

# The Daring Nancy Drew

## • Keep 'em Reading •

Grades  
K-2, 3-5

by | Lynne Farrell Stover

The daring young detective, Nancy Drew, has been solving mysteries for over seventy-five years. From Nancy's first adventures in *The Secret of the Old Clock* by Carolyn Keene, published in 1930, to the current Nancy Drew ® Girl Detective series, debuting in 2004, our young heroine has proven herself to be a champion problem solver. While the successful mystery series has had many "ghost writers" over the decades, the character has remained an intelligent risk-taking role model for generations of readers looking for a good tale with intrigue, danger, and a satisfying plot twist.

**Note:** It is not necessary for the students to have read a Nancy Drew Mystery to successfully participate in these lessons.



### Lesson 1: What Is a Mystery?

A good mystery story is packed with suspense. It characteristically contains a challenging puzzle to decipher or a crime to solve. As the plot thickens, clues that either show the way to the solution or mislead the reader are introduced. Mysteries are unusually populated by a detective working on behalf of an unfortunate victim and many suspects who, with the exception of one, will prove to be innocent.

**Time Required:** 25–30 minutes

#### Objectives:

- The students will be introduced to the elements of a mystery story.
- The students will create a short mystery synopsis based on plot, setting, and character.

#### Materials:

- What Is a Mystery? visual (see page 4)
- Create a Mystery Story Synopsis activity, one for each student or group (see page 5)
- writing tools
- device for selecting topic (Dice work well as there are six choices in each box.)
- a selection of mystery books for students to checkout following the lesson (*optional*)

#### Procedure:

1. Display the visual. Read and discuss it with the class.
2. Pass out activity sheets, along with the selection device, writing tools, and paper. Students may work individually or in groups.
3. Read the directions on the activity sheet to the students. Allow three minutes for students to select topics. (Collecting the device after selection is a good idea!)
4. Allow 10–20 minutes for writing.
5. Encourage students to share their writing creations with the class.

### Lesson 1 Extension: Create a Mystery Dust Jacket

The student-written mystery story synopsis can be used in a creative extension activity that introduces the information often found on book dust jackets.

**Time Required:** 30–35 minutes

#### Objectives:

- The students will be introduced to the information included on front and back covers, front and back flaps, and book spines.
- The students will create a book jacket.

**Materials:**

- Create a Mystery Book Dust Jacket visual (see page 5)
- Create a Mystery Book Dust Jacket activity, one for each student or group (see page 6)
- writing tools
- markers and/or colored pencils
- examples of book dust jackets

**Procedure:**

1. Display the visual. Read and discuss the various components of a book's dust cover.
2. Show the students examples of various book dust covers. Explain that these are also called book jackets, book covers, and/or dust covers.
3. Ask the students what they think the purposes of dust covers might be. Possible answers: *To protect the book. To make the book look attractive. To advertise the book. To make people want to read the book. To give readers information about the book.*
4. Pass out activity sheets, writing tools, and drawing materials. Remind students they are to use the story synopsis they wrote in Lesson I. Encourage students to be creative with the author's name and biography, publishing information, and illustrations.
5. Allow the students to work the remainder of the class. (Students should be allowed to complete the project outside of class if necessary.)
6. Completed dust jackets make an interesting and attractive bulletin board.

**Lesson 2: Nancy Drew and the Mysterious Anagram**

The first Nancy Drew mystery, *The Secret of the Old Clock*, was published in 1930. The main character was a young, bright, and spunky amateur detective. Many different authors have written stories for the Nancy Drew series over the last seventy-five years. They all use the name Carolyn Keene. (Writing under another name can be referred to as "ghost writing.") While the authors have changed and the characters in the book have become more modern, the cases Nancy Drew solves have remained interesting mysteries that hold the readers' attention.

**Time Required:** 20–25 minutes

**Objectives:**

- The students will decode anagrams.
- The students will be introduced to synonyms for the word "detective."
- The students will be introduced to vocabulary specific to mystery and detective stories

**Materials:**

- Nancy Drew and the Mysterious Anagram visual (see page 8)
- Mystery Anagrams activity (see page 9)
- writing tools
- dictionaries for lesson extension (*optional*)

**Procedure:**

1. Display the prepared visual.
2. Read and discuss the displayed contents. The answer to "What is an anagram for **Sue I. Digs?**" is DISGUISE.
3. Pass out the prepared activity sheet. Students may work independently or in pairs.
4. Check the activity sheet for accuracy. Answers: Part I—1. F, 2. I, 3. G, 4. H, 5. C, 6. A, 7. E, 8. D, 9. J, 10. B. Part II—1. C, 2. H, 3. A, 4. G, 5. J, 6. I, 7. D, 8. B, 9. F, 10. E.

**Lesson Extension:** Students may look up unknown vocabulary words in Part II and write down the definition as it applies to mystery and detective stories. They may share their work with the class.

**Lesson 3: Mystery Series**

Mystery series are popular with readers of all ages. Students who enjoy the Nancy Drew mystery books may be interested in the adventures of other young detectives.

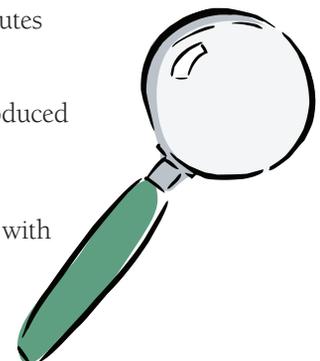
**Time Required:** 15–20 minutes

**Objectives:**

- The students will be introduced to various mystery series.

**Materials:**

- Match the Mystery Series with the Author activity (see page 10)



## Keep 'em Reading

- writing tools
- a selection of mystery books for students to check out following the lesson (*optional*)

### **Procedure:**

1. Ask the students if they know popular mystery series.
2. Allow students to use the card catalog, computer databases, or even look on the library shelves to find the answers. (This activity sheet is to be used as a teaching tool, not as an evaluation of knowledge.)
3. Check for accuracy. Answers: 1. B, 2. G, 3. J, 4. E, 5. K, 6. I, 7. F, 8. C, 9. D, 10. L, 11. A, 12. H.
4. Encourage students to check out mystery books to read and enjoy.

### **McREL Language Arts Standards**

#### **Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process**

- Uses strategies to write for a variety of purposes

#### **Uses the general skills and strategies of the reading process**

- Uses word reference materials to determine the meaning, pronunciation, and derivations of unknown words.
- Uses personal criteria to select reading material (e.g., person interest, knowledge of authors and genres, text difficulty, recommendation of others)

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# What is a Mystery?

A mystery story's main focus is the solving of a puzzle or problem.  
The reader wishes to find the answers to the following questions:



Who did it?  
What happened?  
Where did it take place?  
How did it come about?

The author includes interesting characters, a realistic setting, and clues to help solve the puzzle as well as distractions to confuse the reader.



The main character in a mystery is often the problem solver or detective.

Famous fictional detectives include:

**Sherlock Holmes**  
**Encyclopedia Brown**  
**Frank and Joe Hardy**  
**Nancy Drew**



# Create a Mystery Story Synopsis

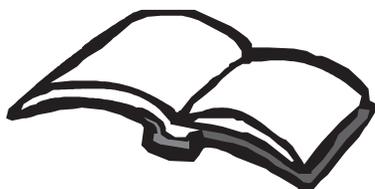
A synopsis is a summary of a book. It briefly explains the plot and introduces the book's main characters without giving away any information that may spoil the story for the reader. A story synopsis is often found on the inside flap of a book jacket.

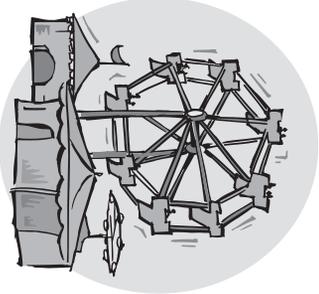
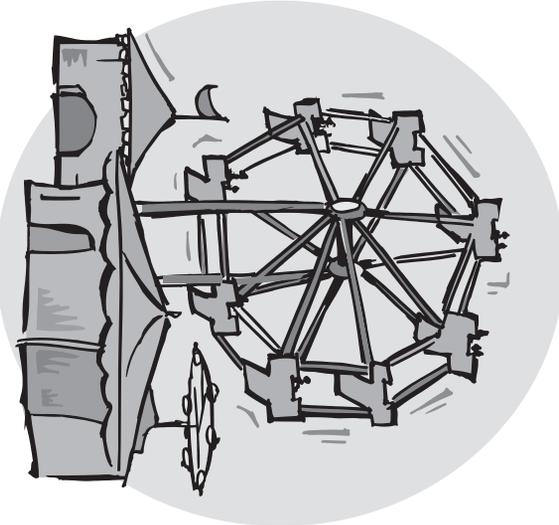
Using a die, a spinner, or a device of your own choosing, select and circle one item from the WHO? WHERE? WHEN? HOW? boxes below. Write a synopsis for a mystery story containing all of the selected information. Create an interesting title for your story.

## Example:

Grandpa Joe, a retired police chief and expert code breaker, uses his skills to prove his grandson, Jay Jones, innocent of stealing a small but valuable gold statue in *The City Park Ferris Wheel Mystery*.

WHO?	WHAT?	WHERE?	HOW?
1. A lonely only child	1. A missing treasure	1. Outside an old castle	1. Using a computer
2. The school librarian	2. Counterfeit money	2. Aboard a ship	2. Reading an old letter
3. Twins	3. A kidnapped puppy	3. On a Ferris wheel	3. Finding a forgotten hiding place
4. A news reporter	4. A lost locket	4. Inside a locked room	4. Decoding a secret message
5. The babysitter	5. A small gold statue	5. Near the ocean	5. Following a pirate's treasure map
6. A grandparent	6. The top secret recipe for a famous cola	6. In a basement	6. Disguised as a lost tourist



<p>Sue Luth has been writing mystery novels for thirteen years. She lives in Chicago with her grandparents who are both retired police officers.</p> <p>Best Books Press Reading Way, NY</p>	<p><b>The City Park Ferris Wheel Mystery</b></p>  <p>Praise for Sue Luth's new Grandpa Joe mystery story:</p> <p><b>"A good story with a surprise twist!"</b> —Paige Turner</p> <p><b>"Grandpa Joe goes around in circles in the fast paced mystery story!"</b> —Bea Smart</p> <p>ISBN</p> 	<p>LUTH</p> <p><b>The City Park Ferris Wheel Mystery</b></p> <p>Best Books Press</p>	<p><b>The City Park Ferris Wheel Mystery</b></p> <p>By Sue Luth</p> 	<p><b>Book Summary:</b> Grandpa Joe uses all of his skills as a retired police chief to prove his grandson, Jay Jones, innocent of stealing a valuable gold statue in <i>The City Park Ferris Wheel Mystery</i>.</p> <p>Leehw sirraf eht ni</p> <p>"Can you decode this secret message Grandpa?" Jay knew he would need all the help he could get. It seemed he was the main suspect.</p>
<p><b>Back Flap</b></p>	<p><b>Back Cover</b></p>	<p><b>Spine</b></p>	<p><b>Front Cover</b></p>	<p><b>Front Flap</b></p>

Possible contents of a book dust jacket:

**Back Flap**—Short biography of author, short biography of illustrator, information about publisher (address, Web site, etc.).

**Back Cover**—Short book reviews and recommendations, illustration, ISBN barcode.

**Spine**—Book title, author, publisher.

**Front Cover**—Title, author, illustrator, illustration, awards won (if applicable).

**Front Flap**—Short book summary, short passage from book.

# Create a Dust Jacket

Back Flap	Back Cover	Spine	Front Cover	Front Flap

**Back Flap**—Short biography of author, short biography of illustrator, information about publisher (address, Web site, etc.).

**Back Cover**—Short book reviews and recommendations, illustration, ISBN barcode.

**Spine**—Book title, author, publisher.

**Front Cover**—Title, author, illustrator, illustration, awards won (if applicable).

**Front Flap**—Short book summary, short passage from book.

# Nancy Drew and the Mysterious Anagram

Nancy Drew, girl detective, is good at discovering clues and solving puzzles. During some of her investigations she will discover criminals who are trying to disguise their identities. In order to do this they may use an anagram of their name.

An **ANAGRAM** is word or phrase formed by rearranging the letters of another word or phrase.

For example, if **Nancy Drew** wanted to use a pseudonym (a made-up name), she might rearrange the letters in her name and call herself **Candy Wren**.

If the author of the Nancy Drew books, **Carolyn Keene**, wanted to disguise her identity she might call herself **Earl Ken Coney**.



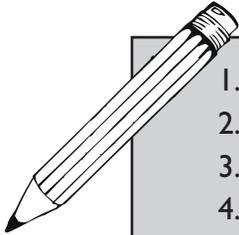
## You be the detective!

If a suspect in a mystery story called herself **Sue I. Digs**, would this be a clue that she may be using a pseudonym? What is an anagram for **Sue I. Digs**?

# Mystery Anagrams

## Part I

Nancy Drew is a young detective in a series of mystery stories. A detective, a person who uncovers clues and solves problems, is known by many other names. Match the name a detective might be called to its anagram. (Remember an anagram is a word or phrase formed by rearranging the letters of another word or phrase.)

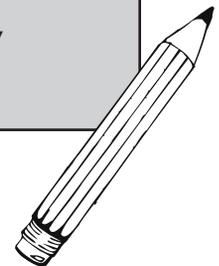


- |                     |                  |
|---------------------|------------------|
| 1. ___ Beagle       | A. rotating vice |
| 2. ___ Eavesdropper | B. spoon         |
| 3. ___ Flatfoot     | C. nice sport    |
| 4. ___ Gumshoe      | D. lock hers     |
| 5. ___ Inspector    | E. so hams       |
| 6. ___ Investigator | F. be a leg      |
| 7. ___ Shamus       | G. lot of fat    |
| 8. ___ Sherlock     | H. some ugh      |
| 9. ___ Sleuth       | I. approve reeds |
| 10. ___ Snoop       | J. hustle        |

## Part II

Mystery stories often contain words that are unique to the work of crime solvers and detective work. Match the vocabulary word to its anagram. Do you know the definition of each word?

- |                     |                   |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1. ___ Deduction    | A. even die       |
| 2. ___ Enigma       | B. cup sets       |
| 3. ___ Evidence     | C. iced donut     |
| 4. ___ Interrogate  | D. chaser         |
| 5. ___ Investigate  | E. an exiled pun  |
| 6. ___ Mysterious   | F. cure all vines |
| 7. ___ Search       | G. Great Orient   |
| 8. ___ Suspect      | H. in a gem       |
| 9. ___ Surveillance | I. Sue or Misty   |
| 10. ___ Unexplained | J. it's negative  |



# Match the Mystery Series with the Author

Carolyn Keene is the author of the Nancy Drew mystery books. Therefore, you should be able to find these books in your library's FICTION section under K, KE, or KEE. (Knowing the author of a series helps make a book easy to find.) There are many different authors who write mystery books. Can you match the author to the mystery series?

- |                                    |                                   |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| _____ 1. David A. Adler            | A. The Boxcar Children Series     |
| _____ 2. Betsy Byars               | B. Cam Jansen Series              |
| _____ 3. Franklin W. Dixon         | C. Nate the Great Series          |
| _____ 4. John R. Erickson          | D. Encyclopedia Brown Series      |
| _____ 5. Caroline Lawrence         | E. Hank the Cowdog Series         |
| _____ 6. Ann M. Martin             | F. Jigsaw Jones Mystery Series    |
| _____ 7. James Preller             | G. Herculeah Jones Mystery Series |
| _____ 8. Marjorie Weinman Sharmat  | H. Chinatown Mysteries            |
| _____ 9. Donald J. Sobol           | I. The Babysitters Club Series    |
| _____ 10. Wendelin Van Draanen     | J. Hardy Boys Series              |
| _____ 11. Gertrude Chandler Warner | K. The Roman Mysteries            |
| _____ 12. Lawrence Yep             | L. Sammy Keyes Series             |

