Mystery Book Project

There are two parts to this project:
1. choosing and reading a mystery book and
2. preparing a Mystery Book Project.

This project should be a lot of fun and I've tried to include a number of choices to get your creative juices flowing! The first thing you need to do is to pick out a mystery book to read. Be sure to find a mystery book that is challenging and that you will find interesting and enjoyable to read!

**Important dates to remember:**

*October 26th* Return the bottom portion of this sheet, signed by you and a parent. This tells me that you have shown this project to one of your parents and that you have chosen a mystery book to read. Returning this on time is worth 5 points!

*November 8th* Submit a status report to your teacher. What do I mean by a status report? I want a neatly written paragraph (see the next page) telling me how far you are with your book and what project you plan to complete. Handing in your status report on time is worth 5 more points!

*November 30th* Book projects are due! Bring your book along with your book project into school. We will draw names to see in what order each student will present their project to the class.

I, __________________________, have chosen the following mystery book to read: ________________________________ by ________________________.

I will prepare a status report by November 8th and will have the book read and my book project done by November 30th.

_________________________ Student signature  ________________________ Parent Signature
Status Report - due November 8th

Name ________________________________
Date ________________________________

I am reading the following book for the Mystery Book Project:
______________________________________________________________________________________________

This is what I plan to do for my project:
______________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________

This is how far I am with my project (be honest!). Remember part of the project is reading the book! Check one below:

   o I am still reading and don’t know what I’m doing for my project
   o I am still finishing my book, but have planned out my project
   o I have finished reading my book and have started my project
   o I am about halfway done with my project
   o I am almost done with my project
   o I am done and plan to hand it in early

We are aware that the Book Project is due in class on November 30th.

__________________________________________  _______________________________________
Student signature                          Parent Signature
The following are different formats (followed below by a description of each) you may use for your project:

- Acrostic poems
- Book cover
- Book cube
- Character trading cards
- Mystery web hunt on the Internet - create your own - parental permission required!
- Poster
- Puzzle Piece Mystery Book Project
- Reader’s Theater
- Story writing options:
  - point of view
  - write your own mystery story
  - write a sequel chapter to the story you read
- Scrapbook - create a scrapbook of super secret sleuthing ideas.

Any other project you would like as long as you discuss it with Mrs. Arendt, Mrs. Barron or Mrs. Hanavan and get prior approval from one of us.

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Project Descriptions

Acrostic poems
Do you like poetry? Are you creative and intuitive? Well, this project may be the right one for you! Create acrostic poems for each of the characters in the story along with an illustration of each character. In an acrostic poem the first letter of a character’s name is the first letter of a word or phrase that relates to that character.

For example: Just clumsy Inclined to cry Lively and Lovely

\{ Jill

************* 
**Book Cover**
Do you like to draw? Have you ever thought about a career in graphic design or illustration? Then this might be the right project for you! Design a book cover for your book. Don’t forget to design a back for your book cover. Often the back of the book cover includes a write-up on the author or a short paragraph summarizing the book itself. Be sure you don’t give away the ending of the story, especially since this is a mystery book!

Be sure to include the following information on your book cover:
- book title
- author(s) of the book
- illustrator(s) of the book
- picture/illustration (by you!)
- any awards the book has won
- don’t forget the back cover

**Book Cube**
This is another fun project for those students who are artistically inclined! I have a book cube template you can use to design and put together a book cube. You need to see me to get a copy of the template. There are 6 sides to the book cube: Setting, Crime, Clues, Victim, Detective and Solution. You need to write out (or type) a few sentences for each side as well as colorfully illustrate each side. Once your cube is all designed you cut it out and put it together following the directions printed on the template.

**Character Trading Cards**
Do you like sports trading cards? Do you enjoy reading the statistics printed on trading cards? Well, put that interest to good use on this project! Create character trading cards for each of the characters in the story. Don’t forget that trading cards contain lots of information and statistics on the player so you need to include information (detailed descriptions) on each of your character trading cards! Be creative!
Mystery Web hunt on the Internet  *Parental guidance and approval required for this project as it involves the Internet!*

Calling all computer geeks! Enjoy surfing the web? There are lots of computer websites that have mystery web hunts. This is a very open-ended project choice, as you will essentially be creating your own project depending on what you find on the various websites that pique your interest! Design your own mystery project but be sure to check it out with Mrs. Arendt, Mrs. Barron or Mrs. Hanavan:

Below I have listed a few websites to get you started:

http://kids.mysterynet.com/
http://library.thinkquest.org/J002344/StoryStarters.html
http://www.teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/mystery/
http://library.thinkquest.org/J002344/Hunt.html
http://library.thinkquest.org/J002344/History.html?tqskip1=1
http://library.thinkquest.org/J002344/?tqskip1=1
http://library.thinkquest.org/J002344/Vocabulary.html
http://library.thinkquest.org/J002344/Anatomy.html

**Poster**
Here’s another creative idea that you might like to try! It combines writing and drawing. Create a poster persuading other students to read your mystery book. You should have an attention-grabbing format that makes people want to read your book. Give enough information to make people want to read the book, but be careful not to share too much information and give away the ending!

**Puzzle Piece Mystery Book Project**
Do you like putting together jigsaw puzzles? Do you like writing clues and solving mysteries? If so, this just might be the perfect mystery project for you! Mystery stories are written puzzles made for a reader. To complete this project, you will make a nine-piece puzzle that gives the reader clues about the story you have read independently. *See the complete directions on the next page!*
**Materials Needed**
Puzzle pieces  
Coloring pencils or markers  
Tag board

1. Number your pieces 1–9.  
2. On piece #1 should be a creative display of the title and author of the book as well as your name.  
3. Piece #2 should tell the reader about the main character and secondary characters in your book as well as include a picture of the main character.  
4. Piece #3 should tell the reader about the setting of the book.  
5. Piece #4 should tell the reader the problem of the book.  
6. Piece #5 should tell the reader about the main events of the book.  
7. Piece #6 should tell the reader about the climax (or high point) of the book.  
8. Piece #7 should tell the reader three clues about the problem of the book.  
9. Piece #8 should give a hint of the solution of the problem but not give away the ending.  
10. Piece #9 should be your personal rating of the book.  
11. Put your pieces together on a large piece of tag board. Decorate the edges in the theme of your book.

**Reader’s Theater**
Do you like acting? Would you like to be a famous playwright someday or even an actor? Do you read with a lot of expression? Well, this may be your lucky break! Try your hand at Reader’s Theater!

What is it? Reader’s Theater is nothing more than a method of presenting the action and dialogue of a story without all the movement and need for props and costumes that a play requires. In it students each take a part to play. The narrator can be one of these parts. After practicing, students perform an episode or scene from the book by reading it aloud to the audience. They do not have to memorize any lines. They hold their script the entire time. The performance comes in the development of the characters through the use of vocal and facial expressions. How do you do this?

Select a scene from the book that relies less on action and more on dialogue. Choose characters and edit the script. You need to **rewrite** the script (an episode or chapter in the book) to eliminate unnecessary wording. After you have rewritten a scene, rehearse the voices. Be creative! You want to create a distinct voice for each character. Rehearse for facial expressions, too. Remember to have the readers who aren’t reading show a reaction to the lines of another character. This is a lot of fun!
Story Writing Options

Point of View
Have you ever read *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* by Jon Scieszka? This story is told from the wolf’s point of view. For the Point of View project you can choose another one of the characters in the book and rewrite an episode from that character’s point of view! Remember, there are two sides to every story!

Write Your Own Mystery Story
Let the creative, mysterious juices flow with this one! Write your own mystery story. At the end of this document I have included two pages of tips on writing your own mystery stories. Trust me, these tips are good - they are off Scholastic’s website!

Write a Sequel Chapter
Did you enjoy your book so much that you wish it didn’t end? Well, you can fix that! Write your own sequel chapter using the characters and setting already set up in the book you read!

Scrapbook
Do you like scrapbooking or want to give it a try? This is your opportunity! Create a scrapbook of super secret sleuthing ideas or even a scrapbook of the characters that appeared in your book. This project is open-ended and perfect for creative, innovative students!

On the following pages you will find the Grading Rubric for this project along with tips for writing your own mystery story.

This project is worth 200 points toward your grade in Reading. Your grade will reflect the time and effort you put forth! Make yourself proud!

Good luck and enjoy!
This project is worth 200 points toward your grade in Reading. Your grade will reflect the time and effort you put forth! Make yourself proud!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content</strong></td>
<td>Well organized, creative - an awesome project!</td>
<td>A really good project! Creative and well done.</td>
<td>Fair. This project should have been better.</td>
<td>Not a lot of time or effort was put into this project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Presentation</strong></td>
<td>Beautifully done! Neat, pleasing to the eye! Reflects a great deal of time and effort.</td>
<td>Well done! Neat, pleasing to the eye! Reflects a lot of time and effort.</td>
<td>Fair project. Somewhat sloppy. Does not reflect a lot of time or effort.</td>
<td>Not a lot of time or effort was put into this project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spelling/Grammar</strong></td>
<td>No spelling or grammar mistakes! Perfect!</td>
<td>Almost perfect! Very few spelling or grammar mistakes.</td>
<td>Some spelling and/or grammar mistakes.</td>
<td>Project has a number of spelling and/or grammar mistakes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Timeliness</strong></td>
<td><em>All</em> parts of the project turned in early or on time.</td>
<td>Most of the parts of the project were turned in on time.</td>
<td>Some of the parts of the project were turned in on time.</td>
<td>Initial parent signature, status report and/or project late.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Write Your Own Mystery Story - Tips

Below are Writing Tips for Writing Your Own Mystery (from the Scholastic Website).

There are a lot of elements to writing a mystery. These tips should help you brainstorm! You'll see I've included all the steps you'll need to create a story full of surprise and suspense. Read through them, and start making notes for your mystery.

Every story begins with an idea. Keep your eyes, ears, and mind open to ideas. Ask yourself what if? Try looking for ideas as you read the newspaper. Did burglars hit three houses on one street in the middle of the day? How did they know no one would be home? What were the burglars looking for? What if you decided to be a detective and solved the crime? Use the newspaper story as a springboard and jump into your own idea.

Your main character is the most important part of your story. The main character will determine in which direction the plot will grow. Is your main character a new girl at school who covers up her insecurity by bragging a lot? How will her personality affect the way the story is solved? Step inside your character’s mind. Then ask yourself, "Now what will I do?"

Choose minor characters who will be in your story. Does your main character have a best friend who will help her sort out the clues? Best friends are good to include, because the main character needs someone to talk to. Are there people who don't want the main character to solve the mystery? Who are they?

The plot of any story is this: The main character has a problem, and must solve it by him or herself. In a mystery story, the problem has to do with the solution of the mystery. What is the mystery idea you've chosen? Is it a crime? Is it something scary? What should the main character discover? And what — or who — is going to get in the way, so the solution to the mystery won't be too easy?

Make a list of clues that you can use in your story. One should be the crucial clue. This crucial clue is one piece of important information that helps the main character finally solve the mystery. The crucial clue might be something that points directly to the perpetrator of the crime. For example, maybe one character — Sam — says that he received a strange telephone call at eight o'clock. Later in the story, the main character receives information about where all the suspects were at eight o’clock, remembers what Sam had said about receiving a call at that time, and knows that it couldn't possibly have happened. Your detective then realizes that Sam is the perpetrator.

Think about "red herrings." Red herrings are bits of information that are designed to mislead readers by making them suspect the wrong characters. Red herrings are fun to include because they make mysteries harder to solve. Maybe you want readers to suspect the main character's little brother, who has a real fondness for peanut butter and grape jelly sandwiches. Suppose your main character finds smeared jelly fingerprints in a suspicious place. Readers will immediately think of the little brother's sandwiches — especially if
your main character is disturbed by the jelly stains — and they won’t notice if you slip in a real clue.

**Suspense is an important ingredient in a mystery story.** Footsteps coming up the stairs in the dark, a doorknob silently turning, a suspect arriving when he's not expected, an unanswered question about one of the characters — there are many ways to make your stories suspenseful. Allow your characters to be scared. Your readers will identify with him or her, and they’ll be scared, too.

**The setting should fit the mood of the story.** Think about where you want your story to take place. Should it be at night? On a foggy morning? During a thunderstorm? Maybe the day is sunny and bright, but the character has to explore the dark passages of a deserted building. What was that noise? Rats? Footsteps? Describe the dark passages. Let readers see the building. Write so vividly that readers feel they are there with your character.

**Look for the best place in which to begin your story.** Mystery stories should begin with action, with suspense, with something interesting or exciting happening. Readers should meet the main characters and be introduced to the mystery right at the beginning.

**Know how your story will end before you begin to write it.** It’s easy to begin writing and surprise yourself on every page, then discover that in the middle of your story you’ve written yourself into a box. Think over various solutions to your character's problem, remembering that she has to solve the mystery herself. She’s in charge. It’s her story.

As you think over ideas, you’re going to discard some of them because you’ll see they won’t work. When the right solution comes along, you’ll know it, and you’ll be able to begin your story. It’s all right for the middle of your story to remain flexible. You might think of something funny or exciting or interesting for your main character to do that you hadn't expected when you began writing. It’s the ending that must stay in place. You won’t lose your story and have to begin again with another idea if you know where your main character is going.