

Literary Detective

Unmask Fictional Mystery Characters by
Gathering and Assessing Text Evidence

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Welcome to Literary Detective

Using pieces of evidence from any grade level text, students are challenged to create clues that will help their classmates unlock the identities of secret literary characters.

First, students apply close reading strategies to learn about the lives of their secret characters. Second, they create text-based questions to be used during the Character Convention. Third, they complete a series of literary skills activities such as Make an Assertion, Argument/Opinion Writing, and Use Evidence to Infer. These activities provide the missing pieces of evidence that their fellow classmates need in order to guess the identities of the characters. This evidence must be cited correctly.

Last, at the Character Convention students will impersonate their characters, debrief by responding to the text-based questions created earlier, and receive more points on their scorecards (to be added to the points accumulated through the Literary Skills activities). Time frames for this simulation are optional depending on student ability level, grade level, and length of class period. If students are paired, the unit can be completed in a shorter time. Complete Setup Directions are provided. Grades 4–9.

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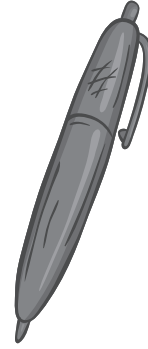
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Secret Identity# _____

Literary Skills Checklist



- Make an Assertion
- The Big Questions
- Use Evidence to Infer
- A Shift in the Action
- Dialogue Discoveries
- Characterization
- Understand Cause and Effect
- Present an Argument
- Argument/Opinion Writing
- Point of View
- Keep a Diary
- Interview a Character
- Identify Theme
- Helpful Advice
- What Would You Do?
- Focus on Foreshadowing
- Thank You Note
- Vocabulary Lie Detector
- Compare and Contrast Analysis
- Figurative Favorites
- Story Setting
- Changing Moods
- What Happens Next?

Secret Identity# _____

Keep a Diary

Create a diary entry that your Secret Character might have written to record a particular experience or a reaction to a particular experience. Consider what you know about the character's personality, emotions, and actions, and use that information in your writing. Make sure to use text evidence to back up your statements. To avoid giving obvious clues, do not use the character's name or location in the diary account. Use first person point of view.

Example

(Portion of a diary entry based on the novel *Shiloh* [Secret Character: Marty])

It is to be the happiest day in my life. I am going to get ownership of the dog I love. He will finally be mine, and I'll keep him safe from further harm. Or will he be safe? I am very worried that his mean-spirited former owner will find a way to get even.

Dear Diary,

Citing Evidence Chart

	Paraphrasing	Direct Quotations
Standard Citation Style	<p>Example from <i>Bud, Not Buddy</i>:</p> <p>He is told that Bud is his full name and is warned not to let anybody tell him differently (Curtis 41).</p>	<p>Example from <i>Bud, Not Buddy</i>:</p> <p>“Bud is your name and don’t you ever let anyone call you anything else outside of that either” (Curtis 41).</p>
Secret Character Citation Style	<p>In the novel, My Secret Character is told that _____ is his full name and is warned not to let anybody tell him differently (41).</p>	<p>In the novel, My Secret Character is told, “_____ is your name and don’t you ever let anyone call you anything else outside of that either” (41).</p>