

Grades  
3-6

Vocabulary Game  
for All Subject Areas!



# Mystery Vocabulary Detectives

Laura Candler





# Mystery Vocabulary Detectives

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## Vocabulary Game for All Subject Areas



**Mystery Vocabulary Detectives** is a cooperative learning and critical thinking game for reviewing vocabulary. During the game one player, the “Eyewitness,” secretly looks at a vocabulary card and provides clues about the word’s meaning to the “Detectives” who try to guess the word. It can be played as a whole class, or students can play it within cooperative learning teams. The game includes 7 sets of prepared vocabulary cards, and it can be adapted to any subject area by using the editable template to create your own cards.

### Materials Needed for Class Game

- Class Directions
- 15-20 Mystery Vocabulary Cards
- 2 Suspect Cards per player

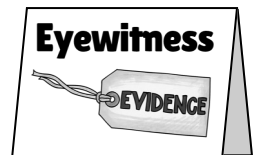
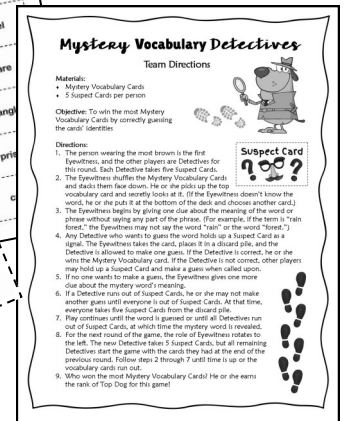
### Materials Needed for Team Game

- Team Directions
- 15-20 Mystery Vocabulary Cards
- 5 Suspect Cards per player
- Eyewitness and Detective Role Cards (optional)

### Advanced Preparation

Before you print and prepare the materials, read the directions on pages 4 and 5 so you’ll have a complete understanding of how the game is played. Then choose one set of Mystery Vocabulary Cards from pages 11 - 17 or create your own. You’ll need 15 to 20 word cards that include key terms and phrases that students have previously studied. To create your own set, print the blank template on page 9 and write the words on it, or type your words on the editable Word template in the zip file you purchased. Laminate the cards and cut them apart. Alternatively, you can write the words on index cards. You’ll need enough Suspect Cards for each student to have five cards.

**Optional Team Role Cards** - During the team version of the game, one person on each team is the Eyewitness and the other players are Detectives. Team members rotate roles after each round of the game. To avoid confusion about whose turn it is to play a given role, you may want to give each team one Eyewitness Role Card (page 7) and enough Detective Role Cards (page 8) for the other students on the team. Print the role cards on sturdy paper, cut them out, and fold them to form tents. After each round of play, the students pass their role tents one place to the left. The cards are not mentioned in the directions because they are optional.



## Why the Suspect Cards Are Important

During the game, the Eyewitness provides clues to help the Detectives guess the mystery word. Each time a Detective makes a guess, he or she must give a Suspect Card to the Eyewitness. Because the players have a limited number of Suspect Cards, they are motivated to make thoughtful guesses in order to avoid wasting any cards. Using the Suspect Cards also ensures that all students have an equal opportunity to participate. When the more assertive students run out of cards, they have to wait patiently for the less assertive students to become involved. During the class game, it's probably enough to give each student 2 Suspect Cards because so there are so many players in the game. During the team game, there are fewer players, so each student will need more cards. The directions call for 5 cards, but if this seems to be too many, try giving each student just 3 or 4 cards.



## Detective Terms Used in the Game

*Mystery Vocabulary Detectives* uses the following terms that deal with investigations and/or detectives: eyewitness, detective, evidence, clue, identity, and suspect. If your students are not familiar with these terms, explain the meanings of those words before you introduce the game.

### Detective Words Used in Game

- eyewitness
- detective
- evidence
- clue
- suspect
- identity

## Whole Class or Team Play?

You can play this game as a whole class or students can play each other within cooperative learning teams. I suggest starting off with the class directions to make sure your students understand the game. Display the directions (page 4) and have students follow along as you explain how the game works. After your students understand how to play the game, seat them in teams of four or five and introduce the team directions. Ask a team to model these directions while the other teams watch how the game is played.

## Teams Against Teams

Another way to play is to combine elements of both games so that teams work together to compete against other teams. If you use this method, you will serve as the Eyewitness and give all the hints. Each TEAM is given two suspect cards. After you give a word clue, team members consult together quietly and decide as a team when to make a guess.

## Management Tips

- If you use the prepared cards, remove any cards from the deck that your students have not previously studied.
- If you use the Historical Figures cards, be sure that all students are familiar with those famous people. This works well when used in a culminating activity after students have previously studied the historical figures.
- If the Eyewitness does not know the meaning of the word selected, the card should be placed at the bottom of the deck to be used later.
- You may choose to let students refer to a dictionary or another reference source if they are having difficulty remembering what the words mean.
- If you have a student whom you suspect will have difficulty with the words, have him or her play the game in a small group of students with similar abilities. This group should be led by a teacher, an assistant, a parent volunteer, or peer tutor.



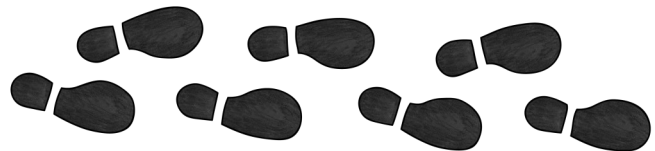
# Mystery Vocabulary Detectives

## Class Directions

**Objective:** To win the most Mystery Vocabulary Cards by correctly guessing the cards' identities

**Directions:**

1. The teacher is the Eyewitness and the students are the Detectives. Each Detective is given two Suspect Cards at the start of each round.
2. The Eyewitness shuffles the Mystery Vocabulary Cards and stacks them face down. He or she picks up the top vocabulary card and secretly looks at it.
3. The Eyewitness gives one clue about the meaning of the word or phrase without saying any part of the phrase in the clue. (For example, if the term is "rain forest," neither the word "rain," nor the word "forest" can be used.)
4. Any Detective who wants to guess the word holds up a Suspect Card as a signal. The Eyewitness takes the card, places it in a discard pile, and the Detective may make a guess. If the Detective is correct, he or she wins the Mystery Vocabulary card. If the Detective is not correct, other players may hold up a Suspect Card and make a guess if called upon.
5. If none of the Detectives wants to make a guess, the Eyewitness gives one more clue about the word's meaning.
6. If a Detective runs out of Suspect Cards, he or she may not make another guess during that round of the game.
7. Play continues until the word is guessed or until all Detectives run out of Suspect Cards or give up, at which time the word is revealed.
8. After the Mystery Word is guessed or revealed, a new word is selected and a new round begins. Each Detective starts with two Suspect Cards. Follow steps 2 to 7 until time is up or the vocabulary cards run out.
9. Who won the most Mystery Vocabulary Cards? He or she earns the rank of Top Dog for this game!





# Mystery Vocabulary Detectives

## Team Directions

### Materials:

- ◆ Mystery Vocabulary Cards
- ◆ 5 Suspect Cards per person

**Objective:** To win the most Mystery Vocabulary Cards by correctly guessing the cards' identities



### Directions:

1. The person wearing the most brown is the first Eyewitness, and the other players are Detectives for this round. Each Detective takes five Suspect Cards.
2. The Eyewitness shuffles the Mystery Vocabulary Cards and stacks them face down. He or she picks up the top vocabulary card and secretly looks at it. (If the Eyewitness doesn't know the word, he or she puts it at the bottom of the deck and chooses another card.)
3. The Eyewitness begins by giving one clue about the meaning of the word or phrase without saying any part of the phrase. (For example, if the term is "rain forest," the Eyewitness may not say the word "rain" or the word "forest.")
4. Any Detective who wants to guess the word holds up a Suspect Card as a signal. The Eyewitness takes the card, places it in a discard pile, and the Detective is allowed to make one guess. If the Detective is correct, he or she wins the Mystery Vocabulary card. If the Detective is not correct, other players may hold up a Suspect Card and make a guess when called upon.
5. If no one wants to make a guess, the Eyewitness gives one more clue about the mystery word's meaning.
6. If a Detective runs out of Suspect Cards, he or she may not make another guess until everyone is out of Suspect Cards. At that time, everyone takes five Suspect Cards from the discard pile.
7. Play continues until the word is guessed or until all Detectives run out of Suspect Cards, at which time the mystery word is revealed.
8. For the next round of the game, the role of Eyewitness rotates to the left. The new Detective takes 5 Suspect Cards, but all remaining Detectives start the game with the cards they had at the end of the previous round. Follow steps 2 through 7 until time is up or the vocabulary cards run out.
9. Who won the most Mystery Vocabulary Cards? He or she earns the rank of Top Dog for this game!

Suspect Card



Suspect Card



Suspect Card



Suspect Card



Suspect Card



Suspect Card



Suspect Card



Suspect Card



Suspect Card

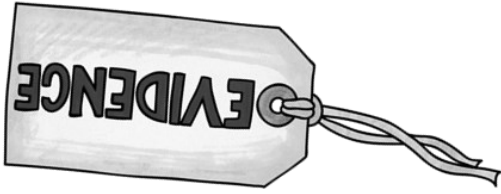


Suspect Card

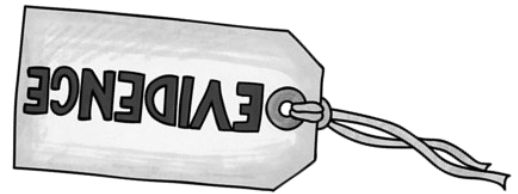


Suspect Card





**Eyewitness**



**Eyewitness**

**Eyewitness**



**Eyewitness**



**Eyewitness**



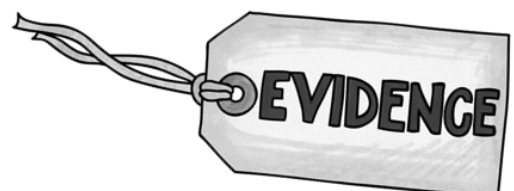
**Eyewitness**



**Eyewitness**



**Eyewitness**



*Eyewitness Role Cards*



**Detective**

**Detective**



**Detective**

**Detective**



**Detective**

**Detective**



**Detective**

**Detective**



*Detective Role Cards*

Preview Version

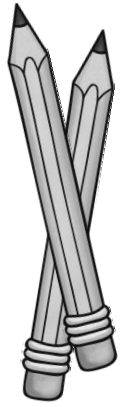




# Mystery Vocabulary Cards

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_


Preview Version

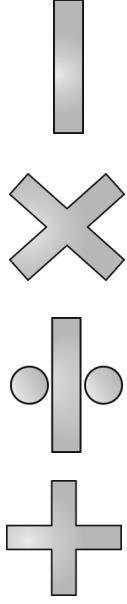


*Mystery Vocabulary Cards*

Spelling Words


Preview Version

# Mystery Vocabulary Cards



## Math Terms

divisor	dividend	quotient	prime
product	factor	sum	difference
addend	mean	mode	range
median	fraction	decimal	numerator
denominator	estimate	perimeter	polygon



# Mystery Vocabulary Cards



# Geometry Terms

point

line

ray

parallel

perpendicular

acute

obtuse

square

rectangle

trapezoid

quadrilateral

triangle

hexagon

pentagon

pyramid

prism

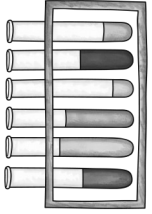
circumference

diameter

vertex

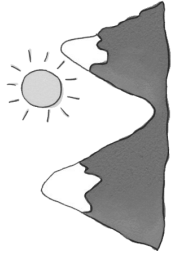
cube

# Mystery Vocabulary Cards



# General Science Terms

gravity	germinate	hibernate	planet
instinct	endangered	mammal	migrate
herbivore	condensation	predator	telescope
microscope	recycle	reptile	erosion
deposition	astronaut	precipitation	friction



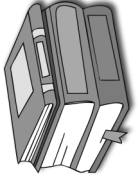
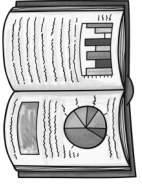
# Mystery Vocabulary Cards

## Landforms & Bodies of Water

canyon	river source	glacier	island
volcano	iceberg	bay	river mouth
plateau	plain	peninsula	ocean
continent	mountain	tributary	lake
delta	desert	strait	valley



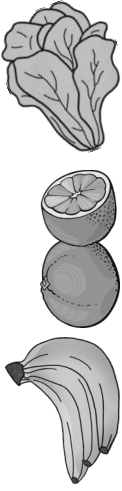
# Mystery Vocabulary Cards



## Genres / Types of Texts

biography	historical fiction	fantasy	science fiction
poetry	drama	realistic fiction	magazine article
editorial	folktale	legend	myth
adventure	mystery	fable	news article
book review	short story	novel	autobiography

# Mystery Vocabulary Cards



## Health and Nutrition

vitamin	mineral	carbohydrate	digestive system
protein	skeleton	heart	muscle
organ	skin	lungs	sugar
exercise	sleep	cavity	addiction
respiratory system	circulatory system	drug	calorie

# Mystery Vocabulary Cards



# Famous Historical Figures

Thomas Edison	Benjamin Franklin	George Washington	Abraham Lincoln
George Washington Carver	Harriet Tubman	Susan B. Anthony	Sacagewea
Helen Keller	Daniel Boone	Alexander Graham Bell	Neil Armstrong
Rachel Carson	Walt Disney	Louis Armstrong	Matthew Henson
Frederick Douglas	Jackie Robinson	Henry Ford	Martin Luther King, Jr.



## Acknowledgements

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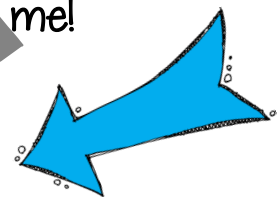
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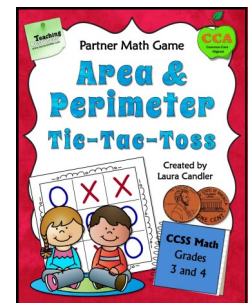
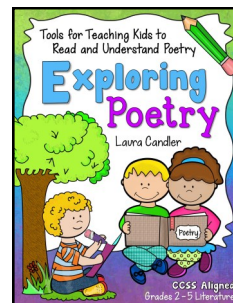
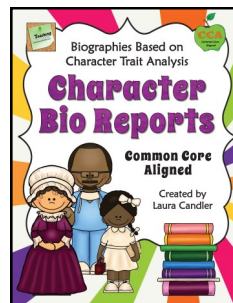
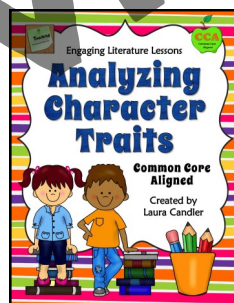
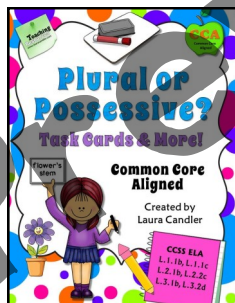
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