



Creative Learning Lab

teaching materials

Our goal is to make learning objectives and standards align with your needs regarding academic requirements in the classroom.

This resource considers **different learning styles** by including a variety of activity types—hands-on, visual, auditory, reading/writing—to engage different types of learners.

Our goal is to make it **interactive and engaging**, moving beyond lectures or readings to build in discussions, group work, games and physical activities when possible.

Simple instructions and model examples are meant to clarify assignments and set expectations.

It can be advantageous to make interdisciplinary connections to other subjects when possible, so various activities have been devised to accomplish a **cross-subject matter** engagement.

In these activities, we leave room for creativity, problem-solving and student choice.

Feedback is always welcome to help us improve and refine future editions of these materials.

Thank you!

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General lesson starters

Aligning curriculum activities to a specific children's book is a great way to engage students while reinforcing literacy skills. Here are some general ideas for tying activities to your book for different grade levels

K-2

Read aloud the book, having students make predictions, ask questions, etc.

Sequencing Have students put illustrations or events from the story in order.

Character Exploration Draw pictures of characters and describe using adjectives.

Retelling Act out the story through drama, puppets or drawing comic strips.

Phonics/Word Study Identify sight words, rhymes, etc. from the book.

3-4

Literature Circles Assign reading roles like summarizer, questioner, word finder.

Writing Extensions Write new endings, more adventures with the characters.

Vocabulary Development Study interesting words from the book and use them in sentences.

Make Connections Compare/contrast to other books, their own experiences.

Setting Exploration Research more about the time/place the book takes place.

5-6

Literary Analysis Identify plot elements, themes, author's purpose.

Socratic Seminar Discuss thought-provoking questions sparked by the book.

Research Projects Explore topics or issues brought up more deeply.

Book Creativity Create book trailers, dioramas, soundtracks for the book.

Persuasive Writing Take a stance on an issue from the book and try to convince others.



Lesson starters for *Bog Gone!*

K-2

Character Exploration Have students draw pictures of their favorite characters from the book (Finder, Keeper, Chopper) and write descriptive words or sentences about their personalities and roles.

Sequencing Events Use picture cards or have students illustrate the major events from the story and put them in the correct sequence.

Mystery Word Hunt Create a list of vocabulary words from the book (e.g. detective, clues, evidence) and have students search for and highlight/circle them in the text.

3-4

Creative Writing Have students write a new adventure for the Creature Finders detective team, focusing on developing an engaging plot and including descriptive details.

Cause & Effect Discuss how one event leads to another in the story (e.g. the truck spill caused the goo ball). Have students identify cause-effect relationships and illustrate them.

Character Perspective Have students rewrite a scene from the perspective of a different character like Seymour Warts or the Zookeeper.

5-6

Literary Devices Examine examples of literary devices like foreshadowing, red herrings, and descriptive language. Have students find examples in the text.

Persuasive Letter Have students write a letter trying to convince the Zookeeper to stop kidnapping animals, using evidence from the story.

Research Connection Have students research real-world organizations like those mentioned (C.R.O.A.K.) and present information on their motivations and methods.

STEM Extension Use the details about the creature and goo ball to design a hypothetical solution for containing or dissolving it, describing the scientific principles involved.

Perspectives & emotional experiences

Giving students opportunities to deeply explore characters' emotional experiences, perspectives and decision-making builds critical skills for real-life empathy.

K-2

Emotion Masks Have students make paper plate masks showing different emotions the characters felt (scared, excited, worried, etc). Take turns wearing them and discussing why that character felt that way.

If I Were That Character For a key event, have students write or draw how they would feel if they were characters like Finder or Keeper in that situation.

Kindness Letters Write a letter to a character showing them kindness and compassion during a difficult moment (e.g. Snapper being scared).

3-4

Perspective Narratives Take a minor event and have students write a short narrative showing it from two characters' different perspectives.

Problem-Solution Notes When characters face problems, have students write notes of advice for what they could do and how they would feel.

Bio poem Write a bio poem from the point of view of a character, including their traits, feelings, struggles and motivations.

5-6

Judging or Understanding? Discuss times people made assumptions instead of trying to understand characters' perspectives first.

Overcoming Adversity Essay Have students write about a character who overcame a struggle or fear and how it helped them grow.

Alternate Viewpoints Take an event and have students rewrite it showing the thoughts/feelings of a different character involved.

Alternative solutions

The key is having students analyze the existing causal events and then creatively re-imagine how changing key variables could lead to very different ending possibilities. Exploring alternative possibilities builds analytical reasoning skills.

K-2

Story Circle Endings Sit in a circle and have each student contribute one sentence to create a new alternative ending, going around until the story concludes.

New Creature Result Instead of the goo monster being dissolved and the animals separated, have students draw and/or write what could have happened if the creature remained and wasn't stopped.

Keeping Seymour If Seymour Warts had stayed to help investigate instead of leaving, how could the ending have been different? Have students illustrate this alternate scenario.

3-4

Two Paths Diverged Have students rewrite the ending to the story splitting off into two different possibilities after a key decision point or event.

Unreliable Evidence What if some of the key evidence (the vitamins, the feather, etc.) turned out to be misleading? How could the ending change based on that?

Unsatisfying Conclusion Write an alternative ending where loose ends are left unanswered and the mystery is not fully resolved. Discuss reaction.

5-6

Expanded Consequences Explore how the ending implications could be expanded if other animals/creatures were also impacted beyond just those in Belly Acre.

Framed Culprit Rewrite the ending reveal from the perspective that the Zookeeper was framed and someone else was actually behind the plot.

New Antagonist If not the Zookeeper, who else could have been the true mastermind? Create an alternate ending revealing a new villain.

Cause and effect

Studying the cause and effect of certain events helps build a deeper understanding of the story as well as character traits, motivation and behavior. It can allow for predictions of events and ways to improve or avoid future problems.

K-2

Goo Ball Causes If the goo ball didn't start with the truck spill, what else could have caused a giant sticky ball to form and trap animals?

Character Consequences What if Finder had not fainted when meeting Seymour Warts? How could that have changed events?

Changing Settings How would the story be different if it didn't take place in the Bog? Have students pick a new setting and explain how that could alter the plot.

3-4

Villain Motivations Why did the Zookeeper want to separate animals into a zoo? Explore an alternative cause for his motivations.

New Creature Origins Instead of being caused by the goo, what if the "monster" was an already existing creature disturbed by the events? What could have awoken it?

Solving It Sooner What could Keeper, Finder, and Chopper have done differently to realize the truth about the goo ball sooner?

5-6

Removing Characters How does the story change if one of the main characters like Keeper or Seymour Warts didn't exist? What impacts could that have?

Red Herring Truthfulness C.R.O.A.K.'s graffiti was a red herring, but what if it was real? How could that have changed the investigation's direction?

Historical Possibilities Set the story in a different time period. How might the availability (or lack) of technology/information change how events played out?

Creative drawing

The goal is for students to engage their creativity and imagination by interpreting and expanding on elements from the book's descriptive storytelling through art.

K-2

Draw Your Own Creature Have students design and draw their own unique creature that could live in Belly Acre Bog. They can get as creative as they want with colors, shapes, features, etc.

Comic Strip Scenes Have students pick their favorite scene from the book and turn it into a comic strip, drawing out the sequence of events panel by panel.

Character Mashups Provide outlines or templates of the main characters and have students mash them together into creative new character drawings (e.g. Keeper's body with Chopper's head).

3-4

Mapping Belly Acre Have students draw a detailed map of the Belly Acre Bog and the important locations from the story (Finder's House, Big Al's Tree, Goose-Liver Farm, etc.)

Designing New Traps Based on the creature trap failures, have students design and draw their own innovative new traps for capturing creatures/monsters.

Alternate Book Covers Have students create a brand new book cover design for the book, including an illustrative front cover and a short descriptive book summary on the back.

5-6

Storyboard the Sequel Have students plan out a visual storyboard for plot points and scenes they could include in a potential sequel story.

Sci-Fi Goo Drawings Reimagine what the mysterious green "goo" could have looked like if it had an alien, radioactive, or sci-fi origin rather than the Tickled Pink factory.

Investigator's Notebook Have students create sketches, diagrams, and drawings for pieces of evidence, characters, locations, as if they were documenting the case like detectives.



Developing characters

Here are some ideas for creating an additional character to join Finder, Keeper and Chopper's team of investigators, with activities for different grade levels:

K-2 **New character: Blinker the firefly**

Describe Blinker Have students draw Blinker and write describing words about her appearance and abilities (e.g. glowing light, can fly, tiny).

Blinker's Special Role What unique skill could Blinker bring to help solve mysteries? Maybe illuminating dark areas or sending light signals?

New Character Story Have students work together to tell a new story about how Blinker joined the team and used her powers.

3-4 **New character: Stinker the skunk**

Smelly Situation Write a scene where Stinker's stink spray comes in handy for stopping a suspect or deterring the monster.

Stinker's Backstory Have students draft a short bio about who Stinker is, where he came from, and why he wanted to become a detective.

Interview Stinker Work in pairs, with one student being the interviewer asking Stinker questions about a recent case he helped solve.

5-6 **New character: Dr. Water-Otter, forensic scientist**

Analyze the Evidence Describe how Dr. Water-Otter's science skills could analyze clues like the goo, feather, or footprints to reveal new insights.

Suspect Interrogation In groups, have students improvise an interrogation scene where Dr. Water-Otter questions an uncooperative witness/suspect.

Expanded Universe Have students write a creative piece exploring Dr. Water-Otter's scientific lab, inventions she's created to aid investigations, etc.

Story arc

Have students analyze and visualize the underlying structure of the narrative and how it builds tension, momentum and payoff over time. This mapping helps reinforce key literacy concepts.

K-2

Draw the important events from the beginning, middle, and end of the story in 3 separate boxes.

Cut out paper shapes to represent the main characters. Move them around to show where they were at the start, climax, and conclusion.

Use blocks or other stackable objects to build a simple 3-D representation of the rising action, climax, and resolution.

3-4

Create a storyboard with 6-8 boxes showing the sequence of the major plot points in this mystery.

Graph the emotional arc of the story, plotting how the mood/tension increases and decreases over the course of the book.

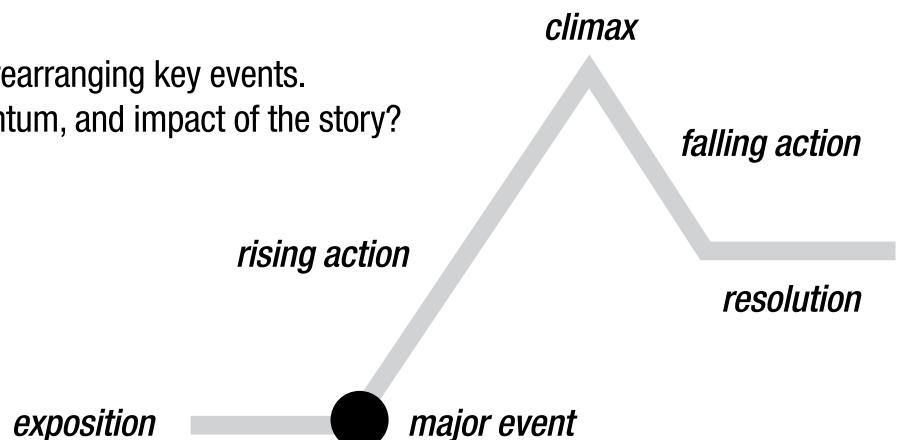
Write 1-2 descriptive sentences for the exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution of the narrative arc.

5-6

Identify where the major story arc elements (inciting incident, complications, crisis, climax, resolution) occur and illustrate each with a quote or scene description.

Compare/contrast the narrative arc of this mystery with that of a typical Freytag pyramid. How does the structure differ?

Alter the narrative arc by removing or rearranging key events. How does it change the pacing, momentum, and impact of the story?



Analyzing clues & drawing conclusions

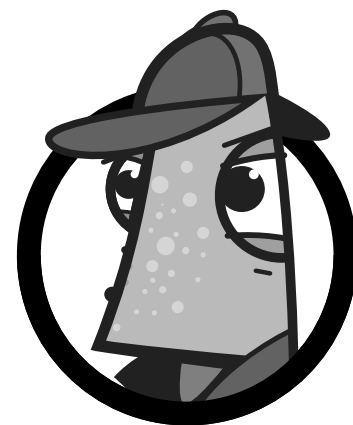
The emphasis is on analyzing clues, making connections between different pieces of evidence, drawing logical conclusions, and justifying interpretations—all critical thinking skills. This reinforces close reading as well.

K-2

Clue Matching Provide pictures/descriptions of different clues (goo, feather, Owl Towers letters). Have students match each clue to the revelation it helped uncover.

Follow the Evidence Give students simple clues one at a time and have them draw what they think the next logical clue or piece of evidence could be.

Missing Clue Read/show the clues from the story, but leave one out. Have students identify the missing clue and why it was important.



3-4

Evidence Sort Give students a set of evidence cards (goo, Owl Towers, missing animals) and have them sort into piles by which clues supported different theories.

Socratic Seminar Lead a discussion analyzing each clue, its significance, and what questions it raised or answered. Students must back up opinions.

Crime Scene Recreate a "crime scene" with physical clues planted around the room. Have students investigate and draw conclusions from their observations.

5-6

Clue Ranking Have students rank the clues from most important to least, justifying the reasoning for their rankings.

Alternative Interpretations Present a clue and have students develop possible alternative interpretations for what it could mean.

Missing Piece Remove information about a key clue from the story, and have students identify what's missing and hypothesize different possibilities for that gap in evidence.

Design thinking skills

The key is taking a hands-on, innovative approach where students apply design thinking by identifying opportunities, exploring ideas, building prototypes or blueprints, and pitching improved narrative elements. This unlocks their creativity while analyzing the story critically.

K-2

Creature Redesign Have students redesign the "monster" creature using different materials/shapes. What abilities could their new creature have?

Build a Better Trap Allow students to prototype a new creature trap using craft materials, analyzing why their design could work better.

Dream Green Goo If they could create a new type of "green goo", what properties would students give it? Have them describe its purpose.

3-4

Setting Makeover Have students redesign the setting of Belly Acre Bog to be more mysterious, dangerous, or kid-friendly. What would change?

Character Makeover Pick a character and have students redesign their look and qualities as a superhero, villain, or other archetype.

Subplots & Storyboards Develop a new subplot or adventure for the characters. Storyboard the revised narrative arc with this addition.



5-6

Be the Author Have students identify 1-2 problems or weak points in the story, then brainstorm how they would revise as the author.

Foreshadowing Focus Group Allow students to review the story's foreshadowing and make suggestions for adding more vivid hints or clues.

New Mystery Blueprint Have student groups blueprint an entirely new mystery plot for the Creature Finders using design thinking steps like: empathy, problem definition, ideation, prototyping, revising.

Vocabulary

Here is a list of 10 words per grade, with the words getting progressively more challenging as the grade level increases. Examples from the teacher will help clarify some of the more conceptual words.

K **bog** - area of wet spongy ground; swamp
clue - something that helps answer a question or solve a problem
tadpole - a baby frog or toad
mystery - something you don't know
creature - a (possibly weird) living thing
frog - a leaping animal with smooth wet skin and webbed feet
disappear - to stop being seen
search - to look for something or someone
trap - a way to catch something, or the thing it's caught in
vanish - to pass quickly out of sight

1 **detective** - someone who solves a mystery
sidekick - a close friend who helps in any situation
witness - someone who sees something happen
suspect - someone who might have done something wrong
observe - watch something closely
primordial - very, very old
motive - a reason for doing something
examine - look very closely at something
proof - a sign that something is true or real, not made up
nocturnal - staying awake at night and sleeping during the day

Vocabulary

- 2** **inhabitants** - people or animals who live in a particular area
collaborating - working together
suspicious - something that looks or seems weird or out of place
conspire - work together to do something wrong
misleading - sending in the wrong direction accidentally or on purpose
deduce - use logical thinking to come up with answers
inference - a guess based on facts or clues
verify - to confirm that something is true
revelation - a surprise or answer
scrutinize - look really closely at something
- 3** **interrogate** - ask a suspect or witness questions to find out what they know
allegation - accusing someone of doing something
corroborate - to confirm that something is true
speculation - making a guess about something unknown
manipulation - getting someone to do what you want them to
conundrum - a problem or puzzle
perplexing - confusing or hard to figure out
incriminating - proof that someone did something wrong
discrepancy - a difference between facts or opinions
concealment - to confirm that something is true
- 4** **red herring** - a misleading clue
deception - lying in order to mislead someone
implicate - give evidence that someone did something wrong
belligerent - angry and threatening
circumstantial - facts that seem to prove someone guilty of wrongdoing
apprehend - to catch and arrest someone suspected of wrongdoing
ulterior - a reason for doing something that is different from the reason they give
resolution - wrapping up an investigation successfully
corroborating - supporting evidence that helps prove something true or false
fallacious - based on a mistaken belief

Vocabulary

- 5** **conspiracy** - a secret plan by a group to do something wrong or harmful
exculpatory - proving to be innocent
plausible - seeming reasonable or likely
inconclusive - not leading to a definite result of true or false, guilty or innocent
conviction - being declared guilty of a crime
subterfuge - lying in order to achieve a goal
unscrupulous - showing no signs of being truthful or fair
incontrovertible - not disputable or deniable; absolutely true
deductive - using logic and reasoning to work through a problem and find a solution
alibi - proof that someone didn't do something wrong

- 6** **analytical** - using logical reasoning
anomaly - something different from what is expected or normal
equivocal - something that can be seen or interpreted in more than one way
fabrication - a made-up story or lie
fortuitous - happening by luck or chance
indubitably - unquestionably, undoubtedly
insinuation - an suggestion or hint at something bad
resilient - able to withstand or recover quickly from difficulties
pernicious - having a gradual or subtle harmful effect
exonerate - give evidence that someone didn't do something wrong

Write a bio poem

A bio poem is a type of poem that describes a person in a structured format. It typically includes specific information about the person, such as their name, age, likes, dislikes, and aspirations.

Choose a format for your poem. Typically, a bio poem follows a specific structure, with lines dedicated to different aspects of the person's life.

Use the following template to guide your writing:

- Line 1: **First name**
- Line 2: **Three adjectives describing the person**
- Line 3: **Important family roles**
- Line 4: **Three things, people, or ideas the person loved**
- Line 5: **Three feelings the person experienced**
- Line 6: **Three things the person needed**
- Line 7: **Three fears, dislikes, or dreams**
- Line 8: **Three things the person would like to see or do**
- Line 9: **Resident of (location)**
- Line 10: **Last name**

Fill in the template with the specific details you know about the character. Edit and revise your poem to make sure it flows well and accurately reflects the person you are writing about.

Bio poem sample

- Line 1:** Seymour
- Line 2:** Silly, smart, curious
- Line 3:** Son of Wendy and Walter Warts
- Line 4:** Lover of French flies, dreary English afternoons, and pickleball
- Line 5:** Who is happy when playing darts, sad when there's nothing to solve, and excited to learn Spanish
- Line 6:** Who needs a magnifying glass, reliable rain boots, and plenty of books
- Line 7:** Who fears the woods, can't stand broccoli, and dreams of becoming a famous violinist
- Line 8:** Who would like to visit Iceland, pilot a hot-air balloon, and star in a Broadway musical
- Line 9:** Resident of a cramped but comfortable apartment in London's Greenchapel district
- Line 10:** Warts

Try your own bio poem

name _____

Who is your character? What is their first name?

Three adjectives (adjectives describe their look,

Family roles

Three loved things

Three feelings

Three needs

Three fears, dislikes, or dreams

Three things to see or do

Residence

Last name

Teaching moments

Below are some unexpected teachable moments and opportunities for mini lessons in various K-6 subject areas that can be found in Finder's Creatures Case #1: Bog Gone!

Language Arts

Figurative language: the story uses phrases like "The good. The bad. The bugly," and book titles such as *The Larvae Boys* and *Antsy Drew*, which play on the popular Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew series. This could lead to a mini lesson on puns, homophones, and creative wordplay.

Characterization: Each creature has distinct personality traits that are shown through dialogue and description, like Keeper being smart and a collector, Chopper being funny and food-motivated. Examining how the author develops characters would make a good lesson.

Mystery genre: With the disappearing animals and suspects like C.R.O.A.K. and the Zookeeper, this has elements of a mystery story. Discussing mystery story arcs, red herrings, and how clues connect could be an interesting discussion.

Science

Animal adaptations: Finder is a frog who starts as a tadpole. The changes a tadpole goes through to become an adult frog could lead to a science lesson on life cycles and metamorphosis.

Properties of matter: The green goo has unique properties that allow it to clump together into a giant ball. Investigating states of matter (solid, liquid, gas) and properties of slime could connect and possibly lead to a slime-making activity.

Ecosystems: The story mentions Finder lives in the Belly Acre Bog. Bogs are a specific type of wetland habitat. Researching the plants, animals, and conditions of bog ecosystems would enrich understanding.

Social Studies

Mapping skills: The characters visit different locations around the bog like Owl Towers, Goose Liver Farm, etc. Having students map out the places in the story allows them to practice geography skills.

Community roles: The creature finders act as detectives to help their community. A lesson on community helpers and roles people play in towns could tie in social studies.

Art

Texture: The illustrations could be used to teach about texture, like the bumpy goo, feathery owl, scaly snake skin. Students could create their own textures in an art project.

Perspective: Some illustrations are drawn from different perspectives. Playing with perspective in drawings, from a bird's eye view to worm's eye view, makes a good art lesson.

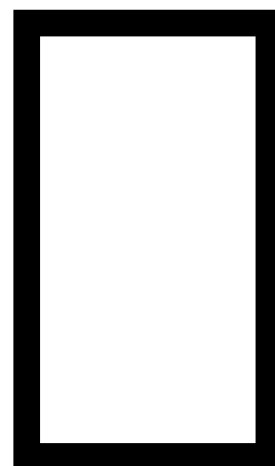
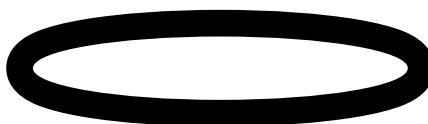
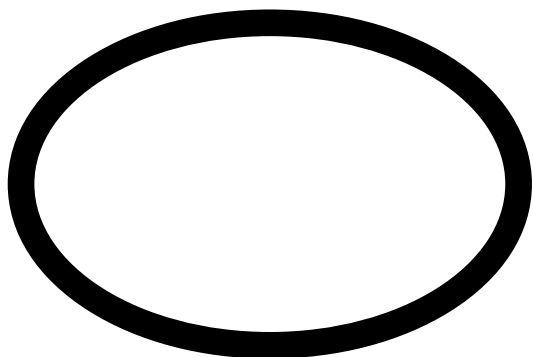
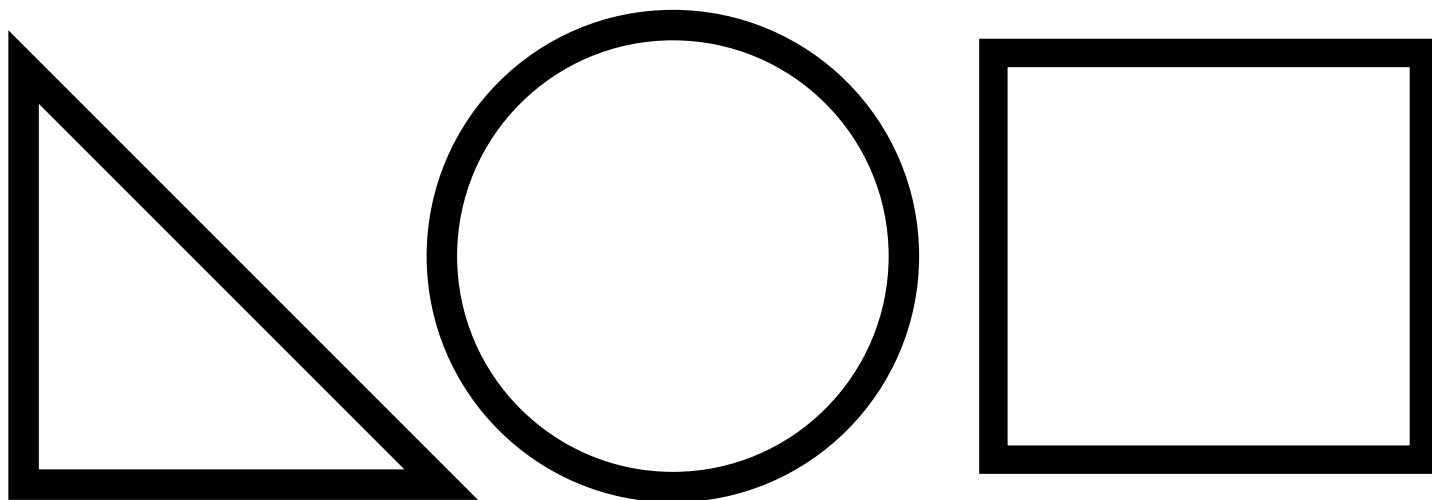
Math

Sequencing: Putting the events of the mystery in the correct sequence practices numbers and ordering for early grades.

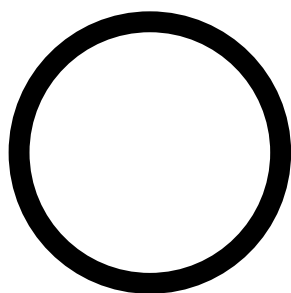
Measurement: Seymour discusses measurement and counting in his unique form of deductive reasoning. Lessons surrounding different units of measure and different tools used for measuring various solids and liquids could be useful.

Draw the Creatures!

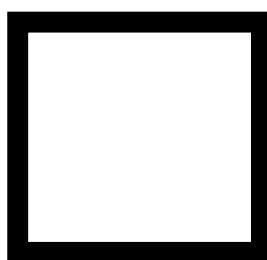
Use the basic shapes below as starting places to draw Finder, Chopper and Keeper.
What are the names of these shapes? Can you make your own characters using them?



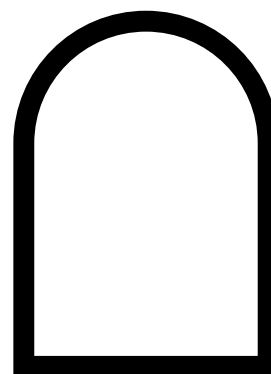
example



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Field observations

There's no better way to learn than in the field. Get prepared—grab your magnifying glass—and go outside for some good, old fashioned looking around. Try to find the things below on your nature hike, but make notes of anything interesting, unusual or memorable you see.

What colors do you see around you? Can you spot any unusual or bright colors?

How many different types of trees can you find? What makes them different?

Do you hear any bird calls or animal sounds? Can you try to imitate them?

Can you find any signs of animals, like tracks, feathers, or nibbled leaves?

What's the smallest thing you can find on the ground? Describe its shape and color.

Feel the bark of a tree or a leaf. Is it smooth, rough, or bumpy? Is it dry or damp?

Can you find any flowers? How many petals do they have?

Look up at the sky. What interesting shapes do the clouds make?

Can you spot any insects like ants, beetles, or butterflies? Where are they going?

Find a rock or a pebble. What color is it? Is it light or heavy?

Can you find any seeds or nuts on the ground? Which trees might they have come from?

Look for different types of leaves. Are they all the same shape and size?

Can you spot any birds or squirrels? What are they doing?

Find a patch of moss or lichen. Is it growing on a rock or a tree?

Storytime

Use things that you discovered on your nature hike to make a short story. You can pick an animal—insect, bird, mammal—as the main character, a setting—field, sky, tree—to describe where the story takes place, and any other observations to help you figure out how to make something interesting happen. Have fun!

[illegible]