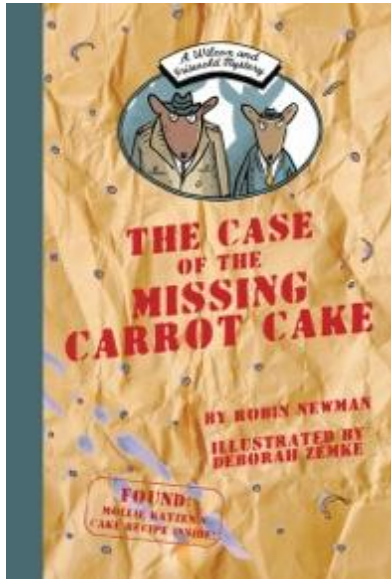


A Curriculum Guide for Educators & Readers



Discussion points, activities, and writing prompts to help educators use *A Wilcox and Griswold Mystery: The Case of the Missing Carrot Cake* as a classroom read-aloud or as a selection for independent reading. Great for book clubs, too!

About the Author



Raised in New York and Paris, **Robin Newman** has been a practicing attorney and legal editor, but she prefers to write about witches, mice, pigs, and peacocks. She lives in New York with her husband, son, goldfish, and English Cocker Spaniel, who happens to have been born on the Fourth of July.

About the Illustrator

Deborah Zemke puts words and pictures together in unexpected and lively ways. The author and illustrator of more than twenty children's books and a frequent contributor to *Ranger Rick* magazine, her most recent book with Creston is *Cock-a-Doodle-Oops!*, a farm caper.



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Common Core Aligned for Grades 1-3

1st grade: ELA.RL.1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.6, 1.7, 1.9, 1.10, ELA.SL.1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5

2nd grade: ELA.RL.2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, ELA.SL.2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4

3rd grade: ELA.RL.3.1, 3.3, ELA.SL.3.1, 3.3, 3.4

Before You Read...

1. Take a close look at the cover illustration of *A Wilcox and Griswold Mystery: The Case of the Missing Carrot Cake*. Can you predict who this book is about? What about when and where it takes place? What from the cover supports your prediction?
2. Read the prologue text. What do you learn about the story from this blurb? What questions does it raise about the story?
3. Read the chapter titles. Do the titles give any further information regarding what the book might be about?
4. Using all of this information, can you make any predictions about what might happen in the book?



Vocab Detectives

The Case of the Missing Carrot Cake contains many "detective-related" words which may be new for students. Encourage them to use context clues from both the text and illustrations to infer meanings.

probe	witness	alibi	headquarters
investigate	innocent	suspect	surveillance
clues	priors	facts	

Join the MFI

At the start of reading *The Case of the Missing Carrot Cake*, students can make their own detective badges.

- Take each child's picture wearing a trench coat, detective hat and sunglasses. You can even give children a magnifying glass to hold. Tell them to wear a serious expression.
- Press each child's thumb onto an inkpad or color thumbs with washable markers. Then have children press their thumbprint onto the badge.
- Give children pens or pencils and let them fill in their stats.

You can cover the badges with a layer of clear packing tape on the front and back for quick faux-lamination. Punch two holes on either side of the badge and attach string to make a lanyard.

Additional Exploration:

- While they read, ask students to look carefully for words they do not know. As soon as they come across a new vocabulary word, they should jot it down.
- Look up the unknown word in the dictionary. (Depending on the level of your students, a student volunteer can do this or the teacher can.) Read the definition.
- Come up with a way to remember what the word means. Using Total Physical Response, students can create an action that symbolizes the word and helps them remember it.

The Recipe for a Mystery

Like other genres, mysteries contain some special story elements. As your students read through *The Case of the Missing Carrot Cake*, instruct them to look for these key mystery ingredients.

- Characters:
 - Detectives ~ characters trying to solve the mystery
 - Witnesses ~ characters who saw the crime being committed
 - Suspects ~ characters who may have committed the crime

When reading a mystery, keeping track of suspects can help students better solve the crime. As they read through *The Case of the Missing Carrot Cake*, students should record information regarding the suspects.

Suspect's Name	Evidence FOR Suspect's guilt	Evidence AGAINST Suspect's guilt	Alibis	"Detective's Hunch" *	Check this box if the character is no longer a suspect

* "Detective's Hunch"—Do you feel in your gut this character is guilty or innocent? Why or why not?

Lie Detector

How do characters behave when questioned? Do they act suspicious?

Can you tell when someone is lying? How?

When lying, people are more likely to:

- offer shorter responses
- laugh nervously
- talk really fast
- get emotional
- make more speech errors - more um's, er's ah's...
- blink often
- fidget more

Here's a short activity to help students develop the skill of catching a lie.

1. Have everyone in the classroom close their eyes.
2. While eyes are closed, place a small item into the hands of one student. This item must remain hidden.
3. Once the item is hidden, have students open their eyes.
4. A detective volunteer can begin questioning students on the whereabouts of the item:
 - Do you have the item?
 - Do you know who has the item?
 - Could you describe the item to us? What does it feel like when you hold it?
 - If you had the item, would you let us know?

When questioned, all students must answer honestly, *except* for the student who holds the item. The guilty student must lie.

The detective, and other students, must keep an eye and ear out for the lie.

5. After everyone in the class has been questioned, ask if anyone has an idea of who was lying. What are the reasons that suspect's answers led to the accusation?
6. Play can go on by changing up the detective and the thief in each round.

- **Setting:**
 - The location where the mystery takes place
 - The time of day/month/year the mystery takes place
- **Plot:** Mysteries include one of the following:
 - a problem that needs to be solved
 - something that is lost or missing
 - a crime that has been committed

Using a table, such as the one below, students can track the parts of *The Case of the Missing Carrot Cake*, including suspects and clues, either individually or as a class.

Beginning	Middle	End
Introduction of characters: Enter problem/conflict:	Detectives investigate clues and suspects. Suspects: 1. 2. 3. Clues: 1. 2. 3. Finally...	The mystery is solved. How?

Making Connections:

Detectives, and readers of mystery, need to have a keen eye and memory. Here is an activity to develop observational skills.

THE MYSTERY VISITOR: Have someone unannounced (a teacher or a student from a different class) come into your classroom while students are working quietly on a task at their desks. Plan with the mystery visitor ahead of time to make sure he or she does several things in your class during his or her brief visit such as:

- Borrow something like a book, a craft supply, money, etc.
- Talk to a student in the class
- Give a note to the teacher
- Ask a question
- Set something down on a table

After the visitor leaves the room, have the students write down as many details as they can remember about the visit.

- What details do they recall? What was the visitor wearing? How long was the visitor in the room? What did the visitor borrow while in the room? Whom did he or she talk to? What did he or she say?

Once everyone has finished writing, ask students to share their observations. Compare notes. What are the similarities and differences between student reports?



Chapter 1—Case File #1113: The Missing Carrot Cake

1. Miss Rabbit calls to report a crime. What is the crime? What other information does she give Wilcox at this time?
2. Explain why you think Miss Rabbit is so upset.
3. If you were Wilcox, what questions would you plan to ask Miss Rabbit when you got to her rabbit hole? Make a list of those questions.
4. Imagine that you are Wilcox and you spend all day answering the phone at MFI Headquarters. Using the dialogue in Chapter One as mentor text, write the dialogue of three other incoming calls reporting crimes. Be sure to include the Code number (i.e., Code 12 is a missing cake).
5. Imagine that Wilcox and Griswold have helped you solve a crime. Write a Thank You letter to Missing Food Investigators. Be sure to include what the crime was, how they solved it and who was the criminal.



Making Connections:

Wilcox and Griswold are MFIs, Missing Food Investigators. They help the animals on the farm recover lost, stolen or missing food.

Whom would you turn to for help in the following situations:

- Someone is teasing you on the playground.
- Your library book is suddenly missing.
- Your brother or sister hides your favorite toy.
- Your bike is stolen.

Write a short story about one of the above situations and how you seek help.

Chapter 2—The Crime Scene

1. At what time did Miss Rabbit call Headquarters? At what time do Wilcox and Griswold arrive on the scene? How much time has gone by?
2. What kinds of clues do Wilcox and Griswold find at the scene?
3. What happened, according to Miss Rabbit?
4. Why does Wilcox ask what kind of cake? How might this information lead him to the thief?
5. What are some observations that Wilcox and Griswold make about Miss Rabbit while investigating the crime scene?
6. Whom do Wilcox and Griswold think of as the first suspect? Why?
7. Why do Wilcox and Griswold think the crime might have been an “inside job”?
8. List the many ways that Wilcox and Griswold investigate the crime scene, aside from interviewing Miss Rabbit.

Classroom CSI

Place twenty-five different objects on a tray and have students study the tray for thirty seconds. Then remove the tray from sight and have students write down all of the objects that they remember.

Making Connections:

It is important for detectives to use their eyes when investigating a crime scene, but they must also use their ears. Luckily, Wilcox & Griswold have large ears that help them pay close attention to what is told to them.

Here is a fun activity to promote careful listening and speaking skills.

Place students into pairs and have them sit back to back. Have one student in the pair draw a unique picture using simple shapes (hearts, flowers, stars, houses, stick figures, etc.). Give the second student in the pair a blank piece of paper. The student with the picture must dictate to his/her partner how to draw the picture. Make sure to emphasize no cheating or peeking! When finished, change the pictures around the groups and have the partners switch roles. When everyone has drawn once, the team with the most similar pictures wins!

Chapter 3—Suspects and Clues

1. Be sure to carefully record all clues and suspects before moving on to help solve the mystery. Can you predict who the thief is?
2. What is the first question Wilcox and Griswold ask Fowler? Why is this question important?
3. How is Fowler threatening Wilcox and Griswold with her given alibi?
4. What odd information do Wilcox and Griswold gather from Fowler? How does this information lead them to their next suspect?
5. Based on Porcini's story of what happened, write your own version of the scene. Be sure to include the dialogue and description, staying as close to Porcini's account as possible, while also adding your own creativity.
6. What do you think Wilcox and Griswold hoped to find in Porcini's pigsty? What kind of evidence would make Porcini guilty?



7. List the evidence that points to Hot Dog being the thief.
8. Do you believe Hot Dog's story? Why or why not?
9. Can you predict what Wilcox's plan is?

Wanted by the MFI

Wilcox and Griswold are on the hunt for suspects to solve their crime.

Using Robin Newman and Deborah Zemke's bios in the back of the book as a guide, have students create their own WANTED posters.

Be sure to include:

- A photograph of themselves
- A creative alias
- A made-up file number
- A "place last seen"
- A reason why they are wanted by the MFI. The reason can either be in connection to *The Case of the Missing Carrot Cake* or another mystery.

Display the WANTED posters on a bulletin board when completed.

Extension: Create WANTED posters for Fowler, Porcini, and Hot Dog.

Making Connections:

Often detectives search for crime scene evidence in the form of fingerprints and footprints. Hot Dog's footprints do not match the footprints found at the crime scene, therefore he is cleared.

Using a washable non-toxic paint, make a footprint of one of each student's shoes. Once dry, randomly choose a footprint from the group. Pretend that this footprint was found at the scene of the crime.

Through careful investigation, the class must try to find out whose shoe print was chosen. Ask students to write down in detail what led them to their answer.



Chapter 4—Video Surveillance and Stakeout

1. Be sure to carefully record all clues and suspects before moving on to help solve the mystery. Can you predict who the thief is?
2. After reading page twenty-five, what do you think Wilcox and Griswold's plan is? What context clues lead you to that answer?
3. Why is Fowler quickly dismissed as a suspect?
4. Do you still think Hot Dog and Porcini are suspects? Why or why not?

Captain's Log

It has been a very long day for Wilcox and Griswold. No wonder they fell asleep on the stakeout.

Using the timestamps throughout the book, create a time log of their day. Be sure to indicate each hour using a drawing of a clock face.

Be creative and observant. When did Wilcox and Griswold eat? How many hours were they on the stakeout? When did they fall asleep? Use context clues throughout the book to fill out the log.

Making Connections:

Detectives often hide somewhere to secretly watch for illegal activity. This is called a stakeout. Sometimes they use cameras, video cameras, or high-tech audio recording devices to gather the evidence. These are surveillance tools.

Pretend you want to solve a mystery. Maybe you want to know where your missing socks from the laundry go. Maybe you want to know who keeps moving your toys. Maybe you want to know if your dog ate your cookies.

Plan a stakeout.

- Where would you hide?
- What surveillance tools would you use to help gather the evidence?
- What else would you take on a stakeout? Food? Drinks? Something to pass the time?
- Draw a map of the stakeout area complete with any and all details of your plan.

Present your stakeout plan to the class.

Chapter 5—The Morning Starts with a Scream

1. Be sure to carefully record all clues and suspects before moving on to help solve the mystery. Can you predict who the thief is?
2. Wilcox and Griswold fell asleep on the stakeout. How can they still find out who stole the cake?
3. The first videotape didn't work. What was their backup plan?
4. Look back through the book. What are some clues you can now see that point to Miss Rabbit?



Making Connections:

Imagine that you are Miss Rabbit. You don't want to wake up every morning having eaten a cake. Research what causes sleepwalking and ways to prevent it.

Based on what you discover, design a plan to end Miss Rabbit's sleepwalking and keep the neighborhood cakes safe.

Chapter 6—The Long-Awaited Party

1. Now that the case is closed, be sure to record all of the details in a “Detective Case Report.” Be as specific and thorough as possible.
 - a. Characters (detectives, victim, suspects)
 - b. Setting (where the story takes place)
 - c. Clues (in the order they were discovered)
 - i. Cite contextual reasons for why something is considered a clue
 - ii. Who discovered the clue?
 - d. Red Herrings (any distractions for the person trying to solve the mystery)
 - e. Conclusion
 - i. Who committed the crime?
 - ii. What evidence led to the solving of the crime?

Case Closed Celebration

Solving a crime requires a lot of teamwork. Celebrate the closed case with a Detective themed party. Include a scavenger hunt, read aloud your original mystery tales and share other mysteries that can be found in the library.

Maybe even serve food with secret ingredients—or Mollie Katzen’s Carrot Cake. Just keep an eye out for sleepwalkers!

Extension: For extra fun, invite parents and caregivers!

2. Read the Epilogue at the end of the book. *“Every day food goes missing from the farm. Sometimes it’s lost. Sometimes it’s stolen. Sometimes it just runs away.”* Write another mystery case for the MFIs using a **Recipe for a Mystery** in the Before You Read section.



After You Read...

Here are a few extension activities to further the learning and the fun!

1. Have students work together to create a newscast about the mystery to present to their classmates. Students will write a script and take on the roles of anchors and on-site reporters. Students can choose to interview suspects from the case or even eyewitnesses to the crime. Videotape the final newscasts so that students can watch themselves on TV. Students can use their completed Detective Case Reports to help them write a script.
2. Invite a local police officer or detective to talk to students about solving real cases in the community. Students should prepare questions ahead of time. Topics can include fingerprints, DNA, and other clues they collect to solve crimes. You can also visit the FBI for Kids website.
3. Visit the FBI's Kids website (<http://www.fbi.gov/fun-games/kids/kids>) for further research. Ask students to browse the site and to find five interesting facts about the FBI that they did not know. Share those facts with the class.

