



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
1995 Volume I: Gender, Race, and Milieu in Detective Fiction

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## **That's Not Fair**

Curriculum Unit 95.01.03  
by Mary-Alice Howley

These are exciting times, especially in the middle schools. From the superintendent on down, the City of New Haven is implementing middle school curriculum reform. To facilitate this reform teachers and librarians throughout New Haven are applying to The Library Power Grant Task Force for thousands of dollars in grant money. Meanwhile, though at Betsy Ross Arts Magnet School, the fifth graders are entering the remedial reading program in greater numbers with the lowest reading levels seen in years. This YNHTI curriculum unit was developed in response to this situation, and part of this unit was used in a successful application for a Library Power Grant.

This curriculum unit, "That's Not Fair", addresses several needs. It reforms the Betsy Ross curriculum through collaboration among the reading department, the drama department and the library. It has garnered five hundred dollars worth of new books for Betsy Ross's Library. And it provides the fifth graders with whole series of detective fiction in a wide range of reading levels.

Typically, the incoming fifth grade reading classes contain twenty to twenty-five students whose independent reading levels range from first to fourth grade. The reading levels of the books in this curriculum unit range from first to fifth grade so that the books can be read by the students with ease, and thus with pleasure. Since the students are an ethnic mix, these books have ethnically diverse and adolescent main characters so that the students can readily identify with them. In addition, the wide assortment allows for individual choice and growth.

Why detective fiction? Primarily for motivation. Adolescents have a very keen sense of justice whether they are personally involved or not. They can be eloquent on the injustice of a foul call, self-righteous over a library pass given to one but not another, and downright indignant at cheating during a friendly game of Uno. This unit taps into some of this emotional intensity, for within the pages of detective fiction justice triumphs to the reader's satisfaction.

To be most effective the reading class should be a springboard for the students to develop individual reading habits. Towards this end, many of the selections are from series in the hopes that once a student has sampled, for example, a Baby Sitters Club Mystery, she will read them all on her own. The Super Snoop Sam Snout series by Anne LeMieux has a reading level of first grade eighth month. The Cam Jansen series by David A. Adler is on about the second grade level. The Boxcar children by Gertrude Chandler Warner is at the third grade level as are the mysteries by Clyde Robert Bulla. Anne M. Martin's Baby Sitters Club Mysteries are on a

fourth grade level. T.J. Edwards' Sports Mysteries stretch up to fourth grade ninth month. B.B. Calhoun's Dinosaur Detective series is at approximately a fifth grade reading level. Such a wide span of reading levels gives every student in the class a mystery that he or she can read independently. It also provides the students with the opportunity to advance into more demanding books.

Since this unit will be directed at an incoming class of fifth graders with divergent reading levels, the class will not be studying one novel together. Rather, each student will be assigned a book at his or her reading level, and the class lessons will apply to any and all mysteries.

Whatever the book or the lesson the overall purpose of this teaching unit is to appeal to the students' sense of what is fair in order to consider values, teach logical thinking skills, expand writing skills and inveigle the students into a lifelong habit of reading.

One place to start is to study the main characters of the stories. What makes a good detective? From Super Sleuth Sam Snout to Fenton Rumplemeyer, the detective doesn't give up. He has pluck. The Boxcar children, for example, spend days pedalling all over town following clues to a long lost coin collection.

The detective is curious—driven to find out. Rather than tell Heather to put her yogurt in a lunch box and quit complaining, Sam Snout cannot forget about the funny hole poked in the top of her yogurt container. He lays a clever trap, tinfoil over a peanut butter jar, to demonstrate that crows were eating her yogurt.

The detective is observant. In children's literature especially, whatever he notices is important. In general, chapter book pages are not wasted on red herrings. In *The Case of the Missing Pitchers*, Bryan wonders why the note is typed, and Cory draws the conclusion that it's typed because whoever wrote it could not imitate Sam's handwriting. Lara figures out that, therefore, Sam did not write the letter. Later in the community center they find a manual typewriter with a mangled ribbon. Sure enough, the miscreant is the player with inky stains on his uniform. He is the one who typed the misleading note and locked Sam in a broom closet just before the key game of the season. Obviously, in *The Sports Mysteries* observation as well as inductive reasoning are a team effort.

The detective also has background knowledge, usually in the sciences. Encyclopedia Brown knows that when a person moves from a subfreezing area into a room heated at 70 degrees, the person's glasses will steam up. Therefore, the caretaker could not have seen the two robbers fleeing as he had claimed.

In addition, the background knowledge can be about people, what people do, think and feel. Jessi and her boyfriend Quint in the *Baby-sitters Club Mystery #8* overhear a conversation about a jewel robbery. They investigate only to find out that the two men are Just actors rehearsing. That's ok because the setting is Manhattan where many people are employed in the theater. They follow the suspects around the city to a lot of neat places; they almost kiss, but Quint's cute little sister interrupts them at the crucial moment. And finally, they decide to be Just friends. There's very little actual mystery in the baby-sitter club series and a great deal of interpersonal problem solving and consensus building.

In all of these books, the detective has friends who share his interests and lend support. Fenton Rumplemeyer has Maggie Carr who, much to his surprise, knows as much about dinosaurs as he does. Encyclopedia Brown has the athletic Sally Kimball who is able to whip Bugs Meany with her flying fists. The Aldens are a family. The Sonics are a team. Jessi is backed by her club. Cam Jansen is assisted by Eric Shelton, and Sam Snout calls on his grandfather. The novels of Clyde Robert Bulla have ever changing groups of characters. (But perhaps fifth graders can be convinced to follow an author as loyally as they follow favorite characters.) In sum, those

novels in which girls and boys work together to solve a mystery appeal to a wider readership and can be used to greater effect in group activities.

The students progress from reading about detectives to being detectives. They get to be plucky, curious, observant, knowledgeable and part of a group. Sam Snout, Cam Jansen, and Encyclopedia Brown stories with the solution withheld lend themselves to group activities where four students, working together, try to solve the case. The students have to determine which clues are important. They theorize as to who is lying and who is telling the truth. They might have to do research. But always they will consider a logical explanation for the facts. In such cooperative learning activities the students read about and become detectives.

Detective fiction also provides the opportunity to teach some difficult lessons about thinking. The thought processes that are automatic for some students need to be reviewed step by step before other students understand how to arrive at a solution. A lesson can be devoted to distinguishing between facts and opinions, for example. Once the facts are established then a judgment can be made on which facts solve the case. The distinction also can be made between inductive reasoning, which works from details to a conclusion, and deductive reasoning, which starts with the conclusion and looks for facts to prove it. The students will have to determine which kind of thinking is called for and then proceed accordingly to solve the case. and then proceed accordingly to solve the case.

The values exemplified by these juvenile detectives, as well as their logical thought processes, are worth noting. They constantly add to their knowledge of things and people. Learning is admired and an education is shown to be useful time and again. They frequently use their talents to help others in a social context. The mysteries they solve help the group just as the crime that is committed harms the group. The tension created by a wrong that should be righted gives their activities import and makes for compelling reading.

In order for the detective to save the day, however, someone has to do something wrong. In most of these series villains come and go, but Bugs Meany from the Encyclopedia Brown series endures. He's a bully. Mostly he tricks little kids into giving him their money until Encyclopedia exposes the scam. Bugs is then shamed into making restitution. Fenton Rumpelmayr faces a similar bully in Buster Cregg. Buster says mean things to people, shoves his way into lines, and disparages learning. He's a threat to all the students who want an education. It's a particularly nice touch that Fenton exposes Buster by making a science project on mistakes in paleontology. After Fenton's presentation, it's impossible for Buster to pass off a dromaeosaurid claw glued onto an iguana skeleton as a new type of dinosaur.

In real life the bully is a character all fifth graders have to deal with, especially when they are entering a middle school and are the smallest people in the building. Those mysteries in which the bully is bested by brains should give them a pleasing vicarious satisfaction.

Thieves also steal their way into juvenile detective fiction. The thief can be another child or an adult. Sam Snout's good friend April stole a snowman and packed it away in her family's freezer. Because she was so kind-hearted, she didn't want to see the snowman melt. But most thieves are not so sympathetic. Cam Jansen catches an adult thief who was bilking a department store by taking merchandise to the returns department. This way the thief left the store with money instead of bulky items that security could spot. Bob Weldon tries to steal an original Mozart manuscript in *The Mystery of the Stolen Music*, a Boxcar Children's Mystery #45. There are two other suspects, but Benny, Violet, Henry, Jessie and their friend Soo Lee do the leg work that apprehends the true thief.

Stealing is a crime that students experience first hand. Pencil snatching is a sport at the middle school level.

Books appear and disappear as if by magic. A student who walks down the halls with his backpack unzipped is fair game.

A good deal of the missing belongings are just left, forgotten until they are needed. The students are more likely to be victims of their own disorganization than of petty thievery. However, when something is finally missed, the student will suspect that someone stole it and make that accusation publicly. The problem of theft is an issue close to their fifth grade hearts, and books dealing with this issue will in all likelihood get read.

When another child has been stolen or kidnapped the crime gets serious. The students read milk cartons. They have all have been warned about talking to strangers and getting into cars. Also the media makes a TV special on the issue of kidnapping practically every six months. When the Sonics' star pitcher is missing, the team goes into action and wins the baseball game. The criminals in this case are two members of the Hornets who want to be noticed by the scouts for a baseball summer camp. Neither motive, nor crime are beyond a fifth grader's scope. Fortunately, the crime isn't made scary. The criminals are kids, and Sam is locked in a closet for an hour. In the Sports Mysteries the bully is routed by team work.

Finally, there are the mysteries which have no villain. These are treasure hunts. Bulla's *Ghost Town Treasure* is typical of this plot. Ty, Nora and Paul follow clues left in a grandfather's diary. With perseverance they explore the foothills until they see the cross made by shadows at sunset. They locate the cave, but find no treasure. But the cave becomes a tourist attraction, a gold mine of another sort, which saves the ghost town of Gold Rock from extinction.

Jessi and Quint's mistake of thinking the actors were jewel thieves appears in another mystery without a criminal. But in a series that puts people first, misjudging someone is a social crime.

By focusing on the crime and the criminal, this unit asks questions on values. What law was broken? Why does society have this law? What beliefs did the criminal oppose? Why do people believe this? What was the criminal's excuse? How was the criminal's thinking flawed? Such questions can use mystery stories for an objective discussion on laws, morality and ethics.

Through discussion of the criminal characters, the plot is also analyzed. Fifth graders are usually introduced to plot by a discussion of sequence, use of the 5 W's, or by dividing the plot into parts: problem, rising action, turning point and solution.

The treasure hunt mysteries lend themselves to a study of sequence. For instance, the student could easily fill out a sequence map for each clue Benny uncovers in *The Mystery Behind the Wall* .

The 5 W's take the detective's perspective. Who had the opportunity to steal the yogurt? When and Where was it stolen? What clues were found? How was the crime done? Why was the crime committed? The Sam Snout series lays out the crimes in this fashion, but the same method can be applied to any of the mysteries.

The story diagram usually takes the form of an isosceles triangle. The problem of the story, the crime, is written over the bottom left-hand point. Main events of the plot climb up the side of the triangle where each important clue is mentioned. The turning point is written at the second angle. Also known as the climax, the turning point occurs when the detective knows the answer to the problem and is no longer searching. The story ends with the solution explained by the detective and placed at the third right-hand angle of the triangle. These diagrams can be quite artistic, especially when done in primary colors on huge pieces of paper.

In juvenile detective fiction the solution is often a gentle one. The punishment fits the crime. April returns the snowman to the playground. Sam takes a picture of the snowman before it melts and gives the picture to her. They remain friends. Buster returns the stolen dinosaur claw, iguana skeleton and what is left of the California chewing gum. In return Fenton does not tell any adults how Buster tried to cheat on his science fair project. Sam is discovered in his closet in time to win the game. The players who locked him there have to sit out the last innings and lose all chance of being selected for baseball camp. Justice prevails.

The treasure hunt mysteries have tangible rewards along with their solutions. Benny finds the coins. Everybody gets to keep a coin, and kindly old Professor Nichols buys the rest. Ty's reward in *Ghost Town Treasure* is to stay in Gold Rock. His parents can now make a living selling groceries to the tourists, and he gets to keep his horse. All of his problems get solved along with the mystery of the hidden cave. The solution is a large factor in the appeal of detective fiction.

Less common than a study of characters and plot, but still worth noting, the setting of detective fiction ties in with social studies. Can Jansen, Sam Snout, *Encyclopedia Brown* and the *Sports Mysteries* are all set in suburbia. Fortunately for the suburban detective, crime is rampant; however, it is not out of control. The crimes do get solved. Mystery stories explode the stereotype of the perfect suburban community. The suburb has its malcontents who break the community's laws and upset its order. In contrast, Jessi's trip to the big city reads like an informative tourist guide of Central Park. From the petting zoo to Alice in Wonderland's statue, the city is a child's playground. Even the criminals aren't criminals.

For the setting of their books Clyde Robert Bulla and B.B. Calhoun take their readers out West. Bulla's *Ghost Town Treasure* is set in California. Even though the time frame is the present, the town of Gold Rock is steeped in its past. It is a former boom town that went bust when the gold ran out, and the highway passed it by. This story contains the romance of western tales with its love of horses, appreciation of the landscape and legend of missing gold.

Calhoun's *Fair Play* is more modern. It's set in Wyoming at a dinosaur fossil dig site. This setting presents the opportunity for the reader to find out scientific terminology and information concerning dinosaur classification, discovery and display.

The fourth aspect of a story, the theme or main idea, is consistent in detective fiction. Crime doesn't pay. Criminal behavior is an embarrassment. The bully is unpopular. No one likes a thief. In detective fiction peer pressure is brought to bear on the person who fails to respect the rights of others. The moral is not spelled out in an italicized tag at the very end of the novel. Instead the moral of the theme is even more effective for being strongly implied. No reader, especially in the fifth grade, likes to be told what to do, but they do like to get the main idea for themselves. While the theme or main idea of a story is often difficult for literal readers to articulate, detective fiction is one place where the theme is easy for them to comprehend.

The theme of the treasure hunt mysteries is a bit less humanitarian. Benny Alden is comic in his eagerness as he chases after the lost coin collection. The Lord helps those who help themselves". "A penny saved is a penny earned. In idle hands are the devil's workshop. n Benny fights boredom by hunting the treasure. He keeps himself and his friend busy, and all his work has a monetary payoff. Hard work and brain work are valued as much as the money. Ben Franklin would be proud of Benny and his creator Gertrude Chandler Warner.

Bulla's treasure hunt mystery has an outcome that benefits the entire community. First Ty and his horse benefit because they get to stay together. His family benefits from the rush of tourist dollars. Mr. Starbuck

reopens his hotel. A neighbor begins giving tours of the cave. Plans are made for a state park. The treasure turns out to be not gold, but a natural phenomenon, a beautiful limestone cave. In this mystery, community and natural resources are valued, and the theme concerns these issues.

The above approaches to studying mysteries follow the standard ways in which novels are taught in the curriculum. Dissect the story into its aspects: characters, plot, setting and theme. Use graphic organizers to reinforce a sense of sequence. Ask who, what, when, where and why to cover all the avenues of inquiry. Break down the parts of a plot to further comprehension. Locate the setting on a map and discuss its relevance to the plot. From a list of statements choose the best theme for the story.

But a teaching unit based on mystery should go beyond the requirements of the Connecticut Mastery Test. Thanks to the Library Power Grant, the reading teacher, drama teacher and librarian can collaborate so that the students approach mysteries in a more creative fashion.

The Librarian presides over a crime fighting center in the library where the mystery series will be kept. The students are able to check out mystery books for home reading as well as classroom use. Everyone is required to read at least one mystery, and all students are encouraged to read as many books as they can. The librarian assists the reading teacher in matching student to series by reading level. The library computers are used to write newspaper articles on the crimes found in the mystery series. The computers also enable the students to layout and publish these articles in a newspaper format.

The drama teacher uses creative dramatics to teach the mysteries. Her students improvise courtroom dramas based on the mystery stories. They write and act out character scenes from the stories. Both teachers collaborate on writing newspaper articles about the sensational crimes from the mysteries. These articles are published with pictures of the students dressed as the characters from the stories. These pictures not only show the detective at work, but also show the criminal characters caught in the middle of their nefarious crimes. Because these creative activities require an audience or a readership, the students constantly recommend books to each other as they perform scenes and write about crimes.

To generate enthusiasm for crime solving, a criminologist from the New Haven Police Department is invited to give a talk and dust for fingerprints.

In addition, the curriculum unit features videos and activity books that tie into the Children's Television Workshop television show *Ghost Writer*. To keep the fifth graders' minds engaged and their enthusiasm high, the activities include secret codes, word games, map reading and very short mystery stories. Another advantage of this program is the ethnic diversity of the *Ghost Writer* characters.

Finally, *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*, a picture book by Chris Van Allsburg, will provoke the students' imaginations. Each haunting picture in this book has an intriguing caption. Reading levels do not apply here, only creative imagination. By explaining the mysterious pictures, the students begin by telling stories and conclude by writing them.

The time frame for this teaching unit is a marking period in length, ten weeks, three classes a week. The project will be considered successful if 100% of the students read a mystery book and 50% read more than one mystery book. Also 100% of the students are expected to complete a project in drama. These projects can be a book report, a dramatized scene, a character study, a newspaper article, or a crime scene set. All of these projects will be evaluated upon completion. A reading record log will monitor students' reading progress by tallying the pages read.

This curriculum unit is organized to maximize the number of opportunities for fifth grade students to read independently. By appealing to their desire for fair play and introducing them to detective fiction in series, perhaps next year's fifth grade class will read more books than they ever have before.

### **LESSON PLAN: The Library**

To catch the students' interest this unit begins with a corpse in the library. In addition to motivation, the objectives of this lesson are to introduce the incoming fifth graders to the library. The students use the card catalog, the atlases and encyclopedias in the reference section, the library computers, the detective fiction collection and the Dewy decimal system. By the end of the class each student will leave the library with a book of detective fiction in his or her possession.

The eighth grade drama students enact the following vignette. A corpse with multiple spider bites and a large fuzzy spider on its face will be discovered in the stacks of the library. Two emergency workers, the police and a coroner are summoned. The policeman makes his chalk outline and the coroner pronounces the corpse dead. The coroner finds an I.D. in the victim's pocket, Dr. Schmedlap, arachnologist. A list of call numbers are clutched in the corpse's hand. Under his stiff body is a copy of a Spiderman comic book (the red herring). The emergency workers carry the late Dr. Schmedlap out on a stretcher leaving the coroner and the policeman to direct the fifth graders to track down the clues.

Working in pairs the students fill out a work sheet that organizes the clues by source. They look up arachnologist in the large dictionary and copy out the definition. Other pairs of fifth graders track down the call numbers which lead to the following books. *Encyclopedia Brown Finds the Clues* contains Dr. Schmedlap's will. The *Boxcar Children's Deserted Library Mystery* holds a note from Schmedlap's stepbrother, Bob. In it Bob claims that Schmedlap stole spider statistics, the results of a spider study that Bob researched in the summer of 1995. An atlas with the page for Arizona indicates one place where spiders are found and where Bob lives. In the nonfiction section a book on spiders will show the killer spider to be a tarantula. Another spider book will contain an airline ticket stub issued to Bob Schmedlap for a flight from Tucson, Arizona to East Haven, Connecticut via Bradley Airport in Hartford.. Encyclopedia references on the computer and on the shelves give more information on spiders. *Who's Who* does not note Dr. Schmedlap, but it contains a report from Schmedlap's doctor citing his weak heart and warning against undue excitement.

A close reading of the will gives three beneficiaries. His niece Denise stands to inherit \$500,000 and control of the Schmedlap Foundation, a charitable trust dedicated to the preservation of spider habitats worldwide. Professor Jackson, a professional rival and best friend, is left Schmedlap's priceless collection of freeze dried spiders and their webs. His stepbrother Bob gets the family ranch in Arizona where Bob, surrounded by tarantulas, is now living in solitary splendor.

The information is collected on a worksheet that organizes the information by source. Then Denise, Professor Jackson and stepbrother Bob enter the library and act out their roles of grieving friend and distraught family members. The fifth graders consider the clues, and based on means, motive and opportunity, reach a consensus on the guilty party. Bob confesses and is removed by the police. The fifth graders get ten minutes at the end of class to choose a book of detective fiction which they read at home and in reading class.

### **LESSON PLAN: Process Writing and Creative Thinking**

The objectives of this lesson are to introduce the fifth graders to process writing and to have them think creatively as they explain a Van Allsburg picture.

The teacher needs to make ten copies of each picture and caption from *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*. The students choose the picture that they want to write about as a class.

The posted list of steps in process writing is shown to the class and read aloud.

1. Choose a topic.
2. Brainstorm.
3. Organize.
4. Write the first draft.
5. Edit.
6. Write the final draft.
7. Share.

The students contribute ideas that tell the story of the picture, and the teacher writes these ideas on the board. To organize these ideas, they are numbered so that they tell a story. Using this outline student volunteers write the story a sentence at a time on a large piece of chart paper. This first draft is in paragraph form. Editing occurs naturally as the students write on the chart paper; however, the final paragraph is checked a sentence at a time for spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. Finally, the student whom the class thinks has the best handwriting writes the final draft that is hung on the wall along with the Van Allsburg picture.

Then each student chooses a picture on which to brainstorm, organize and write a first draft. This first draft will be edited and shared the next time that the class meets. Further editing will take place when the students type their story onto the computer for a final spell checked draft. These individual efforts will also be hung on the walls of the classroom.

### **LESSON: Cooperative Learning and Inductive Reasoning**

The objectives of this lesson are to practice cooperative group learning and to learn about and apply inductive reasoning to a short sample of detective fiction.

The teacher clusters the schoolroom desks into six groups of four. She assigns four students to each group. Because some students may not have worked in learning groups in grammar school, she reviews the jobs in cooperative group learning. The reader reads the directions, text and final product. The writer writes down whatever the group dictates. The organizer keeps everyone on task and speaks for the group. The checker makes sure that everyone's name is on the worksheet and hands in the worksheet. These jobs are posted on a chart so that the students can refer to them during the course of the lesson. Initially, these jobs are assigned by the teacher.

The groups are given a copy of an Encyclopedia Brown story without the solution. They have ten to fifteen minutes to read the story and solve the case. The clues which lead to the solution are to be highlighted in yellow. After fifteen minutes the solution is given to the groups. They compare it to the group's solution; and if there is a need, the writer highlights more clues.



Next the groups prepare to present their detective story to the class. They decide which facts are important in the story and high light these details in orange. The organizer practices telling the story to his group. The group compiles a list of hints and questions that will help the others to solve the mystery. Each organizer tells his story using the high lighted details. The other groups try to guess the solution and are helped by the hints and questions.

Each checker presents the teacher with the highlighted copy of the story and the list of hints and questions. The teacher brings closure to the class by praising the presentations. She notes that by using the details from the story to figure out the solution to the crime they have been using inductive reasoning. Inductive reasonings is written on the board and more examples of it are given from real life situations if there is time.

## Student Bibliography

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David J. Adler, Cam Jansen and *the Mystery of the Stolen Corn Popper* . New York: Puffin Books, 1992.

The detective is a girl with a photographic memory. Reading level is 2.

----. *Mystery of the Babe Ruth Baseball*

----. *Mystery of the Carnival Prize*

----. *Mystery of the Circus Clown*

----. *Mystery of the Dinosaur Bones*

----. *Mystery of Flight 54*

----. *Mystery of the Gold Coins*

----. *Mystery of the Monkey House*

----. *Mystery of the Monster Movie*

----. *Mystery of the Stolen Diamonds*

----. *Mystery of the Television Dog*

----. *Mystery of the U.F.O.*

Clyde Robert Bulla, *Ghost Town Treasure* . New York: Puffin Books, 1994..

This treasure hunt mystery is set in a California ghost town. Reading level is 3.

----. *Eagle Feather*

----. *Last Look*

----. *Poppy Seeds, The*

Calhoun, B.B. *Fair Play* . Dinosaur Detective. New York: W.H. Freeman and Co., 1994.

Fenton and his friends combine fossil hunting with detective work. Education is valued with an emphasis on paleontology. Reading level is 5.

———. Bite Makes Right

———. On the Right Track

———. Night of Carnotaurus

Edwards, T.J. *The Case of the Missing Pitcher* . Sports Mysteries. New York: Scholastic, Inc., 1995.

The Sonics solve the mystery between innings of the ball game. Reading level is 4.9.

———. Haunted Soccer Field, The.

LeMieux, Anne. *The Case of the Stolen Snowman* . Super Sleuth Sam Snout. New York: Avon Books, 1994.

Sam uses logical thinking and occasional experimentation to solve children's mysteries. Reading level is 1.8. Helpful illustrations are included.

———. The Case of the Missing Marble.

———. The Case of the Yogurt-Poker.

Martin, Ann M. *Jessi and the Jewel Thieves* . New York: Scholastic Inc., 1993.

Very little detection or mystery occurs. This book is set in New York City. The reading level is 4.

———. Beware Dawn.

———. Dawn and the Disappearing Dogs.

———. Kristy and the Missing Child.

———. Mary Anne and the Secret in the Attic.

———. Mystery at Claudia's House.

———. Stacey and the Missing Ring.

Sobol, Donald J. *Encyclopedia Brown Takes the Case* . New York: Bantam Skylark Book, 1978.

Encyclopedia uses scientific knowledge and deductive reasoning to solve his cases. Each book contains about ten cases. Readers get to guess at the solution because the explanations are located at the back of the book. Reading level is 3.

———. Encyclopedia Brown Boy Detective.

———. Encyclopedia Brown and the Case of the Dead Eagles.

- . Encyclopedia Brown and the case of the Disgusting Sneakers.
- . Encyclopedia Brown and the Case of the Midnight Visitor.
- . Encyclopedia Brown and the Case of the Mysterious Handprints.
- . Encyclopedia Brown and the Case of the Secret Path
- . Encyclopedia Brown and the Case of the Treasure Hunt
- . Encyclopedia Brown and the Case of the Two Spies.
- . Encyclopedia Brown Finds the Clues.
- . Encyclopedia Brown Gets His Man.
- . Encyclopedia Brown Keeps the Peace.
- . Encyclopedia Brown Lends a Hand.
- . Encyclopedia Brown Saves the Day.
- . Encyclopedia Brown Shows the Way.
- . Encyclopedia Brown Solves Them All.
- . Encyclopedia Brown Tracks Them Down.

Van Allsburg, *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick* . Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1984.

This book consists of haunting pictures with captions to provoke the reader's imagination. It has no story line, but can be used to stimulate creative writing or drawing.

Warner, Gertrude Chandler. *Mystery Behind the Wall* . The Boxcar Children Mysteries. Illinois: Albert Whitman and Company, 1978.

Four orphans with a millionaire grandfather solve mysteries with get up and go. Yankee values and clear thinking are advocated. Reading level is 3.

- . Amusement Park Mystery.
- . Animal Shelter Mystery, The
- . Blue Bay Mystery.
- . Benny Uncovers a Mystery.
- . Bicycle Mystery.
- . Caboose Mystery.
- . Boxcar Children, The.

- . *Bus Station Mystery*, The.
- . *Camp-out Mystery*, The.
- . *Canoe Trip Mystery*, The.
- . *Castle Mystery*, The.
- . *Deserted Library Mystery*, The.
- . *Dinosaur Mystery*, The.
- . *Disappearing Friend Mystery*, The.
- . *Ghost Ship Mystery*, The.
- . *Haunted Cabin Mystery*.
- . *Houseboat Mystery*.
- . *Mike's Mystery*.
- . *Mystery in the Snow*.
- . *Mystery Ranch*.

Wilsdon, Christina. *A Blast with the Past*. Ghostwriter. New York: Bantam Books, 1994.

Classroom activities such as puzzles, maps and codes are tied in with the P.B.S. television series.

## List of Materials

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Ghostwriter Videocassettes,—Children's Television Workshop.

## Bibliography for Teachers

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Winks, Robin, ed. *Detective Fiction: A Collection of Critical Essays*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1980.

Dorothy Sayers, W.H. Auden, and Edmund Wilson among others comment upon detective fiction. The conventions of the genre are considered; the history of its development is reviewed, and key works are given a formulaic analysis.

———, ed. *The Historian as a Detective*, Essays on Evidence. New York: Harper and Row, 1969.

The historian is shown to be like a detective. Sometimes he looks for the facts to support a solution; other times he uses evidence to form a conclusion.

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