

Class Recap: Becoming a Detective!

Today, we learned that every great mystery story is a puzzle built from specific parts. We looked closely at clues, suspects, and those tricky red herrings!

The 5 Essential Elements of a Mystery

Element	Definition	Example
1. The Problem / Puzzle	What needs to be solved? The crime, the disappearance, or the unusual event.	<i>The pencils are missing.</i>
2. The Detective	The character trying to solve the problem.	<i>Nancy Drew, Sherlock Holmes, or you!</i>
3. Clues	The hints, evidence, or pieces of information the detective finds.	<i>A muddy footprint, a dropped key.</i>
4. Suspects	The people who might have committed the crime (or caused the problem).	<i>Anyone with a motive or opportunity.</i>
5. The Solution	The puzzle is solved, and the Culprit (the person who did it) is revealed.	<i>The Art Teacher took the pencils.</i>

The Tricky Clue: Red Herrings

A Red Herring is a false clue—it's a piece of information that makes the detective (and the reader!) look at the wrong person. Mystery writers use these tricks to make the story last longer and keep you guessing!

- Example from our game: The greasy pizza stain was a Red Herring because it had nothing to do with the stolen pencils.

The Detective's Journal Homework Assignment

You have two weeks to complete this assignment. You will keep a Detective's Journal (use a notebook or binder paper) to record your findings and plan your own mystery.

Part 1: Observation and Analysis

Mission 1: The Clue Collector 🔍

Your job is to observe your world carefully and collect three unique observations that could be used as clues in a mystery story (at home, in your neighborhood, etc.).

For each clue, you must answer these three questions in your journal:

The Clue (What did you see?) | The Analysis (What does the clue tell you for sure?)
The Theory (What mystery could this clue belong to, and who is a possible suspect?)



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