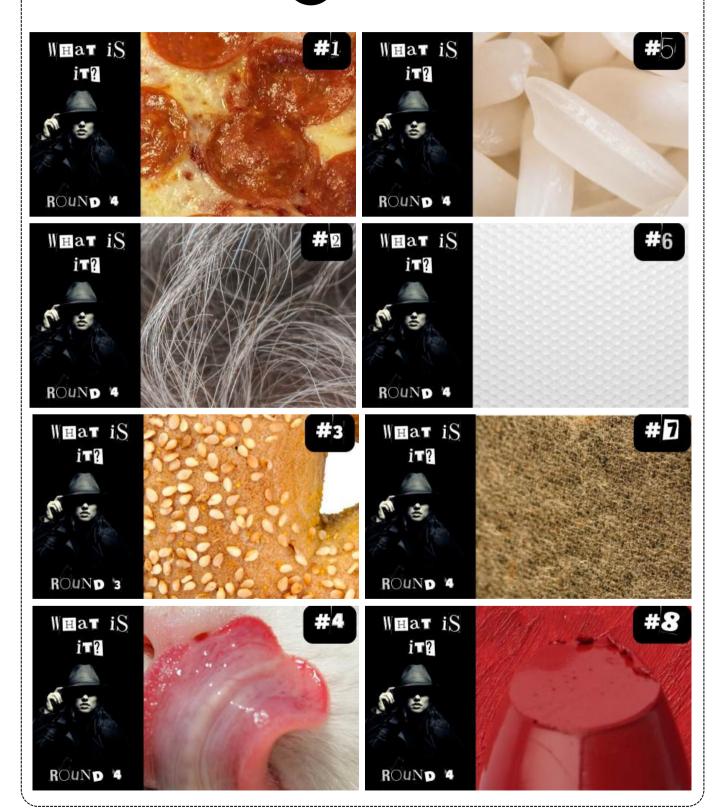
- 1. pizza or lava
- 2. sponge or human hair
- 3. bagel or a cave entrance
- 4. bacon or a cat tongue
- 5. waves on a beach or rice
- 6. shoe sole or golf ball
- 7. dental floss or tea bag
- 8. fruit snack or lipstick
- 9. ice or crinkled cellophane
- 10. watermelon or eyeball





Picture Detective Round #4

Name: _____



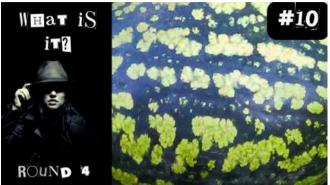




Picture Detective Round #4

Name: _____





Record Your Answers Here:

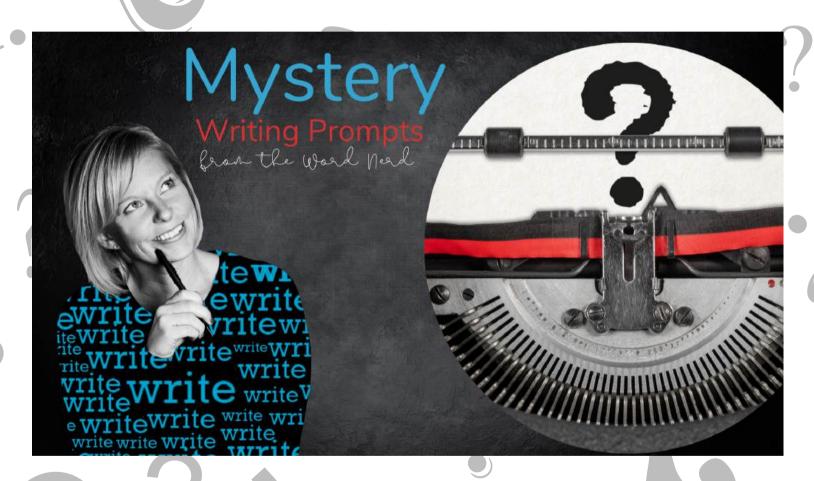
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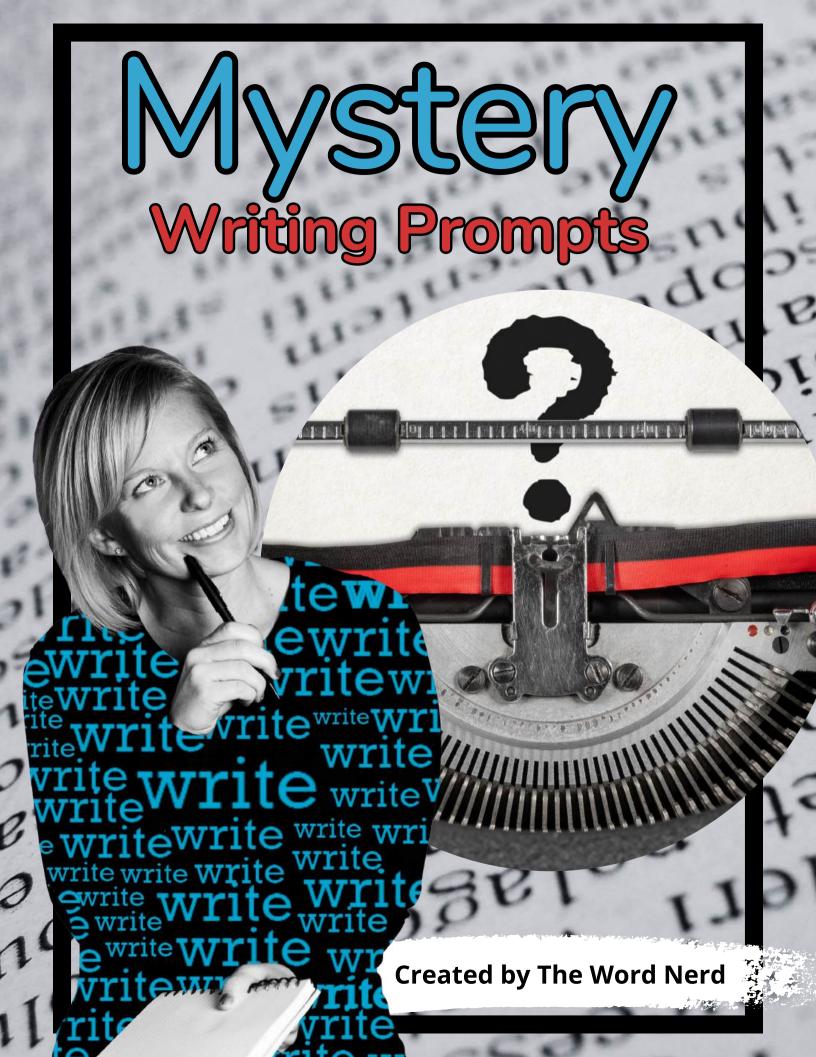
Round 4 Answer Sheet

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

WRITING PROMPT SHEETS



MAY 2025



LET'S WRITE A MYSTERY!

May is MYSTERY MONTH!

In addition to being an educator, I'm an author. I LOVE writing. I know that isn't the case for everyone, but I truly hope that after spending time with me or one of my resources, people will come to like it just a little bit more!

This resource will help you implement a daily writing routine in your classroom. I start small, asking students to write for 5 minutes, and then each week, add on another, until we are up to 10 minutes. I know that they won't create a finished product in that amount of time, but that's not the purpose of these journal writes. The purpose is to be creative, to put ideas on paper, to experiment, and mostly... just to WRITE. The only way we get better at a skill is to practice it. I give a few more implementation tips on page 54, but if you have more questions, feel free to email me at any time. (wordnerd@amandazieba.com).

I hope these prompts spark both interest and ideas in your students.

Happy Writing!

Amanda Zieba

(AkA: The Word Nerd)

P.S. For more ideas on how to get reluctant writers going, watch <u>this video</u>.

P.P.S. Check out the rest of the writing prompts I've got to offer <u>here</u>.



(https://youtu.be/I7UWA-pw04Q?sub_confirmation=1)

THIS PRODUCT

- 5 weeks of printable mystery writing prompts (prompt + writing space)
- A <u>Canva Presentation</u> of the writing prompts to project on a big screen in your classroom. These are editable if you click (FILE MAKE A COPY) once in Canva.

(Link: https://www.canva.com/design/DAGkzuT8wA8/_A1RkJ_pftanD345rS7xJw/edit?utm_content=DAGkzuT8wA8&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source =sharebutton)

- A Gem and Opportunity Feedback form for students and teachers to use when giving a critique.
- A rubric for teachers to use to evaluate the writing products created by their students with these prompts. Students can also use this rubric to self-score/evaluate their writing. I wouldn't "grade" every journal write. Maybe ask students to pick one a week they'd like you to score.
- A list of journal writing tips for students. As well as a video full of ideas for teachers to engage reluctant writers.

5

JOURNAL WRITING TIPS

- Take a minute to think before you start writing. Review what makes a story a mystery. Print out page 55 and give it to students so they can reference common mystery story components while they are writing.
- Put your phone/chromebook/tablet away. Distractions can easily pull you out of the writing flow.
- 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.
- You can always go back to the text/prompt/image for clues, reminders, ideas to add.
- Before submitting your work, whisper read your work aloud to yourself. This will help you catch small, easy to fix errors.
- 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! (link: https://youtu.be/aHVFKDZRC3g)





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

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





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

WRITING PROMPTS



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

My Name:

Name of classmate I am reviewing:

Date:

Title of Piece/Date Written



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	5		
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.



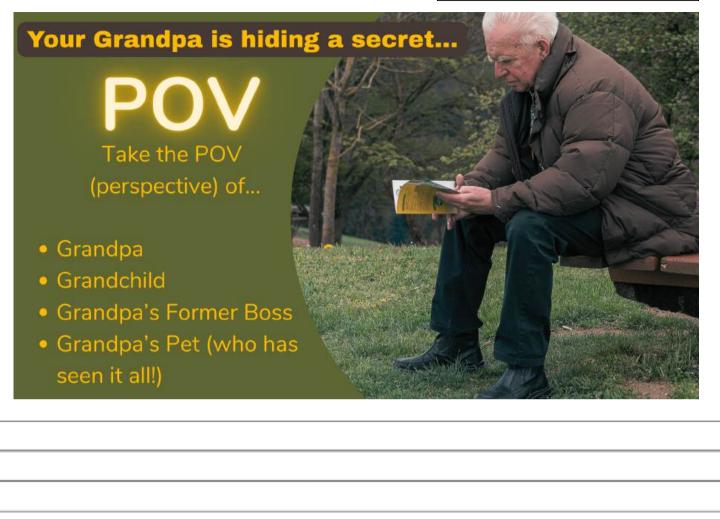


Rubric

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





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

CHOOSE A SETTING: WRITE A MYSTERY STORY... AS YOU WRITE WORK TO INCLUDE SOUND-SENSORY DETAILS!







A CAMPING TRIP

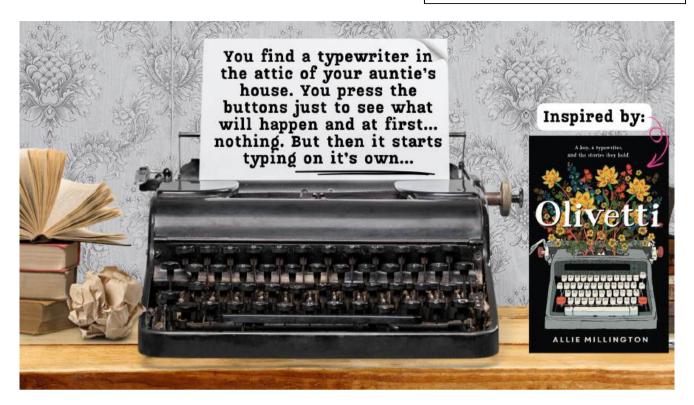


A SHOPPING MALL

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





Rubric P

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

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.

Mysterious

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





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





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

WRITE A STORY THAT INCLUDES THESE KEY CHARACTERS

91

YOU!



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



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



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

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



WORD BANK GLOWING OPAQUE ELLUMINATED WROUGHT-IRON RURAL MOON-LIT PARANORMAL

▼ 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

WEEK 3 PROMPTS

Monday: Crack the Code

Tuesday: Destination Details

Wednesday: A Search for the Truth Thursday: Phantom Fairgrounds

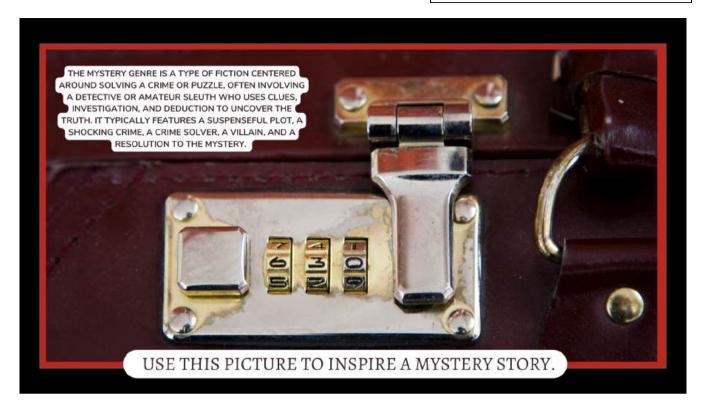
Friday: Free Write Friday



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

Click here to access the SLIDES.





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



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



FROZEN WASTELAND



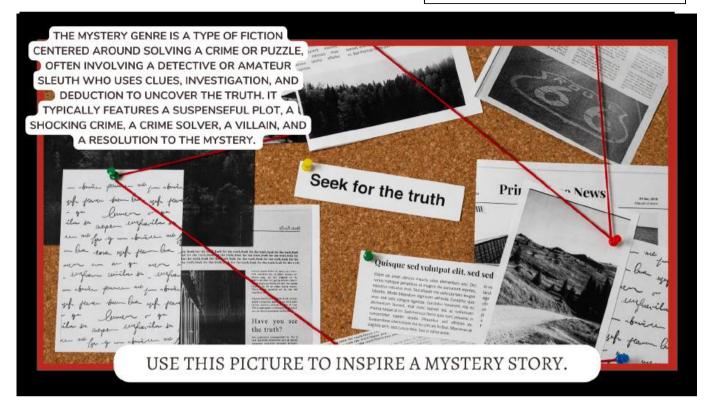
TROPICAL ISLAND



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



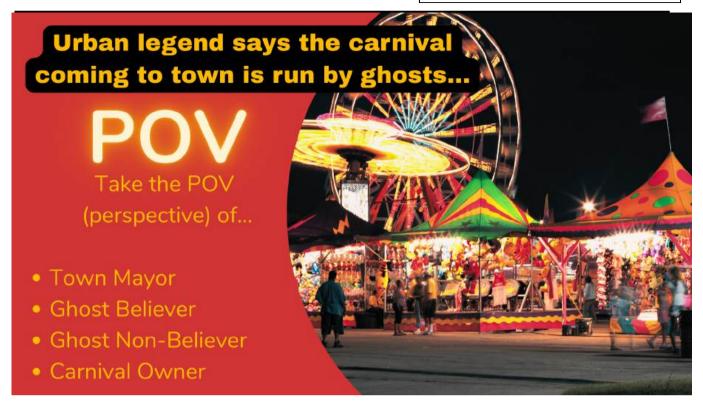


Rubric .

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





▼ 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

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.





■ 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

Mysterious

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





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

Ruhric

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



OPEN WATER
BEACH
BOARDWALK
PARKING LOT

Mystery

LADITIC

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





▼ 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

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.



WRITE A MYSTERY THAT TAKES PLACE IN THE

TOWNHALL ARCHIVES

The archives contain historical records that offer clues to the city's dark past. The dimly lit, dusty archives are definitely creepy, but if you want to uncover the town's buried secrets, it's where you are going to have to go!

Tell what happens when you arrive. What do you find?



■ 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

CHOOSE A SETTING: WRITE A MYSTERY STORY...

AS YOU WRITE THINK ABOUT THE CHARACTERS YOU'D LIKLEY FIND IN THIS LOCATION



A WALK IN THE WOODS



A RAINY DAY DOWNTOWN



AN ABANDONED CASTLE

Ruhric

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



Mysterious

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



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





■ 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.)			

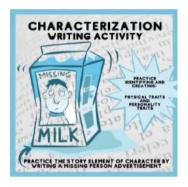
Total Points = ___/10

THANK YOU FOR DOWNLOADING!

A FEW MORE THINGS...

Please leave a review and feedback! By doing this you help future teachers decide if this item is worth their \$\$ and a good fit for their students. You also earn credits to use toward FREE product!

Check out other products in my store! I have more writing resources and activities ready and waiting for you!





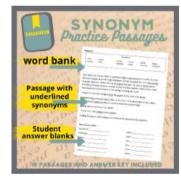














CONNECT WITH ME!

- ☐ Facebook: <u>Amanda Zieba Author</u>
- ☐ Facebook Group <u>Learning with the Word Nerd</u>
- ☐ Instagram: wordnerd_amandazieba
- ☐ Grab your free First Chapter Friday Kit by subscribing to my educator email list. (www.amandazieba.com/teachsignup)

LESSONS



MAY

2025

The Bedrock of

BY AMANDA ZIEBA







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

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

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 Re

ATOS Reading Level: 6.5

Great for instructional text!



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.

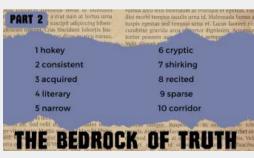


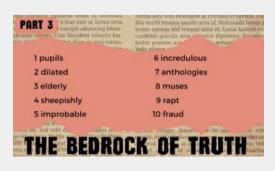




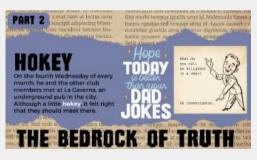
Sample Slides

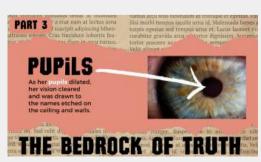














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VOCABULARY

Part 1 Vocabulary

1 devoted

2 acclaimed

3 behemoth

4 tomes

5 prolific

6 facilitated

7 reveal

8 eccentric

9 spelunking

10 adequate





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



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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, now does the character feel?



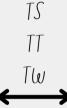
Hearts and Stars - mark your favorite or important parts with a heart or star, so you can easily find these sections again.



Exclamation points - if you find a part hat 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.



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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?

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.

I assign 2 points if the task was completed and well done, 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	ā		
Thoughts are clearly presented and easy to follow			
Length is appropriate			
Format is correct (letter, fiction story, news article, diary entry, etc.)			

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

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

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.)			

CREATIVE WRITING TIPS

- Take a minute to think before you start writing. Jot down ideas, make a mind map, or just day dream!
- Put your phone/chromebook/tablet away. Distractions can easily pull you out of the writing flow.
- 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.
- Ask yourself, if I were the reader... "what kind of story would I like to experience?"
- Before submitting your work, whisper read your work aloud to yourself. This will help you catch small, easy to fix errors.
- 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!





CREATIVE WRITING PROMPT #1



			ic they ngilting	about how to te	
ory? Does Leona	show up? You ge	t 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



CREATIVE WRITING PROMPT #2



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.)			



CREATIVE WRITING PROMPT #3



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.)			



CREATIVE WRITING PROMPT #4



		T		Togeher Comments
Task Follows the prompt and stays on topic	0	1	2	Teacher Comments

Length is appropriate Format is correct (letter, fiction story, news article, diary entry, etc.)

LISTEN TO THE STORY READ ALOUD



The Bedrock of

TRUTH



BY AMANDA ZIEBA





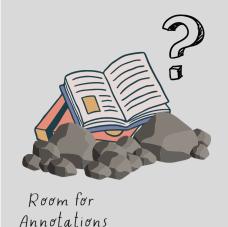












The Bedrock of TRUTH



BY AMANDA ZIEBA



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.

Room for Annotations







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 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 lvy 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 Carrett.

END OF PART 1



The Bedrock of TRUTH



BY AMANDA ZIEBA



Annotations

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.







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 overconfident adrenaline and caffeine.







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.







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 it's 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.



The Bedrock of TRUTH



BY AMANDA ZIEBA



Annotations

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 | 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.







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.

Room for Annotations







"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 used 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."

10







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.



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

**In Table **

**In Table **

**In Table **

Sending Bag

PERFECT FOR FINAL WEEKS OF SCHOOL!

EXAMPLES INCLUDED

dolor sit amet consectetur. Mattis ibus purus in massa. Augue ut lectus i at. Non nisi est sit amet. Vivamus at a g dictum varius duis. Consectetur lorem de

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 bv8EiHDRV3IW54LEkg/edit?
utm content=DAGFHhkq3Zc&utm campaign=designshare&utm medium=link2&utm source=sharebutton



END OF YEAR Require 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

www.amandazieba.com Teachers Pay Teachers: The Word Nerd

Use these slides to introduce the project!







Step 2:
Fill it with books,
using the list on the

following slides.

avorite Book

Character



Best Book You Read This Year

4

5



The most _____ book you read this year.

Fill in the book with an encotional ective.

For example: superiseful, saf, thrilling, ecting, etc.

For example: superiseful, saf, thrilling, ecting, etc.

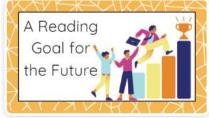
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10

11 12







13

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14

Use these <u>slides</u> 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!



ection GRADE/YEAR: ___ ON MY YEAR OF Reading proud THAT I ... WHAT IS ONE THING YOU ARE PROUD OF THIS YEAR WHEN IT COMES TO READING? favorite BOOK. favorite AUTHOR FAVORITE Character-Looking Ahead.. IN THIS BOX, WRITE A READING GOAL THAT YOU HAVE FOR THE FUTURE. favorite SETTING-FAVORITE genne on format-- BOOK I WANT to read this symmer -



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

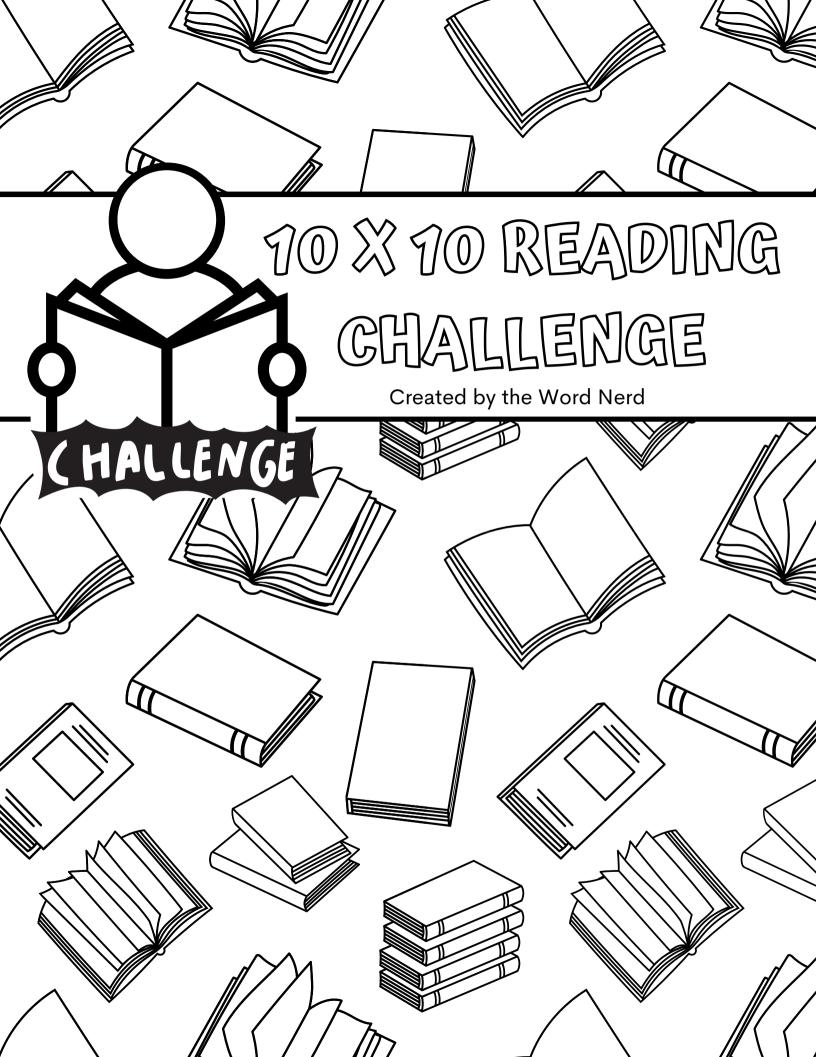
DOOK LIST				
Favorite book from childhood				
$\ \square$ Best book you read th	is year			
\square A book featuring your	favorite character			
☐ A book featuring a ver	ry cool setting			
 The most book you read this year. (Fill in the book with an emotion/adjective, for example: suspenseful, sad, thrilling, 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 				
J				
Favorite Childhood Book	Best book I read this year	Favorite Character		
Coolest Setting	Most book I read this year	Favorite Author		
Reading Achievement	Reading Goal	A book I want to read		



NAME: _____







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?

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

^{**} See next page for student reflection response sheet.

Class

Name:

TIME TO REFLECT

Date:

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?



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!

Who?

When?

Who?

When?

Who?

When?

Who?

When?

Who?

When?

Initials

Initials

Initials

Initials

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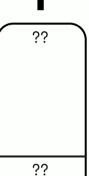
Created by the Word Nerd



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

CHALLENGE

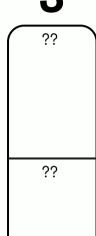
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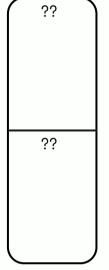
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3



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5

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Challenge

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Initials

Initials

Initials

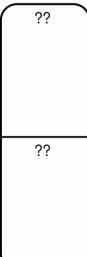
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Initials

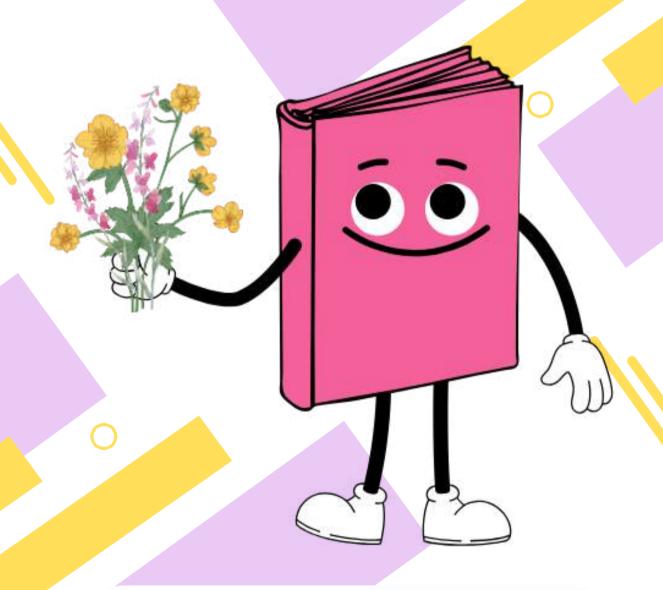
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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



MAY 2025





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.

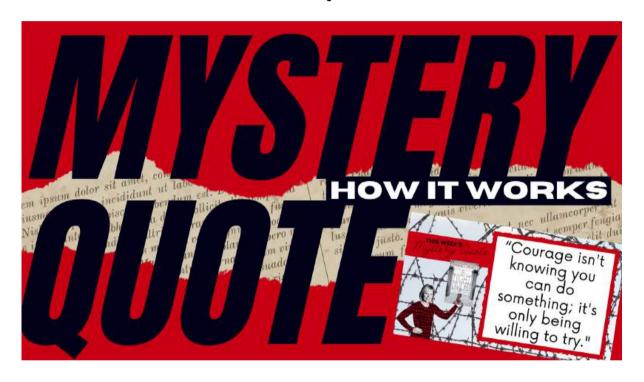


Links to the First Chapter Friday Playlist





Watch this <u>quick video</u> 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.

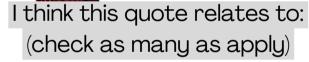
Name	

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



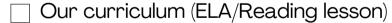
Book Title:





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🔲 My li	ife:
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	Another	book I	l have	read
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Othon	
Other	



I want to continue reading this book.



I do not want to continue reading this book.

	Name
First Cha	pter Friday
My rating of this book's	0 0 0 0
beginning:	I rate this book's beginning stars because
WWWW	Decause
Emotions I felt as I listened to this chapter:	
Happy Intrigued Hopefu	ul Digust Nervous Joyful
Focused Sad Frustrate	ed Confident Jealous Bored
Excited Fear Angry Er	ntertained other:
me in or pushed me	e away were because

-Created by The Word Nerd —

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

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!

Color in a square for ea	h quote correctly written. The 1st team to fill their boxes wi
TEAM #	
EAM # 2	
TEAM #3	
#4 #4	
TEAM #2	

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.c
om/watch?
v=9FMJS7DSQGc&list=PLpVe6VlpCwJbmCUW
sqaBtErvoLVQ9TMJ



INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC PLAYLIST

Looking for the perfect background music for your classroom? This <u>playlist</u> is ideal for quiet work time, independent writing, and focused classroom activities. With soft, soothing melodies and no lyrics to distract your students, this video sets the tone for calm, concentration, and creativity. 30 and 60 minute options are available. A variety of playlists, videos, moods and vibes are available, pick one, press play and then watch your students' focus and productivity soar!











FIVE 30-60 MINUTE INSTRUMENTAL PLAYSLISTS

In case you need to copy and paste this link for students, here it is:

https://www.youtube.co

m/playlist?
list=PLpVe6VlpCwJbnJw
JsASvvKvkxsMsW6UNw



AS WE END ONE SCHOOL YEAR...

and begin thinking about another... I'd love the chance to talk with each of you about your plans for next year and how I can help make it your best school year yet!

Please <u>sign up for a 15 minute time slot</u> to chat with me about:

- What you love about WNC
- What improvements you'd like to see for WNC
- Future ideas for WNC
- Units you need help with next year
- Fun summer plans!
- 5555

Use this link to sign up for a day/time.

Thank you in advance for your time! I am super looking forward to chatting with you! •

- AMANDA

P.S. Even if you don't want to chat one on one, can you please fill out <u>the form</u>? There will be space for you to share your thoughts/wishes/hopes/dreams/critiques/plans and more! Thank you!!