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File Under: 13 Suspicious Incidents

by Lemony Snicket

Common Core Connections—Fifth Grade Focus

Many books can meet most, if not all, Common Core Standards. However, we have found that some books speak strongly to a few standards. These one-page applications connect a focused text and the Common Core Standards as written for fifth graders—leaning on the text’s literary strengths.

KEY DETAILS AND IDEAS

RL.5.1

Lemony Snicket leaves readers many clues throughout each story to help them solve the mystery. Encourage students to predict the solutions as they read and to note the evidence in the text that helped them solve the mysteries. Ask students to chart their responses like this:

Story-Title	Mystery	Prediction	Evidence

RL.5.1 and RL.5.2

Lemony Snicket learns something from each of his experiences in Stain’d. Ask students to keep a record of how his character changes—if they think it does—as the book progresses. When they have finished the book, ask them to use their notes to try to write a theme statement for the book. Does this book have a message for readers to take away? Does a theme need to be serious?

RL.5.2 and RL.5.3

The residents of Stain’d-by-the-Sea are richly drawn, but they rarely leave their own stories. Ask students to imagine and write a mystery that involves several of Stain’d’s residents. Encourage them to write about how the characters respond to the mystery and how they interact with one another. You may ask them to write a script and have your class perform it as a play. After the scene is finished, ask students to find examples from the text to support why they wrote the interactions as they did.

RL.5.1 and RL.5.3

Ask students to choose a mystery from the book and re-imagine it happening to a different character from Stain’d. How would the story change? How would Snicket’s approach to solving the mystery change?

CRAFT AND STRUCTURE

RL.5.4

Lemony Snicket fills this book with interesting vocabulary that he often quickly defines for readers. Ask readers to keep a notebook of these new words (and phrases) and their definitions as they



read. Then ask them to find the words in a dictionary. Do Snicket's definitions match those given in the dictionary? Ask students to reflect on why the author gives readers definitions immediately after using the words.

RL.5.5

Although each short incident in the book can stand on its own, all the stories work together to create a compelling whole novel. Ask your students to consider what effect the short story form has on this book. How does each story help to build your students' understanding of the setting, for example? In your students' opinions, does the form detract from the novel in any way?

RL.5.6

The book begins with an argument between Lemony Snicket and his chaperone about what it means to be an apprentice. Ask students to consider why the mysteries are all told from an apprentice's perspective. How might the book change if Theodora told the story? Encourage students to try writing a story from her point of view.

RL.5.6

Using the first person, Lemony Snicket tells how he solved each mystery himself. Ask your students to consider whether this is an effective way to tell a mystery. How might the story change if it were told in a third-person point of view? Encourage them to try rewriting one of the stories using the third person.

INTEGRATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND IDEAS

RL.5.7

Ask students to look closely at the illustrations that accompany each mystery. How do the pictures contribute to the book, in your students' opinions? Do they help students visualize Stain'd or the characters? Do they supply further hints about the mysteries? Do they maintain a similar tone as the one with which Snicket writes?

RL.5.8

Your fifth grade students have probably read many mysteries. Ask them to choose one and compare it with the mystery stories in *File Under: 13 Suspicious Incidents*. They may look at Snicket's other Stain'd mysteries in the "All the Wrong Questions" series. Whatever mystery they choose, ask your students to compare and contrast the two books: how does the writer give clues to solving the case? How does tone contribute to the book? If there are illustrations, how do they contribute to the story? Is one mystery more effective than the other?

FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS

RF.5.3 and RF.5.4

Encourage your students to read *File Under: 13 Suspicious Incidents* aloud. As students read, monitor for fluency and comprehension.

RF.5.4

Obtain a copy of the audiobook of *File Under: 13 Suspicious Incidents*. Ask students to read along with the text as you play the audio. Discuss how the narrator's intonation and style influence how students visualize the text.