



# MISSING PERSONS

Using detective skills to analyze fictional characters

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## PURPOSE

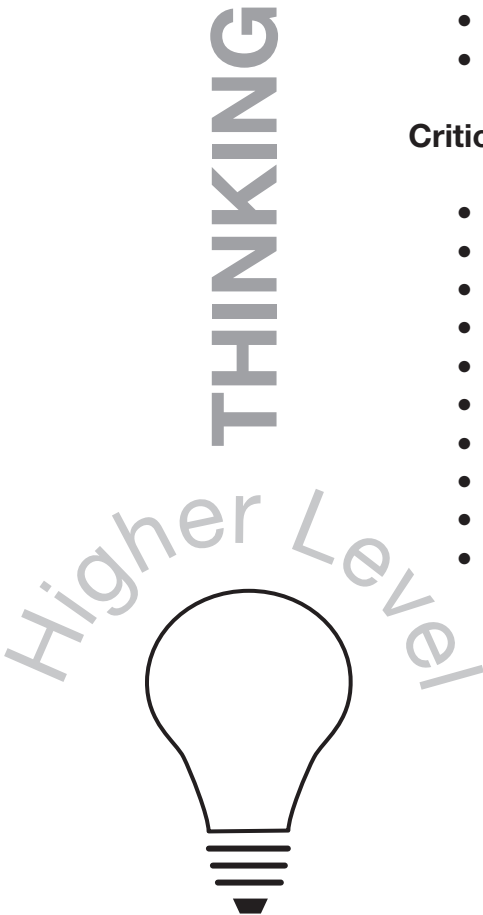
MISSING PERSONS presents an alternative and unique approach to the teaching of literary skills. In this program, students develop higher level creative and critical thinking skills, an appreciation and understanding of the elements of literature, and enjoy the challenge of creating and solving mysteries. As a result of participating in this unit, your students will have developed the following skills:

### Literary skills

- characterization
- main idea
- parts of a plot
- story mood
- figurative language
- author's purpose
- point of view
- cause and effect
- summarizing
- vocabulary enrichment

### Critical and creative thinking skills

- originating ideas
- hypothesizing
- analyzing
- synthesizing
- problem solving
- planning
- decision-making
- forecasting
- evaluating
- drawing conclusions





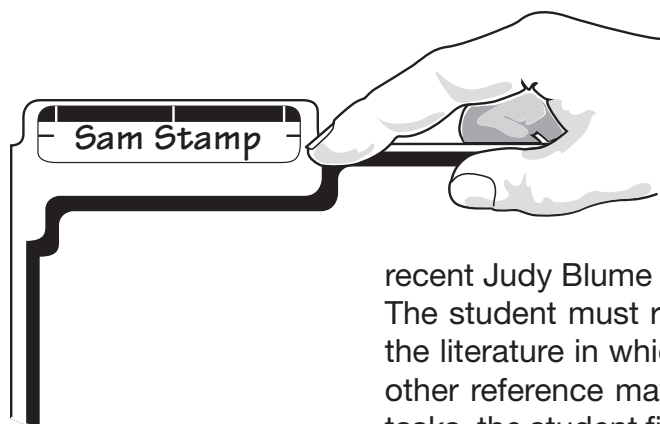
## OVERVIEW - 1

### Introductory activity

Each student receives a Student Guide folder. You have organized this activity by duplicating handouts in this Teacher Guide and placing them – along with the Student Guide that came with the

teaching unit – inside a manila folder with the student's name upon it. Each student then secretly selects a literary figure to “bring to life.” This character may be famous (e.g., someone such as Huckleberry Finn in Twain's classic) or popular (e.g., an interesting character in a

recent Judy Blume novel). This character is *the missing person*. The student must research the life of the character by reading the literature in which the character appears and by consulting other reference materials. After satisfactorily completing these tasks, the student fills out a MISSING PERSON'S REPORT. This activity tests the student's knowledge of literary skills such as author's purpose, point of view, cause and effect, story mood, summarizing, and character delineation. The MISSING PERSON'S REPORT is kept by you until the conclusion of the unit.



### Completing Creative Activities

The student next must provide clues to the secret character by completing a series of creative activities:

- DEAR DIARY
- MYSTERY RIDDLE
- MOST WANTED LIST
- SECRET MESSAGE
- WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?
- EXTRA! EXTRA!
- HELPFUL ADVICE
- LIE DETECTOR
- CONDUCT AN INTERVIEW
- CROSSWORD CLUES
- FIGURATIVE FACTS

### Organizing completed activities

When the student completes an activity, he/she makes certain the missing person's **secret identity number** is prominently displayed on the completed activity. (You will assign such secret identity numbers to the missing persons after the MISSING PERSON'S



## OVERVIEW - 2

REPORTS have been completed.) Then you score the activity, awarding up to 25 points. The student then enters points earned on a personal SCORECARD.

Next you carefully place the activity with its secret identity number inside a separate folder for the missing person. Each missing person's folder is called the MISSING PERSON'S file. (Of course, prominently displayed on the MISSING PERSON'S file folder is the character's **secret identity number**.) Finally, you must have a sturdy file box or a metal file in which you keep the MISSING PERSON'S file folders.

### Optional Activities

Students may choose to do extra work such as dioramas, mobiles, story parades, models, author biographies, morals, story maps, or advertising posters. You will award up to 25 additional points for each such activity.

### Awards

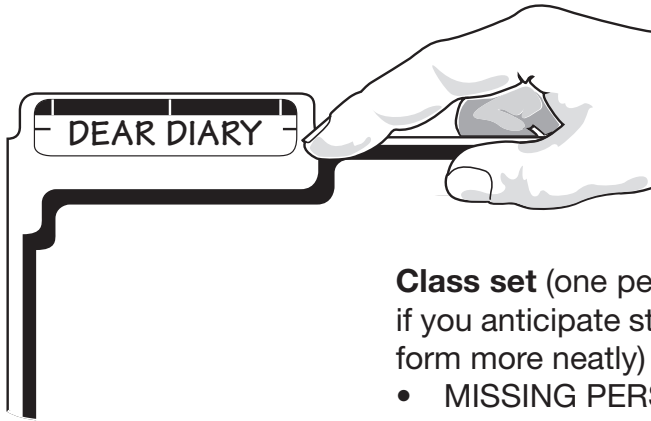
Finally, following the Lineup Activity, you will give students their awards. Having totaled all points from all students' SCORECARDS, you will be ready to announce the winner and award SUPER SLEUTH AWARDS.





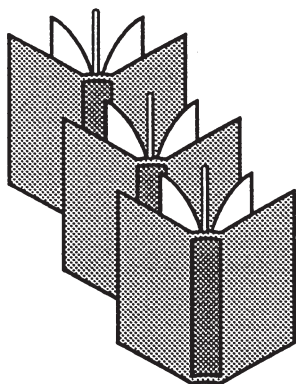
## SETUP DIRECTIONS - 1

1. **Duplication** Carefully study all handouts contained in this Teacher Guide. Set up labeled folders for all the following forms. Duplicate the number of copies specified.
  - CHARACTER SELECTION SHEET – one copy (Only you will use this sheet.)
  - GUESS THE IDENTITY FORM – two class sets (or possibly more?)



**Class set** (one per student – although you may need extras if you anticipate students making errors or wanting to redo a form more neatly)

- MISSING PERSON'S REPORT
- DEAR DIARY
- MYSTERY RIDDLE
- MOST WANTED LIST
- SECRET MESSAGE
- WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?
- EXTRA! EXTRA!
- HELPFUL ADVICE
- LIE DETECTOR
- CONDUCT AN INTERVIEW
- CROSSWORD CLUES
- FIGURATIVE FACTS
- SCORECARD
- INVITATION (to the MISSING PERSONS lineup)
- SUPER SLEUTH AWARD (possibly on heavier paper?)



2. **Gathering books for students to read** Select a variety of fictional literature that is suited to the reading level needs of your students. Place the books or stories in a library corner or book nook in your classroom. Encourage your students to browse and explore the reading material before making a selection.



## SETUP DIRECTIONS - 2

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- 3. Time frame** MISSING PERSONS can be used in a variety of time settings. You may choose to have students work on the various activities for a pre-determined amount of time daily. Or you may wish to have students work for longer periods once or twice a week (e.g., on a Monday – or on both Monday and Friday). Set the time length after reflecting upon your students' age/abilities and after considering other time constraints.
- 4. Student Character Selection** Use the CHARACTER SELECTION SHEET to record names of the missing persons students will use during the unit. Make sure that two students do not choose the same character.



## PROCEDURE - 1

### 1. Getting started

- a. Distribute a Student Guide to each student.
- b. Depending upon your students' age/abilities, read to, or have your students read, the Student Guide introductory comments.
- c. Have students take out their individual copies of the MISSING PERSON'S REPORT, which they will find in their folders.
- d. Explain that this sheet must be completed before the simulation can proceed.
- e. Assign a **secret identity number** to each missing person a student has selected. *The student must record this secret number on each activity – beginning with this MISSING PERSON'S REPORT form.*

*Your students will like the elements of secrecy during this unit.*



- f. When each student completes this MISSING PERSON'S REPORT, make certain that all items are correctly filled out on the report sheet.
- g. Place the separate MISSING PERSON'S REPORTS in separate MISSING PERSON'S file folders, each of which has a **secret identity number**.

### 2. Completing the Creative Activities

- a. Encourage students to stretch their imaginations while they work on the various creative tasks.
- b. They may select some or all of the Creative Activities included within their Student Guides.
- c. Remind your students they are to provide thoughtful and *imaginative* clues. But warn them **to be careful not to reveal the identity of the missing person** by being too obvious with a clue. You should have several examples of such appropriate and inappropriate clues on the tip of your tongue to give students whenever you sense that a particular student is about to give away too much.
- d. Insure that completed activities all have their secret identity numbers on them.

*Place the Creative Activity folders in a file box so that your students have ready access to all the handouts.*



# Optional Activities

- e. When you evaluate each completed activity, award up to 25 points, using the following criteria while making your evaluation:
    - creativity
    - neatness
    - language mechanics
    - organization
  - f. Once the student has received your evaluation, insure that each completed activity is carefully filed in the correct MISSING PERSON'S file folder.
  - g. Stress to all students that they are not to write on activity sheets they examine while going through a MISSING PERSON'S file folder.
- 3. Completing Optional Activities**
- a. If any of your students wish to earn extra points, encourage them to do so. You are to award up to 25 points for each such optional activity. Use the same criteria you use while evaluating Creative Activities.
  - b. Here is a list of such optional activities. (*Encourage your particularly creative students to dream up other optional activities.*)
    - dioramas
    - mobiles
    - story parades
    - models
    - author biographies
    - story map
    - advertising poster
    - murals (Your students may draw or paint the murals as a group project presenting a story setting.)
- 4. Solving the Mystery**
- a. When a student feels he/she has solved the mystery of who a certain missing person is, give that student a copy of the GUESS THE IDENTITY FORM.
  - b. The student then fills out this form and gives it to you to verify.
  - c. If the student is correct, award 10 points and tell the student to enter these points on his/her SCORECARD.