



wasatch range writing project By Katy Wilson

Lesson Title: Whodunits-A Fun Way to Practice Finding and Identifying the parts of an Argument

Burning Question: Can students pick out the claim, evidence, and warrant in “whodunit” scenarios found on the Internet?

Objectives:

- Determine the central ideas or conclusions of a text; provide an accurate summary of the text distinct from prior knowledge or opinions (RST 6-8.2).
- Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; recognize when irrelevant evidence is introduced (ELA RI 8.8).

Context: Students read a mystery and identify the key parts to an argument as well as work to solve the mystery using the clues provided.

Materials:

- Paper
- Writing utensil
- Copy of the mystery
- Computer to read the mystery
- Summarize the argument (optional)

Time Span: 1 class period

Procedures:

- 1 Direct the students to a mystery website (see resources for a good place to start). Read through the first mystery with them asking students to help guide the class through it. Model note-taking as you go.
2. Identify the parts of an argument (CLAIM, EVIDENCE, WARRANT) with the class and discuss the possible solution to the mystery. Instruct them to write the conclusion to the mystery on their own.
3. Instruct the students to read another mystery and identify the parts of an argument on their own. Have them share their work with a partner. Check

for understanding and discuss the clues to the mystery. Again instruct to write the conclusion to the mystery on their own.

Extensions:

- Additional mysteries may be examined and analyzed.
- Instruct the students to write their ending to the mystery and/or find additional arguments.
- Instruct the students to write their own mystery and identify their argument.

Rationale: Students may tire of identifying arguments or writing arguments. This is a fresh, fun, and different way of practicing identification of argument.

Resources:

Hillocks, George Jr. *Teaching Argument Writing, Grades 6-12: Supporting Claims with Relevant Evidence and Clear Reasoning*. Portsmouth. Heinemann. 2011.

Mysteries in General: <http://www.mysterynet.com/>

5 Minute Mysteries: <http://www.5minutemystery.com/>

Math Mavens Mysteries: <http://teacher.scholastic.com/maven/>

Science Mysteries: <http://www.sciencemystery.com/>

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