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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative

2007 Volume II: Across the Curriculum with Detective Fiction for Young People and Adults

D. I. E.

Guide for Curriculum Unit 07.02.04, published September 2007

by Mary Lou Narowski

This unit combines the use of **mystery board games** to grip my students in ways that will really stimulate them and hold their interest, with negotiation of a labyrinth of intrigue found in detective fiction. I have chosen **eleven mystery stories**, one of which is in film version, by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, as I feel that these stories are accessible to my students in terms of appropriateness and reading ability. Added to this is the complement of their personal voices expressed in an expository writing (crime) journal. These mystery stories will engage students while producing and reinforcing emergent literacy abilities, all while following the detective in the whodunit, what happened world of secrecy and suspense. These stories will help in the development of logic, reasoning, and higher order critical thinking as they struggle to find the explanation of the crime. The basic literary elements inherent in any story will also be reinforced. Finally, the **invention of group mystery games** will provide ample room for innovation and creativity as the students proceed from playing the marketed game of *Clue, Master Detective*, with their own cast of characters, creating their own reading level version of a crime game.

(Developed for Language Arts, grades 7-8; recommended for English Language Arts, grades 7-9)

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