Whodunnit?
The Case of the Missing Poodle
Lesson Number: 6

Title: Whodunnit? Weekly Mystery

Grade Level: 5th

Time: 60 minutes

Materials:
Per Student:
Whodunnit? Weekly Mystery packet
Pencil and highlighter
Smart board

Common Curriculum Goal(s):
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.1
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.3
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.4
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.5
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.6
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.7

Anticipatory Set:
Ask the students why it is important to interview many different people that were witnesses and/or suspects in a crime? Should all witnesses’ statements be taken? Why or why not? Based on witnesses’ statements, how can you further investigate into a crime/mystery?

Stated Objective and Purpose:
Students will be able to answer questions based on how the investigation proceeds in The Case of the Missing Poodle. Students will then verbalize what their table group came up with regarding the day of investigation they were responsible for. When every group has stated their reasoning, we will try and solve the mystery of the missing poodle.

Procedure:
1. Pass out the Whodunnit? Weekly Mysteries packet to each group. Make sure there are four groups so each group will get their own investigation day. (If more than four groups, take the remaining group(s) and divide them up into the other four groups).

2. Explain to the class what each group will be doing. Remind students that everyone will be required to write down answers as they will be turning in their packet at the end of the day.

3. Tell students they need to put their name on their packet as well.

4. Read the Introduction and Case Details to the class, aloud, and put a copy of it on the DOC Cam so students can also visually see, and follow along, with what you are saying.
5. Ask students if they have any questions and answer any that may arise (Checking for understanding).

6. Tell students they will have about 15 minutes to complete their investigation page before we come back as a class and talk about what happened during each day’s investigation. *Some student groups will need to review previous day(s) investigations to answer their set of questions.

7. When 15 minutes is up, regain focus of the students and tell them each group is going to talk about what happened during their day’s investigation as well as what their questions were that went along with their investigation.

8. On the Smart board, write out important clues/evidence in each day’s investigation.

9. Once all of the groups have gone, ask students what they believe may be the solution to the crime.

10. Discuss this with the class for about 20 minutes.

11. Once there have been great discussions and students feel that they want to find out what REALLY happened, read them the Case Resolution and put it on the DOC Cam so students can also visually see what you are reading.

12. Talk about the difference between their answers and the answer on the paper and see if they can make any correlation of how that was the actually solution to the crime.

13. Have students put their packets in the basket to turn in to get graded.

Adaptations for Students with Special Needs:

Talented, Gifted, and/or Creative Learners: These students will be given the task to complete more of what is required on the worksheet for their group. I will have students provide reasoning behind their answer so I know they are challenging themselves to support the answer they write. I will also ask students questions, not on the worksheet, about the reading, to further their thinking beyond what is being asked.

English Language Learners: When explaining the activities, describing mysteries, or facilitation discussion, I will speak using plain language and gestures/visual cues. Each student will be provided a copy of The Case of the Missing Poodle packet, which will help them follow along. I will also provide a copy up on the DOC Cam for them to follow along as well. This will allow the students to use both visual and auditory learning techniques. For students who are struggling with understanding and/or answering the question, I will provide extra help with them or will have another adult accompany them during the work time.

Students with Learning Disabilities: I will explain activities and facilitate the discussion clearly and simply using plain language. Students will also have visual and auditory means of following The Case of the Missing Poodle packet, by reading the text themselves or by listening to the class read-aloud and discussion. These students will be given the chance to ask questions if they are unclear of what is being asked of them. For students who are struggling with understanding and/or answering the question, I will provide extra help with them or will have another adult accompany them during the work time.
Closure: (5 minutes)
Once students have finished giving their groups’ clues, we will solve the mystery together and come up with how we came to that conclusion. I will remind students to turn in their work to me with their names on their packets so they can receive the proper grade.

Lesson Assessment:
During the student’s time to work, I will walk around from group to group to ask them questions about what they are thinking and how they came up with some of their answers. I will also use whole class discussions to assess their understanding of the assignment and to see if they are finding their way towards the correct answer. I will also use informal assessment to see how students are working with other classmates and/or by themselves to accomplish the assignment.

Multiple Intelligences Address in the Lesson:
Verbal/linguistic; Interpersonal
Whodunnit? Weekly Mysteries

The Case of the Missing Poodle
Introduction:
Congratulations! You’ve just been hired by the wealthy Mrs. Abigail Winchell to help solve a crime. As a private detective, you're always ready for the next case and can't wait for a chance to figure this one out.

Case Details:
Approximately one week ago, Mrs. Winchell's prize, six-year-old poodle, Moxie, didn't come into the mansion when called for her evening gourmet meal—a bit unusual for the always-hungry pooch. Mrs. Winchell searched everywhere for Moxie and, when the animal didn't turn up after 24 hours, called the authorities. Police detectives conducted interviews with many potential suspects and collected evidence. However, they were unable to solve the case. As one of Mrs. Winchell's private detectives, you will carefully review the detailed report that was written by inspectors during their weeklong investigation. It's your job to discover the clues and ultimately conclude whodunnit.
Case Notes

Use the space provided below to record your notes and thoughts as this investigation moves forward.
Today at 9:05 AM, my partner and I responded to a missing canine call at the address of 1105 Baxter Drive. Mrs. Harriet Winchell is the owner of both the residence and the missing pooch—Moxie. Mrs. Winchell seemed quite frazzled and upset, but was still able to speak clearly. She quickly informed us that Moxie had been missing since around 9:00 PM Saturday evening. Upon realizing that her beloved pet wasn't playing in the backyard of the estate as usual, Mrs. Winchell searched her entire property—including the house, but still could not locate Moxie. Officer Billings and I were allowed to conduct our own search of the grounds as well. Though, we likewise could not locate the absent poodle.

After our thorough search, we began to question Mrs. Winchell. She informed us that Moxie had never before strayed far away from the house. She also mentioned that Moxie was terrified of traffic. So, even if Moxie managed to scale a large fence, and have access to the front yard, it is unlikely that she would have gone near the road.

Mrs. Winchell was also kind enough to show us where Moxie slept and ate her food—a screened in porch. There was a large pillow on which Moxie slept, water/food dishes, and several play toys scattered about the space. Officer Billings noticed a few particles of soil on Moxie's pillow which we have collected as evidence. Moxie's food dish had also been knocked-over. Some of the dry pieces of dog food bits seemed to have been squished—as if someone had stepped on them. Mrs. Winchell confirmed that Moxie likes to dig holes in the yard and sometimes knocks over her food dish. So, the soil evidence may not be helpful and the messy state of her dog food could be irrelevant. Mrs. Winchell let us know that she has checked the local animal shelter every day for Moxie.

Finally, we asked Mrs. Winchell to name those who had access to her property on the day that Moxie went missing. She reported that the gardener for the estate, Herbert Ells, was on duty tending to the rose bushes and that she allows a neighbor, Delia Kelley, to take nature walks through her property from time to time. Mrs. Winchell’s private chef, Ricky Vargas, was preparing her evening meal that night. Her eldest son, Dalton Winchell III, was supposed to have been there as a dinner guest, but cancelled at the last moment.

Gregory Baskin - First Sergeant
The Case of the Missing Poodle
What have you learned from reading the first police report?

Possible Suspects:
Identify the possible suspects and what you know about them thus far.

Who's the Culprit?
Based upon what you know about the case, which suspect do you think is responsible for the crime? Why? You must justify your suspicions.
Today, First Sergeant Baskin and I interviewed possible suspects in this case. Each of the subjects interviewed had access to the Winchell house or property on the day Moxie went missing.

At 10:51 AM, we spoke with Mrs. Winchell’s chef, Ricky Vargas. He explained to us how Moxie would sneak into his kitchen and steal the food that he was cooking on many occasions. He didn’t seem to think fondly of Moxie—referring to her as a "dirty animal." But, he assured us that he never spoke of the dog as such in front of Mrs. Winchell and asked that we not inform her of his true feelings about Moxie. He is concerned about job security. We asked Mr. Vargas if he had seen the dog on the day in question. He noted that he had seen Moxie several times throughout the afternoon, but not after the gardener, Mr. Ellis, finished his work for the day. We ended our chat with Mr. Vargas by each eating a meatball sandwich he graciously prepared for us.

At 12:32 PM, we visited Mrs. Winchell’s neighbor, Delia Kelley. When we informed her as to the nature of the visit, she slammed her front door in our faces. First Sergeant Baskin and I will take her into custody for questioning tomorrow. We would have done so on the spot, but received a call that a group of rowdy kids was vandalizing Shady Shores Nursing Home again. So, we were forced to respond.

At 2:11 PM, we met Mrs. Winchell’s son, Dalton Winchell III, on the tennis courts of his estate. After First Sergeant Baskin won the first set, and then lost the following two sets, Mr. Winchell agreed to talk with us about his mother’s missing pet. He informed us that he cancelled dinner plans with his mother because he had to stay late at work that evening. Mr. Winchell is a vice president at Winchell Enterprises. We are still in the process of verifying his alibi for the evening.

At 5:16 PM, we ended our investigation for the day by talking with Herbert Ellis - Mrs. Winchell’s gardener. Before the conversation was even underway, we noticed several scratches on the suspect’s hands and arms. His explanation for the injuries is contact with the thorns on Mrs. Winchell’s rose bushes. As for Moxie, Mr. Ellis claims to not have seen her once on the day that she went missing. This is strange considering Mrs. Winchell has noted that Moxie played outside frequently.

Bernard Billings - Officer
The Case of the Missing Poodle

What have you learned from reading the second police report?

New Information:
What new information do we know about the suspects so far?

Who's the Culprit?
Based upon what you know about the case, which suspect do you think is responsible for the crime? Why? Have your suspicions changed?
Wednesday

Because there was a hostile witness involved, I decided to personally question Delia Kelley on behalf of First Sergeant Baskin and Officer Billings for this case. As their superior officer, I felt I could lend a hand. Mrs. Kelley was taken into custody this morning at about 8:00 AM while wearing a bathrobe and flip-flops. She may be the only witness I have ever interviewed that was wearing such attire.

From the beginning, Mrs. Kelley seemed agitated and grew furious when I mentioned Mrs. Winchell's name. In order to calm her down, I tried to steer the conversation in another direction. She acknowledged that she would take nature walks through the Winchell property because it was nearly five acres and well-maintained. Mrs. Kelley noted that she took these walks about once per week, but was adamant that she took no such stroll on the evening of Moxie's disappearance.

I then asked Mrs. Kelley why she became so upset at the sound of Mrs. Winchell's name. After some careful prodding, she admitted that she had been fighting with Mrs. Winchell over the non-payment of some medical bills. She informed me that Moxie had actually bitten her in the leg during one of her nature walks on Mrs. Winchell's property last month. On that occasion, she had to be rushed to the hospital via ambulance. Mrs. Winchell allegedly agreed to pay for Mrs. Kelley's medical bills at the time of the accident, but has yet to do so. Mrs. Kelley explained that she hasn't set foot on Mrs. Winchell's property since Moxie attacked her for fear of a repeat performance. verified her injury by talking with the staff who treated her wounds at Happy Body Medical Center.

Milton Chalmers - Senior Detective

While Mrs. Kelley was being interrogated by Detective Chalmers, Officer Billings and I took advantage of the search warrant we had obtained for her house. Other than some horrible decorating, all we found was some kind of smelly, brown, dried dirt caked on the bottom of a pair of her running shoes. We have collected a sample and have submitted it to the crime lab to see if it matches any substance found at the Winchell residence. Unfortunately, we didn't find any evidence that Mrs. Winchell's poodle had been at the Kelley house.

Gregory Baskin - First Sergeant.
The Case of the Missing Poodle

What have you learned from reading the third police report?

New Information:
What new information do we know about the suspects?

Who's the Culprit?
Based upon what you know about the case, which suspect do you think is responsible for the crime? Why? Have your suspicions changed?
Thursday

Today was a day of test results and hard evidence in this case. We had an expert on animal wounds take a close look at photos of the injuries sustained by Herbert Ells-Mrs. Winchell’s gardener. It appears likely he was telling the truth about being injured by the thorns on the rose bushes. He must just be a clumsy gardener who doesn't know how to properly handle that type of plant life. Even so, we haven't ruled him out as a suspect. As it turns out, Mrs. Winchell kept a record as to the number of times Mr. Ellis complained about Moxie digging up the flowers he planted. So, he certainly appears to have a motive.

As for Mrs. Winchell's son Dalton Winchell III, he does appear on the security surveillance video at Winchell Enterprises during the evening he was supposed to have dinner with his mother. But, there is a thirty minute period in which he is not seen on camera. He claims to be in the company bathroom during this entire length of time because he ate too many fully-loaded tacos for lunch. Officer Billings and I have tested how long it would take a person to drive from Winchell Enterprises, to Mrs. Winchell’s estate, and then return. We made the drive in heavy traffic in 31 minutes, 57 seconds. So, it appears possible Mr. Winchell could have done the crime. Furthermore, we have discovered a possible motive as well-learning that Mrs. Winchell’s last will and testament gives the bulk of her estate to Moxie if she's still alive-leaving her son with nothing.

The tests came back on Delia Kelley's running shoes. The brown gunk on the bottom of her sneakers turned out to be a form of modeling clay. After further questioning with Mrs. Kelley, she admitted to having entertained her niece at her house in the past week during which time they played with modeling clay. This doesn't rule Mrs. Kelley out as a suspect as the attack last month leaves her with a clear motive.

Wanting to cover all of our bases, Officer Billings and I spoke one last time with Ricky Vargas – Mrs. Winchell's personal chef. Because it was his day off, we met him at his house where we had an uneventful talk. However, on our way back to the cruiser, we noticed an empty bag of dog food sticking out of a curbside trash can. Although we aren't certain, Officer Billings and I don't recall Mr. Vargas mentioning that he cared for a dog of his own. We may search his premises in the future.

Gregory Baskin - First Sergeant
Police Department Official Report  
Case # 8753-054

Friday

After being questioned by a private investigator, Dalton Winchell III has confessed to the crime of kidnapping Mrs. Harriet Winchell’s poodle. Below is his confession. It has been written exclusively by Mr. Winchell and recorded in this report herein by his own free will.

Milton Chalmers - Senior Detective

I, Dalton Winchell III, do hereby admit to having kidnapped Moxie - a six-year-old poodle owned by my mother, Mrs. Harriet Winchell. I alone am responsible for taking the canine without permission. I performed this act because I had learned a few months prior that my mother had left all of her possessions and liquid assets to Moxie, and cut me out of her last will and testament entirely.

On the day in question, I cancelled dinner plans with my mother so that I could claim I was elsewhere when Moxie went missing. Having practiced driving a few different routes to my mother’s house over the last week, I chose the fastest one and made it from my place of business, to there, and back again in under thirty minutes. Since Moxie and I had always gotten along well, she made no noise whatsoever when I scaled the high hedges in the backyard, attached a leash to her collar, and led her out through the back gate just as I noticed Mr. Ellis - the gardener - putting away his tools. I then walked her briskly to my vehicle and returned to Winchell Enterprises as fast as possible.

After Moxie was in my possession, I removed her tags and collar - making sure her owner couldn’t be identified. The very next morning, I delivered her to an animal shelter in the next county because I knew it would be unlikely that law enforcement would check if Moxie had been picked up as a stray so far away. The Unloved Pets Animal Shelter is where you can find my mother’s poodle. I apologize deeply and sincerely for my actions in this case.

Truthfully,

Dalton Winchell III

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Truthfully,

Dalton Winchell III
The Case of the Missing Poodle
What have you learned from reading the last police report?

Were You Correct?
Were your suspicions right or did you conclude that the wrong suspect was guilty?
Were you surprised by case’s the outcome or not at all?

Visualization:
In the space provided below, sketch and color a detailed image of what you think the suspect looked like while he was committing the crime.
Credits

Graphics provided by
www.clker.com

Please visit our store for other products.

Remember providing feedback for this item will earn you TpT credits for future purchases.

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