MURDER IN THE SCHOOL

Use the clues to find out who killed Miss McGowan.
Lesson Number: 9

Title: Murder in the Classroom

Grade/Age Level: 5

Time: 40 minutes

Materials:
* Murder in the Classroom worksheet
* Character Cards
* Background Information
* Solution

Each Student:
- Character Card
- Murder in the Classroom worksheet
- 1 #2 pencil

Standards/ Common Curriculum Goal(s):
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.1
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.3
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.1
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.3
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.3b

Anticipatory Set:
“How many of you would like to solve a murder today? We’ll get to mingle with different people in the room to find out who killed Miss McGowan and then we’ll name our culprit and solve the case!” Now, let’s take a closer look at the case.”

Objective and Purpose:
Students will be able to figure out who murdered Miss McGowan by process of elimination through conversation and by written notes. Students will be able to use expression and drama to bring out their character role in order to try and persuade the audience (classmates) to not pick them as the suspect.

Procedure:
Explain to the class that you are going to play a murder mystery game. Everyone will be a character in the game and one of them is the murderer! Give them the background information.

Inform students they will need to use appropriate language and if you hear any inappropriate language being used, a two tally marks will be applied to the tally board.

Break up students into three groups of nine. You will need no less than seven students per group to play the game. The main character cards all contain clues to working out the mystery. For bigger groups use the supplementary cards (they contain no real clues). Give each student a character card. They need to read and memorize the information.
Tell students that the aim is to act out the game, become the character and not to just read the information from the card.

At this point answer any questions students might have about their character. *(Check for Understanding).*

Hand out the worksheets, explain to the class they need to collect information about everyone who was at the party and fill any relevant information on the sheet.

At this point go over key vocabulary: alibi, motive, and clue.

Elicit from the class the questions they need to ask and write on the board for reference:
- What is your name?
- Why were you at the party?
- What was your relationship with Ms. McGowan?
- When did you last see Ms. McGowan?
- What were you doing when you heard the scream?

This is the mingling portion of the activity with students asking questions and collecting information. Monitor the language used at this point and correct where necessary.

When the students have spoken to everyone who was at the party, have them go back into their original groups. Take back the character cards.

Using the information they have collected, the students try to work out *who* killed Ms. McGowan and *why* they did it. Have them briefly talk about this within their groups (no more than 5 minutes).

As a class, discuss the possibilities and write all them on the board. One by one eliminate suspects until you have come to the conclusion of who killed Miss McGowan.

**Adaptations for Students with Special Needs:**

*Talented, Gifted, and/or Creative Learners:* These students will have the opportunity to write extensively about each character they meet. They will be required to write more about the character rather than just a simple one word clues/answers. They will also be required to talk more amongst their group while in the role of their character.

*English Language Learners:* When explaining the activities, describing the murder, and facilitation discussion I will use plain language. I will also have the background information about the murder on the DOC Cam for them to follow along both visually and auditory. They will also be able to read directly off of their character card so they don’t feel anxious about remembering the information about their character. When writing, these students will be able to use key words that help them remember important information about the characters. If the student(s) are having trouble, I or another student will help them.
**Students with Learning Disabilities:** As I mentioned, I will explain activities and facilitate the discussion clearly and simply. Students will also have a visual and auditory means of following the background information about the murder by either by reading the worksheet themselves or by listening to the class discussion. These students will be given a chance to share their thoughts or ask questions regarding their character during the lesson. If these students have difficulty writing clues about other characters in their group, I or another adult or student will help them.

**Closure:**
When students have finished interviewing other characters in their group and have finished filling in all the necessary information on their worksheet as well as discussing who the killer is in their groups, we will come together as a class to find out all possible suspects. After we have identified all of the possible suspects, we will narrow it down to find out who actually murdered Miss McGowan.

**Lesson Assessment:**
During the time students are in their groups, finding information about all the characters, I will circulate the room to make sure students are on task and following directions both orally and written. At the end of my lesson, I will assess the students based on their input of who killed Miss McGowan and if they understood the process of figuring out who had done the crime. After the lesson is over, I will look at their worksheets to make sure they followed directions in putting down important/necessary information.

**Multiple Intelligences Address in Lesson:**
Verbal/linguistic; visual/spatial; logical/mathematical; bodily/kinesthetic; interpersonal.
# Murder in the Classroom Characters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Motive</th>
<th>Alibi</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Simon Donnelly</td>
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<td>A copy of Simon Donnelly’s book was found in the classroom where Miss McGowan was killed…</td>
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<td>Saul Sheen</td>
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<td>A photograph of Saul Sheen was found in Miss McGowan’s pocket.</td>
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<td>Ivan Williams</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Miss McGowan was holding a handkerchief with the initials I.W. in her hand when she was killed.</td>
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Name: ___________________

**Background Information**

During a school reunion a scream is heard from one of the classrooms. It's 8:30 pm. A few minutes later the dead body of Miss Eliza McGowan, a cranky old English teacher, is found. She has been hit on the head. Also found were a number of items that may lead us to the killer: a book written by one of her ex-students, Simon Donnelly, a photograph of one of her fellow teachers, a young man called Saul Sheen, and a handkerchief with the initials I. W. At the moment these are the three main suspects, but everyone who was at the party and saw or spoke to Miss McGowan needs to be questioned.
Main Character Cards

Your name: Simon Donnelly; you are an ex-student.

Memories of Miss McGowan: She was a very tough teacher, she made you do extra writing assignments and she said you had talent but you hated all the extra work. But now you're grateful, you're a writer, you have just written a new book and you dedicated it to Miss McGowan.

Last time you saw Miss McGowan: You saw Miss McGowan at about 7 pm, you gave her a copy of your new book and she was pleased.

When you heard the scream: You were talking to Louise King, another ex-student.

Your name: Louise King; you are an ex-student.

Memories of Miss McGowan: You thought she was an old hag, you hated her class, she gave too much homework, she made you hate school so you stopped going. You didn't do your exams and now you work in a chicken factory. You think it's all Miss McGowan's fault. You're glad she's dead!

Last time you saw Miss McGowan: You went outside for a cigarette at about 8 pm, you saw her with Mr. Green, it looked like they were arguing and it seemed serious. Anyway, they were talking about someone called Paul or Raul or something..... ..you couldn't hear very well.

When you heard the scream: You were glad for the distraction; you were trying to escape from boring Simon Donnelly.

Your name: Saul Sheen; you are a teacher at the school.

Opinion of Miss McGowan: She was a very serious woman, she wasn't easy to like.

Last time you saw Miss McGowan: Nobody at school knows this but Miss McGowan was your mother, she gave you up for adoption when you were a baby. You were having an argument because she wouldn't tell you who your father was. It was about 7:30 pm.

When you heard the scream: You were looking for Mr. Green, the headmaster, you knocked on his office door but there was no answer.
Your name: Ivan Williams; you are the caretaker at the school.

Opinion of Miss McGowan: You thought that she was a very classy lady; it surprised you that she wasn't married. You wanted to invite her to dinner but you were afraid she would say no.

Last time you saw Miss McGowan: You saw her argue with Mr. Sheen. You never liked him, he was always upsetting poor Miss McGowan. You went to see if she was okay, you loaned her your handkerchief, you always carry one because you have allergies.

When you heard the scream: You were cleaning the floor in the men's toilets.

Your name: Lily Simmons; you are an ex-student.

Memories of Miss McGowan: She was a very scary teacher, most of the students worked hard because they were afraid of her. You did very well in English and, because of Miss McGowan; you are training to be a teacher.

Last time you saw Miss McGowan: You spoke to her briefly at about 7:45, you were telling her about your studies; she didn't seem interested, she kept looking around. Then she saw Mr. Green and said she had to go. You thought she was a bit rude.

When you heard the scream: You were dancing in the Sports Hall with some of the other ex-students.

Your name: Edward Green, you are the headmaster at the school.

Opinion of Miss McGowan: You have known Miss McGowan since you were both students in college, you thought she was a wonderful woman; you will miss her very much.

Last time you saw Miss McGowan: You were very busy this evening, you didn't see Miss McGowan.

When you heard the scream: You were in your office working on the computer.
Your name: Patricia Woods, you are a teacher at the school.

Opinion of Miss McGowan: She was a good teacher but she didn't have very many friends.

Last time you saw Miss McGowan: She was walking to her classroom, it was about 8:15 pm and she looked upset. You thought she was crying; she was wiping her eyes with a handkerchief.

When you heard the scream: You were serving drinks with some of the other teachers in the Sports Hall.

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Supplemental Character Cards

Your name: Janice Carroll; you are a teacher at the school.

Opinion of Ms. McGowan: You only just stared at the school so you didn't really know Miss McGowan.

Last time you saw Ms. McGowan: You didn't see Ms. McGowan at all.

When you heard the scream: You were talking to some of the other new teachers in the Sports Hall.
Your name: Judy Hall, you are an ex-student.

Opinion of Ms. McGowan: She was very strict, not very friendly, most of the students were afraid of her.

Last time you saw Ms. McGowan: When you arrived at the party, before 7 pm.

When you heard the scream: In the Sports Hall dancing with an old school friend, Lily Simmons.

Your name: Hal Johnson, you are the receptionist at the school.

Opinion of Ms. McGowan: She was a polite woman, not very friendly, but you didn't have any problems with her.

Last time you saw Ms. McGowan: This afternoon while we were getting ready for the party. You arrived late for the party and you didn't see her all evening.

When you heard the scream: You were washing your hands in the men's room.
Mr. Green is Saul Sheen's father; he and Miss McGowan had a relationship in college. Miss McGowan has always kept it a secret but after the last argument with Saul she plans to tell him the truth. She tells Mr. Green about her plan and they argue. Louise King overhears them. Mr. Green is furious and it is he who follows Miss McGowan to the classroom and hits her over the head. He wasn't in his office when everyone heard the scream, that's why when Saul Sheen knocked on the door he got no answer.
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<td>You were looking for Mr. Green.</td>
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<td>Ivan Williams</td>
<td>Caretaker at school</td>
<td>Cleaning toilets.</td>
<td>Miss McGowan was holding a handkerchief with the initials I.W. in her hand when she was killed.</td>
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<td>Louise King</td>
<td>Ex student.</td>
<td>Talking to Simon Donnelly.</td>
<td>Went outside around 8:00 pm for a cigarette.</td>
</tr>
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<td>Lilly Simmons</td>
<td>Ex student.</td>
<td>Dancing in Sports Hall.</td>
<td>You told her about your studies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward Green</td>
<td>Headmaster at the school</td>
<td>You were busy working on your computer this evening.</td>
<td>You were in your office, but Saul Sheen said you were not there.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patricia Wood</td>
<td>Teacher at the school</td>
<td>Serving drinks with other teachers in the Sports Hall.</td>
<td>You saw her at 8:15 p.m. walking in the hallway crying.</td>
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<td>Janice Carroll</td>
<td>New teacher.</td>
<td>Talking to some of the other teachers in the Sports Hall</td>
<td>Other teachers were serving with you.</td>
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<td>Ex student</td>
<td>You were in the Sports Hall with Lilly Simmons</td>
<td>You were drinking and dancing.</td>
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<td>Hal Johnson</td>
<td>Receptionist at school</td>
<td>You were washing your hands in the mens room.</td>
<td>The caretaker was in there cleaning the toilets.</td>
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