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Mysteries
Talk About It

What mysteries could the people in this photograph be investigating?

Find out more about mysteries at www.macmillanmh.com
Blurry Vision

After collecting homework assignments, Mrs. Morris said, “Jason, would you please read the first problem on the board?”


“I can’t see the board. Everything is blurry,” explained Jason.

Mrs. Morris thought a moment. After some consideration, she suggested, “Why don’t you go see the school nurse? Maybe you have allergies to something that’s blooming now.”
**Colliding Classmates**

Jason walked down the hall. He turned the corner and BAM! He and Susie Hu bumped into each other. Their glasses went flying.

Susie was about to **accuse** Jason of not looking where he was going, but she had been on her way to clean her own glasses.

“That’s weird,” said Jason, as soon as they had put on their glasses. “Now I can see just fine.”

“Me too!” Susie exclaimed.

“Something **suspicious** is going on,” said Jason.

**Mystery Solved**

“Our glasses must have gotten switched when we bumped into each other earlier today,” Jason said.

“Hmmm…” said Susie. “What’s your proof? I need **evidence**!”

“Look, our glasses are exactly the same,” noted Jason.

“You’re right!” said Susie.

“I’m very glad you solved the mystery. Lunch period is next and I would have hated to **consume** a pencil instead of a pretzel rod!”

---

**Make Inferences and Analyze**

**Problem and Solution** The plot is what happens in a story. The plot often includes a problem and a solution to the problem.

A Problem and Solution Chart can help you make inferences and analyze a story. Reread the selection to find the problem, the actions taken by the characters, and the solution.
Comprehension

Genre
A Mystery is a story in which the characters and the reader must use clues to find the explanation for a troubling event.

Make Inferences and Analyze

Problem and Solution
As you read, fill in your Problem and Solution Chart.

Read to Find Out
Can you solve the mystery before Ramón does?
The Mystery of the Missing Lunch

by Johanna Hurwitz

illustrated by Joe Cepeda
At noon, on the first day of school, a very hungry Ramón García looked for his lunch bag in the coat closet. He searched the shelf above the coat hooks but couldn’t find his lunch. “My bag isn’t here,” he complained.

“Are you sure you brought it?” asked his friend Emily Wilson. “Maybe you left it at home.”
Ramón was sure. His mom had made him his favorite sandwich—salami—and he knew he hadn’t forgotten it.

“Here’s my lunch box,” reported Ted Collins between sneezes. Ted had been sneezing all morning. “Allergies,” he explained, apologetically.

Ramón didn’t hear him. He was too angry. “Someone took my salami sandwich!” he said to Emily. “And I’m going to find out who!”

**Problem and Solution**

Ramón has a problem. What does he need to find out?
“Maybe it was Jack Crawford,” Emily whispered. “He’s always hungry.”

Ramón took out the little notebook he had bought to write down homework assignments. It would be good for keeping track of any clues. Then he went over to Jack. He noticed at once that there was no lunch bag or box on Jack’s desk.

“Where’s your lunch?” he asked.

“I don’t have one,” answered Jack.

“Why not?” asked Ramón.

Jack pulled a couple of dollars out of his pocket. “I’m buying today,” he said.

Ramón leaned closer to Jack and sniffed deeply. He couldn’t smell any salami on his classmate’s breath.

“What’s that?” asked Emily. She pointed to a brown smudge on Jack’s shirt. “It looks like mustard.”

“It’s just an old paint stain,” claimed Jack. “I got it when I helped my dad during the summer. It may look like mustard, but it’s called ‘golden oak’ on the paint can.”

“A likely alibi,” Ramón muttered to himself. He made a note of the stain on Jack’s shirt.
“All right, what’s going on here?” asked Mrs. Richmond, their fourth-grade teacher.

“Someone took my lunch,” said Ramón.

“Don’t look at me,” said Jack. “I’m innocent.”

Mrs. Richmond clapped her hands. “Everyone in your seats,” she shouted. “A lunch is missing. We can’t leave for the cafeteria until we find it.”

“Awww,” grumbled all the students together. By now, everyone was hungry. Ted sneezed three times in succession.

No one knew anything about Ramón’s lunch bag. The whole class waited while Mrs. Richmond checked the coat closet, but she didn’t find Ramón’s lunch.
By this time Ramón was so hungry, his stomach was growling. Mrs. Richmond must have been hungry herself, because she solved the problem by handing Ramón a five dollar bill. “Buy something with this,” she told him. “You can pay me back tomorrow. I have a feeling that you left your lunch on the bus. I can’t imagine any of your classmates taking it.”

Of course, it was a relief that Ramón could buy some food. However, he was 100% certain that he had put the bag in the closet. He was determined to discover who had taken it.
In the cafeteria, while he was eating the soggy tuna fish sandwich he had bought, Ramón wrote again in his notebook. He made a list of all his classmates. Any one of them could be the culprit.

Emily leaned forward to see. “Just because you like salami doesn’t mean that everyone else does,” she pointed out. “Josh, Tina, and Margaret are vegetarians. They wouldn’t eat a salami sandwich.”

“You’re right,” agreed Ramón, crossing out their names. “Sarah thinks salami is smelly. She holds her nose whenever she’s around it. And all Max ever eats is peanut butter and jelly,” he added. He crossed out their names too. After a minute’s consideration, he crossed Jack’s name off his list.
Ted had been too busy sneezing all morning to secretly consume a salami sandwich, Ramón decided. Off went his name too.

“Cross me off the list of suspects, too,” said Emily. “I don’t even like salami.”

So far, out of a class of eighteen, eight were definitely innocent. Then there were Beverly and Grace. Neither of them was tall enough to reach the shelf where Ramón put his lunch. He crossed off their names too. The list of potential suspects kept getting shorter. It got even shorter when Ramón realized that he was one of the eighteen students in the class. And he knew for certain that he had not eaten the salami sandwich.

Ramón sighed deeply. His chances of solving this case were getting slimmer and slimmer.
Then, after lunch, when the students were given quiet time for reading, Ramón went back to the closet to see if he could find any clues that he hadn’t noticed earlier. He looked under the book bags but found nothing suspicious there.

On his way back to his desk, Ramón passed the library corner. He stopped. What was that scratching sound? Could there be a mouse in the classroom? Mice eat anything.
Looking around, he saw poor Ted was still blowing his nose. Then he spotted something! Pieces of torn brown paper lay on the floor near Ted’s desk. Ramón picked them up. Immediately, he noticed that there were ink markings on the papers. He placed them together, like puzzle pieces, to form the picture of a smiley face. Ramón recognized it at once. It was the same smiley face his mom had drawn on his lunch bag that morning!

This was a very important clue. Whoever had taken his lunch had torn up the evidence!
Just then, Mr. Gordon, the Assistant Principal, knocked and came into the classroom. “Here’s the new computer we ordered for you, Mrs. Richmond.” He placed it on the counter.

As he started to leave, Mr. Gordon said, “By the way, has anyone seen a stray cat? She sneaked into the school building a few weeks ago when we were painting, and I think she’s still hiding somewhere.” The kids looked at each other and shook their heads.

“Please let me know if you do. I want to find her a home,” Mr. Gordon added.
Mrs. Richmond looked around with a little chuckle. “I don’t see any cat in this room,” she said.

At that moment, Ted gave three more loud sneezes.

“Wait a minute,” Ramón called out. The biggest clue had been right there under his nose all this time. “Ted, what kind of allergy do you have?” he asked. “Could you be allergic to cats?”

“How did you know?” Ted asked when he stopped blowing his nose.

“Your nose gave it away,” said Ramón.

Ted grinned. “I’m very allergic to any animal with fur,” he admitted.

Mrs. Richmond turned to Mr. Gordon, “And I was worried that he was allergic to fourth grade!”
Ramón started pulling all the books out of the shelves in the library corner. The other students and Mr. Gordon helped. Sure enough, there behind the mystery books was the solution to the mystery of the missing lunch. Three little kittens were hiding amid the remains of Ramón’s salami sandwich.

“But where’s the mother cat?” asked Mrs. Richmond.

“She won’t be far away from her kittens,” Mr. Gordon said.

A loud hiss confirmed his words. On top of the closet stood the anxious mother cat.
“You stole my lunch!” Ramón scolded the cat, but he was smiling. He was pleased that he did not have to accuse one of his classmates.

The mother cat jumped off the closet and slipped out the door.

“There she goes!” said Mr. Gordon. “Well, I’ll take these kittens to my office until we find good homes for them. Their mama will find them. Cats have a good sense of smell.”

“And they like salami!” said Ramón.
Johanna Hurwitz likes to write about everyday boys and girls, like the ones in this story, and their funny adventures. Johanna gets her story ideas from many places. She thinks about children she knew as a librarian and about people and places she’s seen on her trips. She also gets ideas from her family, and, as proven in this story, her cats.

**Other books** by Johanna Hurwitz and Joe Cepeda

Joe Cepeda did not plan on becoming a children’s book illustrator. He planned to be an engineer, but then he went back to school to study illustration. Joe thinks that children who want to be artists should spend a lot of time reading and studying math.

Find out more about Johanna Hurwitz and Joe Cepeda at www.macmillanmh.com

**Author’s Purpose**

What clues can you use to figure out Johanna Hurwitz’s purpose for writing *The Mystery of the Missing Lunch*? Did she want to entertain, inform, or persuade? How do you know?
Comprehension Check

Summarize
Use your Problem and Solution Chart to help you summarize *The Mystery of the Missing Lunch*. Describe Ramón’s problem and the steps he took to solve it.

Think and Compare
1. Describe one piece of *evidence* Ramón gathered to solve the mystery. How did that piece of evidence help him?

**Make Inferences and Analyze: Problem and Solution**


**Analyze**

3. How would you have tried to solve this mystery? Explain. **Apply**

4. Think about Ramón’s problem-solving methods. In your opinion, are they effective? Explain your answer. **Evaluate**

5. Read “The Case of the Blurry Board” on pages 18–19. How is Jason’s method of solving a problem similar to Ramón’s? Use details from both stories in your answer. **Reading/Writing Across Texts**
Science

Genre

**Magazine Articles** present facts and photographs of the people, places, discoveries, and living things being discussed.

Text Feature

**Charts** show information in columns and rows.

Content Vocabulary

- scientific method
- survey
- secure
- testify
Crime scene investigators are the first people to examine the scene of a crime. They search for clues that will help the detectives later decide what probably happened and who might be responsible for it. It’s hard work, but these experts are specially trained. They use the **scientific method**, a series of specific steps, as they work.

**Securing the Crime Scene**

It is important that nothing be disturbed before an investigation begins. So the first thing a crime scene investigator does is **secure** the crime scene. This protects it from being altered in any way. The next step is to simply observe. The investigator writes a description of the scene and sketches a floor plan of the scene. Photographs are taken.

**Types of Fingerprints**

**Reading a Chart**

Read across each row to learn how common each type of fingerprint is.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fingerprint</th>
<th>Percentage of All People</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Loops</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whorls</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arches</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Protecting the Evidence

The crime scene investigator must protect evidence as it is gathered. After a piece of evidence is photographed and notes are taken, the evidence is put into a container. It is sealed and labeled to show where it was found. Fingerprints are mounted on cards or special plastic sheets. They will be compared later with those in police records.

After all the evidence is gathered, it’s time for a final **survey**, or a last look around. This is to make sure nothing has been overlooked. When the investigator is sure that the search is complete, the crime scene is “released.” That means that other people can then enter the area.

Searching for Evidence

The next step is to search for evidence—physical clues about the crime. This search is done carefully. Hairs and fibers from clothing are gathered. Objects at the scene are dusted with special powder to make any fingerprints show up. Then sticky tape is used to lift the prints off the objects. Fingerprints are important pieces of evidence because they place people at the scene. No two people have the same prints.
Presenting the Findings

A crime scene investigator may help others prepare a court case for the crime. The investigator may also testify, or speak about the evidence in court.

Being a crime scene investigator looks exciting on TV. But it takes time, skill, and a lot of scientific knowledge. If a crime scene investigator does the job well, it’s likely that the crime will be solved. Then the case can be marked “Closed!”

Connect and Compare

1. Look at the chart on page 39. Which is the most common type of fingerprint? Which type of fingerprint has ridges that rise up in the middle? Reading a Chart

2. What information would you use to support the view that a crime scene investigator must be well trained? Evaluate

3. Think about this article and “The Mystery of the Missing Lunch.” Do you think Ramón would make a good crime scene investigator? Why or why not? Reading/Writing Across Texts

Science Activity

Research how to take someone’s fingerprints. Then use an ink pad and index cards to collect classmates’ fingerprints. Make a chart of the fingerprints.

Find out more about fingerprints at www.macmillanmh.com
I wrote about a problem and how I solved it. Here’s my topic sentence.

The other sentences give details about what happened.

**What’s That Noise?**
by Indira S.

Last weekend, all of a sudden, a loud banging woke me up. Thump, thump! I was at Grandma’s house in Pennsylvania. I was scared — I thought a bear was trying to get into the house! I thought a light might scare the bear. I put on the lamp, but the thumping got louder.

Then I heard a small woof. I looked over the side of the bed and saw Grandma’s dog, Rusty, lying on the floor. The thumping was her tail wagging!
Your Turn

Write a paragraph about a problem you once solved. Be sure to begin your paragraph with a topic sentence that tells what happened. Then include the details of the story in the sentences that follow. Use the Writer’s Checklist to check your writing.

Writer’s Checklist

- **Ideas and Content:** Did I include enough details to tell what happened?
- **Organization:** Did I write a good paragraph that includes a topic sentence and details about what happened in the following sentences?
- **Voice:** Does my personal narrative tell how I felt?
- **Word Choice:** Have I chosen the right words to make my story interesting and exciting?
- **Sentence Fluency:** Did I use complete sentences?
- **Conventions:** Did I use exclamation marks at the end of exclamations?