Cam Jansen and the Mystery at the Haunted House

by David A. Adler

THEME Creative Ideas

This is the story of a young girl who solves mysteries. The creative thinking she uses to catch a thief helps children explore the Big Question: What does it mean to be creative?

This book will help build children's understanding of investigation through observation and reasoning.

Genre A mystery is a made-up story in which there is a problem to be solved.

SUMMARY

When Cam "The Camera" Jansen wants to remember something, all she has to do is close her eyes and say "Click." In this mystery, Cam's Aunt Katie discovers that her wallet is missing after visiting the Haunted House at an amusement park. Aunt Katie thinks she might have lost her wallet, but Cam's memory tells her that somebody probably stole it. Cam and her friend Eric don't jump to conclusions, even when circumstances lead to possible culprits. Readers will learn how Cam uses observation and reasoning to catch the real thief.

Other Books by David A. Adler

- Cam Jansen and the Mystery of the Dinosaur Bones
- Cam Jansen and the Birthday Mystery

SNEAK PREVIEW

Match Children and Books

This book will appeal to children who

- like to solve mysteries
- enjoy haunted houses
- are interested in detective work

Comprehension Skills and Strategies

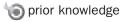
n character and setting

compare and contrast

plot 🌘

visualize

nredict



· critical thinking

Vocabulary Strategy

synonyms

Children may work independently, as partners, or in small groups. The book may be divided into three parts for reading.

Before Reading

BUILD BACKGROUND

Talk with children about mysteries. Explain that a mystery is a type of story in which a problem needs to be solved. Tell children that characters in mysteries find evidence, called clues. Ask what other mystery stories they have read. Encourage children to share the problems that needed to be solved in those

PRACTICE PAGE

Children can use Student Practice Page 6 to explore how they would solve common problems.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

PRACTICE PAGE

Use Student Practice Page 7 to introduce vocabulary or to assess children's understanding of the words before they read. If necessary, provide additional practice with the words. For example, ask children to say or write a new sentence for each word.

Words to Know

dim insisted photographic refreshment ruin security stole turnstiles

Reading the Book

PART 1 • CHAPTERS 1-3 In Part 1, readers are introduced to Cam Jansen, who has an amazing photographic memory. Cam, Eric, Aunt Katie, and Uncle George enjoy a day at the amusement park until Aunt Katie discovers that her wallet is missing.

OCOMPREHENSION SKILL Character and Setting

PRACTICE PAGE

On Student Practice Page 8, children answer questions about where and when the story takes place, and what each character says and does. Review with children what they have learned about character and setting.

- Characters are the people or animals in a story.
- The setting tells where and when a story takes place.

© COMPREHENSION STRATEGY Prior Knowledge

Remind children that they can use their prior knowledge to understand the characters and the setting of a story. By thinking about what they already know, children can better understand why the characters act as they do and how the time and place influence story events.

Reader Response

See **Teacher's Guide Page 8** for a possible response to the question, "Cam, Eric, Aunt Katie, and Uncle George visit an amusement park. What place would you like to visit? Why would you like to visit that place?"

PART 2 • CHAPTERS 4–6 In Part 2, Cam looks back at her mental pictures and believes that the boys on roller skates may have stolen Aunt Katie's wallet. When Cam is proven wrong, she insists they go through the Haunted House again. Eric, Aunt Katie, and Uncle George exit safely, but Cam is not with them.

OCOMPREHENSION SKILL Compare and Contrast

PRACTICE PAGE

On **Student Practice Page 9**, children compare and contrast how Cam and Eric approach the problem of the missing wallet. Review with children what they have learned about comparing and contrasting.

- When you compare and contrast, you see how things are alike and different.
- Clue words such as both and like tell how things are alike.
- Clue words such as but and unlike tell how things are different.

© COMPREHENSION STRATEGY Visualize

Remind children that good readers visualize, or create pictures in their minds, to help them better understand what they are reading. By picturing things being compared and contrasted in the text, readers can better understand how they are alike and different.

Reader Response

See **Teacher's Guide Page 9** for a possible response to the question, "What is a mystery or problem in the world that you would like to solve? How would you solve it?"

PART 3 • CHAPTERS 7–8 In Part 3, Cam comes out of the Haunted House and immediately starts following a man dressed in black. She follows him to his car, where she sees him empty a bag of stolen wallets into the trunk. After Cam reports the man to a security guard, the wallets are returned to their owners and Cam is rewarded for her good detective work.

OCOMPREHENSION SKILL Plot



On **Student Practice Page 10**, children write what happens in the beginning, middle, and end of *Cam Jansen and the Mystery at the Haunted House*. Review with children what they have learned about plot.

- The plot is what happens in the beginning, middle, and end of the story.
- The plot begins when a character has a problem or conflict.

Remind children that good readers predict events that make up the plot. When readers think about what they know and what the author tells them, they can make logical guesses about what will happen in a story.

Reader Response

See **Teacher's Guide Page 10** for a possible response to the question, "When do you think having a photographic memory might be helpful? Explain your answer."

After Reading

COMPREHENSION CHECK

PART 1 • CHAPTERS 1-3

- 1. Why do you think the author has Cam say "Click!" when she wants to remember something? Saying "Click!" lets readers know when Cam has taken a mental picture. The things that she takes pictures of throughout the story might be important later on. (Author's Purpose)
- 2. When Cam and Eric get off the bumper cars, Aunt Katie and Uncle George are talking to a woman with a baby. What happens next? Two teenage boys in roller skates bump into them, and Aunt Katie falls down. (Sequence)
- 3. Describe the Haunted House. Then tell how Aunt Katie reacts to the Haunted House. The Haunted House has dim purple lights, a painting with moving eyes, a tape playing scary music, and skeletons hanging from the ceiling. Something dressed in black jumps out at Aunt Katie. She says it was very scary, but she liked it. (Character and Setting)

PART 2 • CHAPTERS 4-6

- 4. What do Cam and Eric do next after they discover that Aunt Katie's wallet is missing? Eric suggests looking for the wallet at the park entrance. Cam finds a police officer. (Sequence)
- 5. Why does Cam want to wait for the skaters to bump into another person before they tell the guards? Cam wants to wait for them to bump into someone else to see if they take that person's wallet. (Cause and Effect)
- 6. How is the second visit to the Haunted House similar to the first visit?

 How it is different? Similar: Aunt Katie is scared both times. Different:

 Cam does not come out with them the second time. (Compare and Contrast)

PART 3 • CHAPTERS 7-8

- 7. When Cam comes out of the Haunted House, she and Uncle George follow the man in black. Why does Uncle George pretend to talk on the phone? Cam and Uncle George do not want the man to know they are following and watching him. (Cause and Effect)
- 8. What clues does Cam use to identify the thief? First, she realizes that she has seen the woman with the blue dress outside of the Haunted House. Then she remembers how the woman and Aunt Katie had both been scared because someone had jumped out at them. Finally, she realizes that the man who jumped out at them is the thief. (Sequence)
- 9. What happens at the end of the story? Cam reports the man who was stealing wallets to security. The wallets are returned and Cam is rewarded.
 (Plot)

CRITICAL THINKING

- 1. Does Cam make the right choice by following the man instead of alerting a police officer? Why? Possible response: No. Cam should have found a police officer. The man could have chased them. (Making Judgments)
- 2. Did you find this story suspenseful? Why? Were you able to guess how the story would end? Possible response: Yes. I found this story suspenseful because I was never sure what was going to happen next. I knew the wallet went missing in the Haunted House because the frightened lady gave me the clue. (Evaluating)

ASSESSMENT



Use the Selection Test on **Student Practice Page 11** to assess children's understanding of the book. See **Teacher's Guide Page 11** for answers.

Be a Detective

Read the problems below. For each problem, **write** what you would do to solve it. An example has been done for you.

Problem You and your aunt are waiting in line to go to a movie. Her wallet is suddenly gone.

I would look where we are. Then I would go to

the car. I would look for someone running away.

I. Problem You need directions to your friend's house.

Possible response: I would use a map to find the way or ask my friend to have his parents tell my parents how to get there.

- 2. Problem Your dog ran away from home, and you must find him. Possible response: I would go to my neighbors' houses and ask them if they had seen my dog. I would ask my parents to drive around the neighborhood with me to look for him.
 - **3. Problem** You and your brother want to watch different TV programs, and you have only one TV.

Possible response: I would record one of the programs or decide which program to watch by flipping a coin.

4. Problem You are a detective and need tools to solve a mystery.

Possible responses: I think a camera, a notebook, a magnifying glass, and a video camera might be helpful.

Words to Know

Write the word from the box that completes each sentence below.

dim insisted photographic refreshment ruin security stole turnstiles

- I. A robber_____ money from the bank.
- 2. I was thirsty so I asked my mom for a refreshment.
- 3. When I got lost in the grocery store, I found a member of security to help.
- 4. You must use turnstiles to get into the park.
- 5. It was hard to see in the _____ basement.
- 6. My mom ____insisted ____ I finish my homework.
- 7. The rain will _____ your dress.
- 8. If I had a **photographic** memory, I would never lose my lunchbox.

CSI: Character and Setting Investigation

- Characters are the people in a story.
- The **setting** is the time and place in which a story happens.

Answer the questions below.

I. When and where does the story take place?

at an amusement park on a warm afternoon

Write one thing Cam says and one thing she does. Possible responses:

2. Cam			
Says	"Click."	 	

Does Takes mental pictures

Reader Response Text to Self

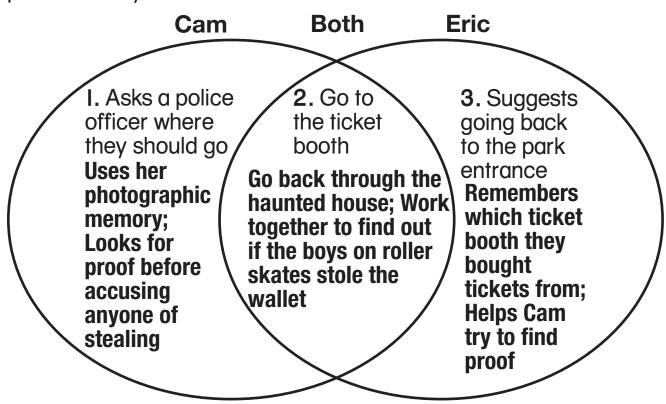
3. Cam, Eric, Aunt Katie, and Uncle George visit an amusement park. What place would you like to visit? Why would you like to visit that place?

Possible response: I would like to visit the Museum of Science and Industry because I want to see the different exhibits there.

Alike and Different

- To **compare** is to tell how two or more things are alike.
- To **contrast** is to tell how two or more things are differrent.

Directions As you read *Cam Jansen and the Mystery at the Haunted House*, think about what Cam and Eric do to solve the problem of the missing wallet. Complete the diagram below with details about what each person does. The first details have been provided for you.



Reader Response Text to World

4. What is a mystery or problem in the world that you would like to solve? How would you solve it? Possible response: I think it's a problem that animals are becoming extinct. I would make sure there are more parks and large areas of land where animals can live without being bothered by humans.

Plot It Out

• The plot is what happens in the beginning, middle, and end of the story.

Directions As you read *Cam Jansen and the Mystery at the Haunted House*, think about the plot of the story. Then number the story events below from 1 to 7 to put them in order.

- I. Cam and the others go to the security office.
 - 2. Uncle George got a child's balloon out of the tree.
- 3. Something jumps out at Aunt Katie in the Haunted House.
- 4. Cam and Eric are rewarded with four park passes.
- 5. Two boys on roller-skates crash into Aunt Katie.
- 6. The guards catch the man dressed in black.
- **7.** Cam does not come out of the haunted house.

Reader Response Text to Self

8. When do you think having a photographic memory might be helpful? Explain your answer.

Selection Test

Mark the space with your answer.

I. What sound does Cam's mental camera make?

Clack

Snap

Crash

Click

2. What problem do the characters in the story face?

Uncle George's wallet is missing.

Aunt Katie's wallet is missing.

Eric gets sick on a ride.

Cam gets lost and the others must find her.

3. At first, what does Cam think happened to Aunt Katie's wallet?

She thinks it is at home.

She thinks it is in the car.

She thinks it is on a ride.

She thinks the boys on roller skates stole it.

4. Who doesn't come out of the Haunted House the second time?

Eric

Uncle George

Cam

Aunt Katie

5. What is Cam's reward?

three passes for another park

free refreshments for everyone

a trophy with her name on it

four passes to come into the park for free