Whodunit?
Using Technology to Unravel the Mystery of Mystery Fiction

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Overview

Mystery stories. What is a mystery for many students is: Where did mystery stories come from? Who wrote them? What was the purpose of this type of story? And the age-old question of "Whodunit?" Mystery stories have been around as long as crime has existed. In this unit, students will begin by exploring the origins of where mystery writing began. While it is believed the first mystery story came from *The Book of Daniel* over two thousand years ago, the first mystery story was published in 1841 by the famous author Edgar Allan Poe, titled *Murders in the Rue Morgue.* Following the success of Poe were other authors, such as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, who created the now-famous character, Sherlock Holmes and Agatha Christie, who created Hercule Poirot.

This unit will not only introduce students to the great mysteries of the past, but after being introduced to some of Poe's and Coyle's short stories, students will have the opportunity to examine contemporary authors, such as David A. Adler, who created the character Cam Jansen, and Ron Roy, author of the A-Z Mystery Series. Students will receive instruction in how a mystery story is created: from inventing a main character, a crime or situation to be solved, to developing clues to imbed in the story to lead readers to solving a mystery. The unit will culminate with students using the software program Comic Life to create a comic strip of their mystery stories. A book will be created, bound, and presented to the school librarian so that others may enjoy reading students' mystery comics.

The design of this unit was created for elementary level students in grades 3 -5. Books that were carefully chosen for group and/or independent reading range from the

beginning to end 3rd grade reading level. Interest level ranges from 3rd to 7th grade level.
PA Standards will be addressed in the areas of reading, writing, and technology.
Emphasis will be on developing higher-order thinking skills for students with learning
disabilities or other medical/behavioral issues that adversely affect learning.

Rationale

The reasons for creating this unit are multi-faceted. Because keeping students engaged
during reading becomes a problem for struggling readers, it is vital to create a unit that
will maintain excitement and motivation throughout. In "unraveling" the twists and turns
of the mystery story, students will utilize various skills and strategies in order to increase
understanding as well as be instructed in using higher-order thinking skills, which prove
difficult for the struggling reader. Infusing technology throughout will also provide
opportunities to address different types of learners: visual, auditory, and tactile. The
overarching goal is to improve comprehension skills in an area of interest, the mystery
genre, so that students may utilize the skills learned to assist them in their regular
education classroom settings.

In working with students with special needs, challenges always arise with the task of
teaching students to not only "learn to read" but to "read to learn."   It sometimes proves
difficult to keep students motivated to look deeper into understanding different types of
literature selections when they struggle while attempting to decode the words. Higher
order thinking skills, along with even basic comprehension, may prove difficult, which
affects students' desire to read.

According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), "approximately
one in four students in the 12th grade (who have not already dropped out of school) are
still reading at 'below basic' levels, while only one student in twenty reads at 'advanced'
level" (Wren). If students are not reading fluently at grade level by the third grade,
progress in reading becomes a struggle for the rest of students' academic careers.
Students with special needs, such as learning disabilities, autism, ADHD, etc. are plagued
even further with the untenable task of learning how to be an effective reader when
disadvantages in learning using conventional approaches may not be effective for these
students. Findings also reveal "students with learning disabilities experience more severe
forms of reading problems than do poor readers who have not been identified as learning
disabled. This pattern of performance pertains to difficulties not only in decoding but
also in comprehending text" (Gersten, 280).

In attempting to present reading materials to students with disabilities, it is imperative
that the materials used are of high-interest and lower reading level so as to keep
motivation as well as feelings of accomplishment positive. The choice of the mystery
genre speaks directly to the population I work with, which is composed of almost all male
students, grades 3 – 5.

Included in this section is a brief description of the history surrounding the establishment of the mystery genre as well as biographical information about authors included in the unit. An author study may be included using this information, allowing students to become better acquainted with the authors of the stories they enjoy. Websites devoted to each author are also included in the Web Resources section.

Background

The first mystery stories date back to ancient times. Some scholars claim that *The Book of Daniel*, a book contained within the Hebrew Bible, contained the first "mysteries." Scholars do not agree on exactly when *The Book of Daniel* was written, but believe it to be around the 2nd century BC. One of the stories, *Bel and the Dragon*, presents the reader with what is known as a "locked room mystery." A locked room mystery is one that involves a crime committed under impossible circumstances. Committed in some sort of locked room that no one should be able to enter, the detective in the story had to use the clues presented to solve the crime. In this case, the mystery involved a statue, Bel that was idolized as a God. This "God" was housed in a temple where priests left a daily food offering. When the King of Cyrus asked Daniel if he believed that the statue was indeed a God, Daniel stated that he did not. The mystery became: if not the God, then who was consuming the daily food offerings? The King then demanded that the priests prove that Bel consumed the daily offerings. In an attempt to solve the mystery, Daniel poured ashes around the temple, while the King watched, because he thought that something was awry. The following day, there were footprints from adults and children, proving the priests, along with their families, were sneaking through a secret door and eating the daily offerings themselves. Daniel looked for a logical explanation for the food disappearing and deduced the answer himself.

There are other stories within *The Book of Daniel* that resemble mysteries as well. Some basic premises of mystery fiction are based on the writings from *The Book of Daniel* today. While there are many books written today that qualify as belonging in the genre of mystery fiction, history does point to the first mysteries being written over 2,000 years ago.

The first published mystery stories, which occurred much later, began with Edgar Allan Poe. Published in 1841, *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* was based on a character known as Chevalier C. Auguste Dupin, who solves the mystery of the brutal murder of a French woman and her daughter on a fictional street in Paris known as Rue Morgue. Edgar Allen Poe not only established the first "detective" in fiction, but also set the stage for the development and writings of other famous authors to follow such as Sir Author Conan Doyle and Agatha Christie.

Edgar Allan Poe

Edgar Allan Poe was born in Boston on January 19, 1809. Poe had two siblings: an older brother and younger sister. When his parents died at Poe's tender age of three, he was separated from his siblings and taken in by a man named John Allan and his wife Francis in Richmond, Virginia. Poe spent time in various places during his life, being educated at the University of Virginia and West Point (he was thrown out after only eight months because of a disagreement with Allan). Even from a young age, Poe aspired to be a writer. He was writing poetry and had even written enough to publish a book by the age of eighteen. Poe did not get along well with John Allan; Allan left him out of his will after he died on March 27, 1834. Poe spent time in Philadelphia writing stories for magazines from 1838 until 1844, when he moved to New York.

Poe eventually married his 13-year old cousin, Virginia Clemm in 1836 and enjoyed a happy marriage with her until she passed away from tuberculosis in 1847. He was so devastated by the loss of his young wife that he stopped writing for several months. Poe himself passed away at the age of 40 on October 7, 1849. The cause of death is unknown.

During most of his life, Poe was a struggling writer who, while being recognized for his talents after he wrote for various magazines, struggled financially. His works are famous today. There are several museums dedicated to Poe's life, including one in Philadelphia. People pay pilgrimage to his gravesite in Baltimore, where since 1949, on the anniversary of his death, an unknown person leaves a partially full bottle of cognac and 3 roses, adding to the mystery that continues to surround Edgar Allan Poe.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Arthur Ignatius Conan Doyle was born on May 22, 1859 (died August 7, 1930), in Edinburgh, Scotland, 10 years after Edgar Allan Poe's death. While Arthur's father, Charles, had a severe drinking problem, his mother, Mary, loved books and telling stories. His mother's exquisite talent at telling stories no doubt influenced Coyle's eventual love of books and storytelling as well. When he was nine, Coyle was sent to a boarding school in England for seven years. Upon return to Scotland, he had to commit his father to an asylum due to his demented behaviors. He then attended the University of Edinburgh to become a doctor.

During the years he was attending school, Coyle was also writing. It has been reported that one of his professors, Dr. Joseph Bell, was Coyle's greatest influence in creating the character Sherlock Holmes. Coyle's first short stories, *The Mystery of Sasassa Valley* and *The American Tale,* were both published in magazines and received positive reviews. Coyle travelled the world on different adventures, going to different places such as the

Arctic Circle and Africa. These adventures influenced his writing in stories such as *Captain of the Pole-Star* and *Stark Munro Letters*.

The novel that made Sir Arthur Conan Doyle famous was "A Tangled Skein," eventually published in Beeton's 1887 Christmas Annual, and titled *A Study in Scarlet*. In this novel is the introduction of the now-famous Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson. While Coyle thought that his writings about Sherlock Holmes were "too commercial," he continued to write about Holmes in stories and plays throughout the rest of his life.

Agatha Christie

While students will not be studying books written by Agatha Christie in this curriculum unit, I will include a brief summary of her life as I did with the other authors if students have questions.

Agatha Christie was born on September 15, 1890 in Torquay, England. She was a very shy child who excelled at singing and piano. Unfortunately, her father died when she was only eleven. She began to travel with her mother and two sisters shortly after the death of her father and eventually traveled all over the world. Agatha Christie had one child, a daughter, and was married two times, the second marriage lasting 46 years.

Agatha Christie's first novel was written based on a challenge made by one of her sisters. *The Mysterious Affair at Styles,* which took only one year to write, was published after five years of shopping it to publishers, when it received the unusual opportunity of a review from the *Pharmaceutical Journal*. The famous detective, Hercule Poirot, made his first appearance in this novel. Christie wrote over 30 novels featuring the famous detective. Agatha Christie died on January 12, 1976 at the age of 85. She is considered to be the most famous mystery writer of all time.

David A. Adler

David Abraham Adler was born in New York City on April 10, 1947. He has five brothers and sisters who are all very close in age. As a child, David liked to paint and draw pictures, tell stories, and entertain his brothers and sisters. After high school, David went to Queens College in Queens, New York. He received his Bachelor's Degree in education and economics. He became a math teacher, teaching for nine years. He also earned an MBA in marketing. His first published story was titled, *A Little at a Time* in 1976. David was married in 1973 and had his first child in 1977. He stayed home while his wife, Renee, worked. During this time, he created his first Cam Jansen book: *Cam Jansen and the Mystery of the Stolen Diamonds*.

Cam Jansen's real name is Jennifer Jansen. Her nickname is "Cam" because she seems to have a photographic memory, which is key in helping her solve mysteries. The Cam

Jansen stories are based on an elementary classmate of David's whom everyone believed had a photographic memory. Eventually, Adler wrote over 50 Cam Jansen books, all of which have been translated to other languages so that a larger audience may enjoy them. Adler also wrote *The Young Cam Jansen Series*, which appeal to younger readers at lower reading levels.

Adler also published other books and series, such as *Bones* and *Andy Russell* series, Holocaust books for young readers, biographies, and the *My Dog, T. F. Benson*, *The Fourth Floor Twins*, *Jeffrey Ghost,* and *A Houdini Club Mystery* series.

Ron Roy

Ron Roy was born on April 29, 1940 in Hartford, Connecticut. His first career path took him to becoming an educator, teaching 4th grade students. But his first love was always writing. Early in his teaching career, Ron started submitting books he had written to various publishing houses, only to be rejected for over four years. Ron Roy's first children's book was finally published in 1978, titled, *A Thousand Pails of Water*. In 1997, Ron Roy began writing *The A to Z Mysteries*, one book for each letter of the alphabet. Beginning with *The Absent Author*, published in 1997, and ending with *The Zombie Zone*, published in 2005, Ron Roy has written over 40 books for children over the last 3 decades.

Objectives

This unit is designed for use in grades 3-5. Those participating in this unit will be students who receive special education services in the Learning Support environment. Delivery of the unit will be during periods of pullout instruction. While written with students with special needs in mind, the unit may be used in regular education classrooms as well, as content covered meets the Pennsylvania State Standards in Literacy and Technology, which are located in the Appendix.

The first objective will address making inferences when reading. While students are exploring early authors such as Edgar Allan Poe and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, opportunities will be provided to stop and predict what might happen next, based on what's happened thus far. Students will not only make inferences and predictions but also look for clues in the story in order to assist in solving the mystery presented. Students will read and respond to comprehension questions designed to clarify understanding throughout stories with higher reading levels during group readings. Visual aids and organizers will be used to collect data on clues in various stories if students experience difficulty following the plot. Making inferences is listed as PA Standard 1.2.A in Literacy.

Students will be studying how the mystery story originated. Basic facts about Edgar Allan Poe will be examined, such as his early life and first works. There is an Edgar Allan Poe museum right here in Philadelphia, located at 7 Spring Garden Street. If a field trip is not possible to the location, an informative website exists: www.poemuseum.org, which contains an interactive section for students to explore, as well as a wealth of information about Poe himself and his works. Students will also look at Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and how he came to develop the character of Sherlock Holmes, whom he did not feel was his best literary work. Also addressed in this objective will be contemporary author David A. Adler, who has written many mystery series. *A to Z Mysteries*, by Ron Roy may also be examined briefly, allowing the students to identify with how a short mystery is created. This will transition students into beginning their own short mystery story. This objective addresses PA Standard 1.8.C in Literacy.

Students will examine the process of writing a short mystery story. Using a website from Scholastic, http://teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/mystery/index.htm, students will follow the steps required in writing a mystery story. Kid-friendly language is used so that students will be able to understand the steps to follow in developing characters, plot, and common mystery vocabulary in order to make stories more appealing. Visual aids such as story maps will be utilized so that different learning styles may be addressed. Students will also be provided with a checklist designed on the website so that all elements of their mysteries will be addressed. Another website, http://kids.mysterynet.com, contains short mystery stories that will provide additional examples of necessary story elements required to write a mystery story. Students will use their checklists while listening to the website stories so that they can easily identify what is required. This objective addresses PA Standard 1.4.A, Types of Writing.

After students have written a short mystery story, the software program, Comic Life, will be used to assist students in developing a comic strip version of their story. Images for the comic will be created by students and scanned for use in the comic, text will be added to each frame, and speech bubbles will be added to complete the appearance of a comic strip. After completion, all comics will be bound in a book and presented to the librarian. Using technology for learning encompasses PA Standards for Science and Technology 3.7.4.D and 3.7.4.E.

Strategies

Because this unit was designed for students who receive Learning Support services, various instructional strategies and supports will be introduced and utilized throughout the duration of instruction and activities. Instruction will be presented in whole group, small group, and individually, as needed. Activities will be completed in either pairs or small groups, so that students may lend each other support throughout the duration of the unit. This strategy provides opportunities for students to gain confidence and self-esteem in helping others with concepts they feel confident in, such as navigating software

programs, brainstorming ideas for writing, or assisting in creating illustrations for mystery stories.

K-W-L Chart

At the onset of the unit, a K-W-L chart will be developed to assess students' prior knowledge of mystery stories. Donna Ogle developed a K-W-L chart in 1986. It is usually divided into three columns, with two being completed at the beginning of instruction and the third being completed at the conclusion of a unit of instruction. The acronym K-W-L stands for what we **K**now, what we **W**ant to know, and what we **L**earned. Using a graphic organizer will assist students in identifying prior knowledge, as well as drive instruction when the W column is completed, with students informing the teacher what interests and questions they may have regarding mysteries.

Inferencing

An important strategy that will be used while working with various mystery stories is inferencing. When a student is inferring, they are using observations, prior knowledge and experiences, and details from the text to make connections and come up with ideas. This strategy will prove important when looking for clues in solving mysteries presented in various stories. Inferencing is a skill that proves difficult for students with learning disabilities because it requires students to process information at a higher level. During group readings, students may use an "It Says, I Say Chart" that will assist them in making inferences about the solutions to different mysteries.

Think-Alouds

A during-reading strategy that may prove helpful to increase comprehension is the think-aloud strategy. By modeling a think-aloud during reading, the teacher will read a small amount of text, possibly a few lines, and stop and reflect about what was read by asking questions and making connections. This will teach students how to stop and check for understanding often while reading. Many students are able to read lengthy texts fluently, but are unable to provide little, if any, information about what was read. This is especially true of students with disabilities. In stopping often and thinking aloud about what was read, it encourages students to do the same while reading in order to remain focused. Presentation of the Think-Aloud strategy will also provide students the opportunity to use a graphic organizer to take notes with the goal of solving mysteries presented.

It Says…I Say at a Glance

This strategy consists of using a graphic organizer (chart) to answer a question requiring an inference. The chart contains four columns: Question; It Says; I Say; And So. The actual question is generated from a familiar story read by students. The second column

will contain what the text says about the question. The third column is students' prior knowledge about the question, and the last column will contain the inference made based on columns two and three. This chart may be used when solving mysteries presented in stories read as a group and/or independently.

Storyboard

A storyboard is an illustration of chronological events from a piece of literature. It assists students in summarizing major events and/or sequencing events from stories read. Students who experience difficulty in writing may create storyboards in order to assist them in demonstrating understanding. They may also be used as an initial layout for students' own mystery stories, prior to creating the comic strips.

Text to Speech/Reader

A strategy to use when utilizing Internet sites with struggling readers and/or readers who experience difficulty remaining focused while reading are the Reader and Text to Speech functions. For the purposes of this unit, the web browser Safari will be used, which contains these features. On websites containing articles, stories, etc., the Reader function will appear in the address bar. If clicked upon, the actual text students are reading will be enlarged and moved forward while the rest of the web page will be dimmed. This allows students to focus only on the text they are reading instead of advertisements and/or movement located elsewhere on the web page.

The Text to Speech function will take any text on a website and read it aloud. This function works well with Reader in that once text has been enlarged using the reader function, students may simply highlight any text they choose and the computer will read it aloud, instead of students attempting to read text that is above their independent reading level. For students who experience difficulty focusing while reading, these tools are invaluable because they allow students to focus solely on the text being read to them instead of struggling with decoding, which detracts from comprehension. In Lesson Plan One, I have provided brief directions on how to access both functions.

Classroom Activities

Included in this curriculum unit are three sample lesson plans that may be completed with students. While I have included books from several authors in the student resource list, I have developed a lesson plan for Edgar Allan Poe only. Students may explore other authors in the same manner in which the following lesson explores Poe. Most authors have websites dedicated to their books and lives that contain interactive activities for students. I have included at least one website for each author in the Web Resources section.

Lesson Plan One

Title: Edgar Allan Poe: Life of Mystery

Subject: Literacy/Writing

Grade Level(s)/Duration: Grades 3 – 5/ 2 class periods of 45 minutes each

Objectives:

Students will develop a timeline of important events from Edgar Allan Poe's life
Students will listen to the Story, *The Tell-Tale Heart*
Students will watch a short video of the story *The Tell-Tale Heart* on the website
www.poemuseum.org
Students will make inferences as to possible sources of the beating sound in the video
clip

Standards: This lesson is aligned with the following PA State Standards in literacy:
1.2.A, 1.8.C

Materials: Computer, LCD Projector, Screen, Book, *Edgar Allan Poe's Tales of Death
and Dementia*, sentence strips, post-it notes, picture of Chevalier C. Auguste Dupin,
biography of Poe's life on website (used for timeline creation)

Introduction: Teacher will begin a discussion about the origin of the mystery story,
beginning with Edgar Allan Poe's *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*, and displaying a
picture of Chevalier C. Auguste Dupin, the first fictional detective. Teacher will then
read a few paragraphs from the short story, *The Tell-Tale Heart*, adapted for children.

Body of Lesson: Teacher will introduce students to the website www.poemuseum.org
using the LCD Projector so that students will see how to explore the site. Time may be
provided at the end of the lesson as well for student exploration. After spending 5-10
minutes showing students the various parts of the site, attention will focus on how to
navigate to the Student section, where a video of the Tell-Tale Heart is. The video
duration is 7:54. At the conclusion of the video, teacher will lead a discussion about the
source of the beating heart. An "It Says…I Say" at a Glance chart may be used to
facilitate an inference question and organize students' thoughts. At the conclusion of
discussion and chart activity, students will then be directed to Poe's biography in the
"Poe's Life" section of the website. While this is written in language which may prove
challenging to read, teacher may instruct students how to use the "Reader" function in the
address window (using Safari). When reader is clicked, the text of Poe's biography will
be isolated from the rest of the website. Once this happens, teacher may highlight
portions, or all, of the biography so that students may listen to it. In Safari's

drop-down menus, teacher may go to: Safari, Services, Speech, Start Speaking Text. The text will be read to students by the computer. This feature in Safari will allow students to listen to Poe's biography without having to read challenging text themselves. Students will be asked to create a timeline of Poe's life, looking at the important dates in the biography to use as a guideline. Sentence Strips and post-it notes will work for this activity. Students may complete timelines in small groups or independently, based on level of understanding of the task.

Assessment: Assessment will be based on completion of chart (if students complete their own), as well as completion of timeline with at least 6 specific years along with events that occurred during that time. For students with IEP's, accommodations on the IEP should be checked with regard to attention to writing conventions.

Lesson Plan Two

Title: Creating a Mini-Mystery Story

Subject: Literacy, Writing, and Technology

Grade Level(s)/Duration: Grades 3 -5/at least 5 class periods of 45 minutes each

Objectives:

Students will use http://teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/mystery/index.htm as a web resource to assist them in writing a mini-mystery
Students will write a mini-mystery that contains all the components of a mystery as outlined on the website
Students will work through the writing process to finish with a published piece at the conclusion of the lesson

Standards: This lesson is aligned with the following PA State Standards in literacy: 1.4.A. It is also aligned with the following PA Standards in Science and Technology: 3.7.4.D, 3.7.4.E

Materials: computer, LCD projector, handouts of directions for writing a mystery story

Introduction: After examining different mystery writers from the past as well as present, instruction will now begin on how to write a mini-mystery. Teacher will introduce the website http://teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/mystery/index.htm to students, using the LCD projector so a whole group lesson is presented first.

Body of Lesson: After introducing the website and what it may be used for, teacher will guide students to the section Mystery Writing Home. A mystery story is displayed on

this page. Teacher will use Reader and Text to Speech (discussed in Lesson One) so that students may listen to the story. Step two discusses 10 steps that should be followed in order to write a mystery story. Teacher will go over each step in detail, spanning over several class periods to ensure understanding. Teacher may then place students in groups to brainstorm ideas for characters, plots, clues, etc. Support will be provided, as necessary, to allow students to feel successful during this writing journey. After the initial steps have been completed, three more steps to challenge students are included. The goal in of the challenge steps is to show students how to capture their audience and maintain interest using vivid words.   Once students have created a published piece, there is an opportunity to upload student stories to the website for publication. Parents must provide permission prior to any student work being posted to the Internet.

Assessment: Students may be assessed based on completion of their stories, using a rubric or other preferred method of assessment. For students with IEP's, accommodations on the IEP should be checked with regard to attention to writing conventions.

Lesson Plan Three

Title: Comic Life Mystery Comic Strips

Subject: Literacy, Writing, Technology

Grade Level(s)/Duration: Grades 3 -5/duration will vary based on prior knowledge of Comic Life software and comfort level with its use

Objectives:

Students will use Comic Life to create a comic strip of their mystery story
Students will either illustrate themselves or import images from the Internet to illustrate their comic (illustrations created by hand or photograph may be scanned, if a scanner is available)
Students will present their comic strip to the class

Standards: This culminating lesson is aligned with the following PA Standards in literacy: 1.4.A. It is also aligned with the following PA Standards in Science and Technology: 3.7.4.D, 3.7.4.E

Materials: Completed mini-mystery stories by students, computer, Comic Life software, scanner (optional), photo paper or regular computer paper

Introduction: Teacher will introduce lesson by generating excitement about the final phase of the curriculum unit: Using Comic Life. A discussion will be held to ascertain

students' comfort level with the software. Teacher may provide samples of completed Comic Life projects for students.

Body of Lesson: Brief instruction will be provided, if necessary, on how to import images into Comic Life. Students will then be given time to choose a layout, import/insert their illustrations, insert text, and add speech bubbles. Students should have been provided prior guidance on how to divide text from their stories into various comic frames as well as examples of what to type in speech bubbles. After students have finished importing images and adding text from their stories, students may then add speech bubbles with dialogue. A completed comic strip may vary in length, depending on the layout students have created for their stories. A culminating activity may be a presentation of each student's comic strip to the class. A showcase, where students walk around and read each other's comics, may complete this or students may present to the entire class individually. Once this activity has been completed, teacher may bind comics together and create a classroom copy as well as a copy for the library.

Assessment: Students may be assessed using either a rubric designed to rate various parts of completed projects or a grade based on completion. Assessment is ultimately based on teacher discretion.

Annotated Bibliography/Resources

Teacher Resources

"Poe's Life." Poe Museum, n.d. Web. 15 May 2011.
> A short biography about Edgar Allan Poe within the Poe Museum website.

Wren, Sebastian, Ph.D. *Developing Research-Based Resources for the Balanced Reading Teacher*. BalancedReading.com, 2 Jan. 2009. Web. 20 May 2011. Interesting article about why older students fail to read at grade level along with different steps regarding how to help them.

Gersten, Russell, et al. "Teaching Reading Comprehension to Students with Learning Disabilities." *Review of Educational Research* 71.2 (2001) : 279-320. Print. Interesting journal article outlining research on different methods used in teaching comprehension strategies to students with learning disabilities.

"Mystery Writing with Joan Lowery Nixon." Scholastic, n.d. 29 March 2011.
> Website that outlines how to write a mystery story in kid-friendly language.

"Mystery Net's Kid's Mysteries." MysteryNet: The Online Mystery Network, n.d. 15 April 2011. Website that contains interactive activities for students along with mysteries to solve.

"RonRoy.com." Ron Roy, n.d. 1 June 2011.
> Website containing biographical information about Ron Roy as well as his works.

"David A. Adler, Author of Fiction and Nonfiction Books for Young Readers." n.p., n.d. 19April 2011.
> Informative website about David A. Adler as well as all the books he has written.

"Agatha Christie, The Official Information and Community Website." n.p, n.d, 5 June 2011.
> Website containing information about her literary works as well as a timeline chronicling her life.

"The Official Web Site of the Sir Arthur Conan Doyle Literary Estate." The Big Oxford Computer Co. Ltd., n.d., 29 April 2011.
> Website containing a biography of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle as well as information about films, books, and characters he has created.

Student Resources

Adler, David A., **Cam Jansen and the Chocolate Fudge Mystery**. Penguin Books USA Inc., NY 1993.
> Cam Jansen and her friend Eric go door-to-door selling fudge to raise money for the local library, Cam uses her photographic memory to foil a crime.

Adler, David A., **Cam Jansen and the Mystery at the Haunted House**. Penguin Books USA Inc., NY 1992.
> Cam and her friend Eric chase the thief of Aunt Katie's wallet through an amusement park and find themselves involved in a mystery to solve.

Adler, David A., **Cam Jansen and the Mystery of the Stolen Corn Popper**. Puffin Books, NY, 1999.
> Cam Jansen uses her photographic memory to catch a thief during a department store sale.

Doyle, Sir Arthur Conan, **Mysteries of Sherlock Holmes**. Random House Books, NY, 1982.
> Sherlock Holmes, the master of deductive reasoning, solves several mysteries with the help of his friend, Dr. John Watson.

Doyle, Sir Arthur Conan, **Adventures of Sherlock Holmes: The Final Problem**. Troll Associates, NJ, 1982.
> Sherlock Holmes strives to destroy Professor Moriarty who is at the bottom of half the evil in London while the criminal genius vows the same for the detective.

Doyle, Sir Arthur Conan, **Adventures of Sherlock Holmes: The Adventure of the Speckled Band**. Troll Associates, NJ, 1982.
Sherlock Holmes comes to the aid of a client whose sister's last words before she died were, "It was the speckled band."

Doyle, Sir Arthur Conan, **Adventures of Sherlock Holmes: The Adventure of the Empty House**. Troll Associates, NJ, 1982.
Sherlock Holmes is thought to be dead, murdered by his enemy, Moriarty, but turns up alive to solve a puzzling murder.

Poe, Edgar Allan, **Edgar Allan Poe's Tales of Death and Dementia**. Atheneum, NY, 2009.
The second installment to *Edgar Allan Poe's Tales of Mystery and Madness*. It includes *The Tell-Tale Heart*, *The System of Dr. Tarr and Professor Fether*, *The Oblong Box*, and *The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar*.

Poe, Edgar Allan, **Edgar Allan Poe's Tales of Mystery and Madness**. Atheneum, NY, 2004.
Four stories are included: *The Black Cat, The Masque of the Red Death, Hop-Frog,* and *The Fall of the House of Usher*.

Roy, Ron, **The Absent Author**. Random House Inc., NY, 1997.
The first book in the series A to Z Mysteries, Dink writes to a famous author and invites him for a visit. The first mystery begins after the author never arrives.

Roy, Ron, **The Zombie Zone**. Random House, Inc., NY 2005.
The last book in the A to Z Mysteries, Dink, Josh, and Ruth Rose go to Louisiana where they encounter village stories of a zombie who is digging up graves in a cemetery.

Web Resources

In creating this curriculum unit, I utilized the Internet to find resources, information, and activities. This list of websites should prove useful.

www.mysterynet.com
http://kids.mysterynet.com
www2.scholastic.com
www.poemuseum.org
www.amazon.com
http://ebible.org/bible/kjv/Bel.htm
http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/400773/mystery-story
http://www.sldirectory.com/libsf/booksf/mystery/early.html

http://webtech.kennesaw.edu/jcheek3/mysteries.htm
http://www.kidsreads.com/series/index.asp
http://www.carolhurst.com/subjects/mysteries.html
http://www.davidaadler.com/
http://agathachristie.com/
http://www.sherlockholmesonline.org/biography/index.htm
http://www.ronroy.com/
http://teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/mystery/index.htm

Appendices/Standards
Appendix 1

Pennsylvania Department of Education: Academic Standards

The School District of Philadelphia aligns its own Core Curriculum to the Pennsylvania Academic Standards. The curriculum unit above is aligned with the Pennsylvania Academic Standards in the following areas:

Literacy

1.2.A -Read and understand essential content of informational texts and documents in all academic areas.
- Makes inferences and draws conclusions based on the presenting evidence
- Make inferences about similar concepts in two texts and draw conclusions

1.8.C - Reorganize information from sources into a new format for sharing with others.
- Surfing: Explore the Internet for information about your subject
- Take notes from sources using a structured format

1.4.A - Write poems, plays, and multi-paragraph stories.
- Include detailed descriptions of people, places, and things
- Use relevant illustrations
- Compose dialogue
- Include literary element

Science and Technology

3.7.4.D - Use basic computer software.
- Identify and use simple graphic and presentation graphic materials generated by the computer.

3.7.4.E - Identify basic computer communication systems.
- Apply a web browser
- Use on-line searches to answer age appropriate questions

Appendix 2

It Says…I Say at a Glance Chart

Name_____

Date_____

It Says…I Say Inference Chart

Question	It Says	I Say	And So