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Purpose and Overview

Who is this unit for?

Book Mountain Expeditions is an independent reading program for fourth and fifth grade students that develops language arts skills, an understanding of literary genres and other curricular skills. Designed as a contract approach, this unit reaches all kinds of learners with its broad range of activities and variety of reading options. It provides a consistent approach that can be used to create a customized language arts program for one or more students. Reading level, activity selection and even effort required can be adapted to best fit the needs of each student. Use the unit with one student or your entire class. Incorporate it into your regularly scheduled language arts time or use it as an independent study alternative.

Acting as their “Travel Agent,” you guide student travelers as they select a journey into mystery, biography, animal stories or realistic fiction. Use the Navigator, Adventurer or Explorer Recommended Reading List to find a book at, above or below the grade level that best fits each student’s interest and ability. Then select a variety of Vocabulary, Writing, Comprehension and Challenge activities from more than 50 choices provided in each genre.

Each student begins their personalized journey by reading the chosen book and completing the individually selected activities. Travel points are earned each time a student successfully completes an activity or presentation. These points move the student along the path of the Expedition Map toward the final destination—the top of Book Mountain.

To reinforce the verbal communication skills of speaking and listening, each student selects at least one activity that can be shared with the class. Or you might ask each student to present a summary of his or her journey to the class and then conduct a brief awards ceremony. This is a way to recognize individual achievements and creativity while students practice presentation and listening skills. Verbal sharing allows students to learn from and motivate each other. Hearing about a fun project might get other students excited about pursuing their own Book Mountain Expedition.

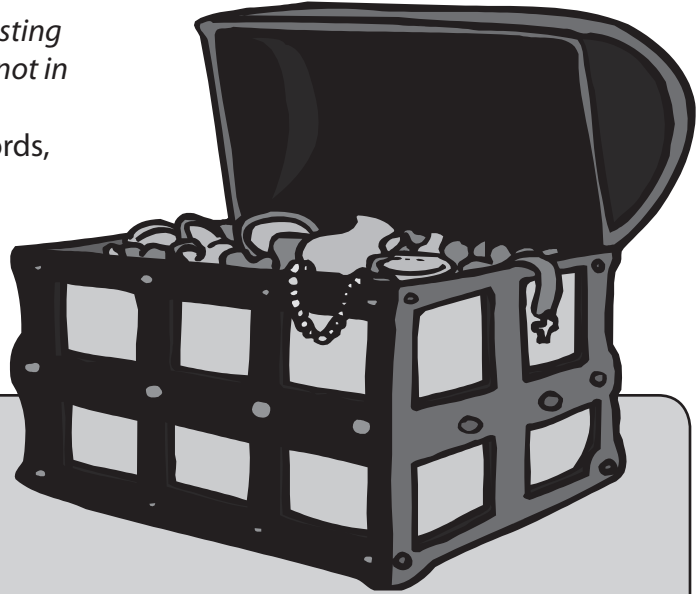
The journey comes to an end when the student earns enough travel points to reach the top of Book Mountain and earn a Genre Sticker to commemorate his or her experience. The student is then ready to embark on another expedition using another of the four literary genres to create a new personal reading adventure. The combinations of books and activities are endless!

Slang Expressions

Mystery

Traveler name(s): _____

Mystery books often contain **slang** (*lively, interesting language that you might use in conversation but not in formal speech or writing*) words or expressions. Slang expressions often shorten or combine words, as in "perp" for "perpetrator" or "gumshoe" for detective. Sometimes slang assigns new meanings to old words, as in "stiff" for "corpse." Complete the following steps to help you spot and understand slang.



- 1 Find two slang terms from the mystery Vocabulary List. Find words that are not included in the examples above. Use the lines to the right to start your list.
- 2 Look for at least two examples of slang in your book. Add them to your list.
- 3 Think of more slang terms that might be used in mysteries and add them to your list. Make sure your slang words are appropriate for school use. Your final list should have at least 10 terms.
- 4 Find a slang dictionary or a dictionary that contains slang (try *Merriam-Webster's Intermediate Dictionary*) in your school or public library, or try the Encarta Online Dictionary (encarta.msn.com).
- 5 Look up each of the terms on your list and write the definition on a separate piece of paper.
- 6 Use each in a sentence that shows its meaning. Underline the slang word or expression in each sentence.
