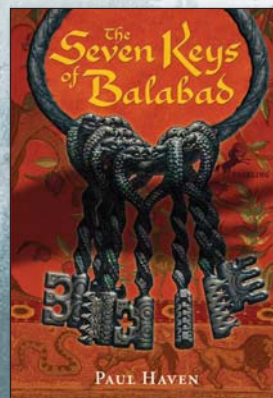
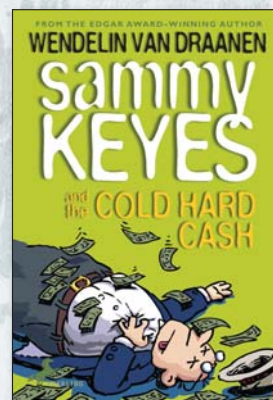
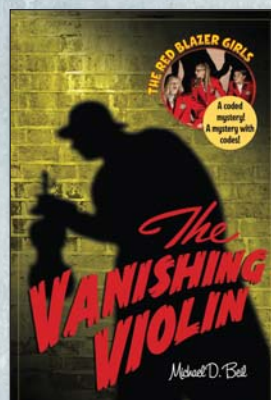
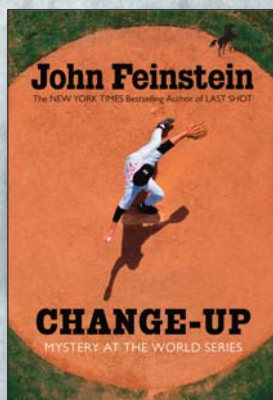


# UNCOVER A GREAT MYSTERY

WITH RANDOM HOUSE

CHILDREN'S BOOKS






# WHAT'S THE MYSTERY?

Who doesn't enjoy a good mystery? Many readers will be familiar with Agatha Christie, Edgar Allan Poe, and the Sherlock Holmes character, but there are also modern-day gems certain to captivate middle-grade readers.

In addition to being entertaining and intriguing, mystery is a genre that middle-grade readers need to be aware of and familiar with. Mysteries help reinforce critical thinking skills. They can be used to demonstrate the concepts of prediction, foreshadowing, and the importance of filtering and analyzing information.

## A MYSTERIOUS CLASSROOM STUDY

 Prior to beginning your mystery unit, have the class discuss the genre in general terms. What is their definition of a mystery? Do they have any favorite mystery books, movies, or television programs? List their suggestions on the board. What are the shared common elements in their suggestions? What are the differences? Ensure that the discussion acknowledges the fact that not all mysteries have to involve a murder or violence.

Review vocabulary words and concepts that are commonly found in mysteries, including: *alibi*, *clue*, *deduction*, *evidence*, *hypotheses*, *motive*, “*red herring*,” *sleuth*, *suspect*, *suspense*, *witness*.

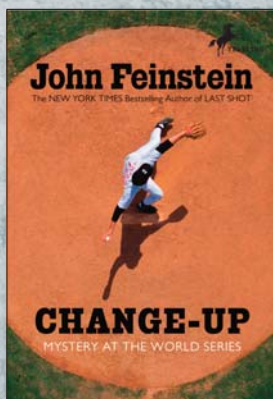
Gather a collection of various mystery titles and have a cover discussion. Based on the cover's design—including artwork, typeface, and any featured blurbs or review quotes—have the students predict what the story or mystery will involve. Write their predictions on posterboard or summary sheets (one sheet per title). Store these predictions until the end of the unit, after the students have read a selection of the titles. Then compare their initial predictions with the actual storylines. How accurate were their guesses? Did they feel that the covers fairly depicted the text? Have each student select their favorite mystery title and create their own cover.

For a creative writing exercise, compile a group of various images, including visuals from magazines and general vacation photographs. Have students pick an image and then, based on their chosen image, prepare an outline for their original mystery story. The outline should include the core mystery that needs to be solved, character and setting descriptions, and the series of events (plus clues) that will lead to the story's conclusion. Don't forget to remind them to add in a red herring or two, or an unexpected twist. Once outlines are completed, full stories can be written; these are then critiqued by both teacher and fellow students. Have students revise their stories based on the constructive feedback. The compiled stories can be printed and circulated to other classes or posted on the school's Web site.



# EVERYONE DESERVES AN “AHA!” MOMENT.

SET THE MOOD FOR YOUR READERS WITH THESE NEW RANDOM HOUSE MYSTERIES.



Grades 5 up  
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GLB: 978-0-375-95636-2  
PB: 978-0-375-84759-2

## CHANGE-UP: MYSTERY AT THE WORLD SERIES

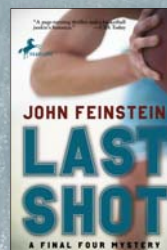
**John Feinstein**

Teenage sports reporters Stevie and Susan Carol are covering the World Series in this third mystery by Edgar Award-winning author John Feinstein. What's the hot new pitcher hiding? An embarrassing secret or a possible crime? Let the investigation begin!

*Also available from John Feinstein:*



**Cover-Up: Mystery at the Super Bowl**  
HC: 978-0-375-84247-4  
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**Vanishing Act: Mystery at the U.S. Open**  
PB: 978-0-440-42125-2

***In the Classroom*** Have your students pretend to be reporters. Have them write an original investigative report or transcribe an interview based on a current sports event that's being covered in today's news. Have them add a fictitious mystery element that they must provide a solution to as well.



Grades 3-7  
HC: 978-0-375-85213-8  
GLB: 978-0-375-95213-5  
PB: 978-0-440-42254-9

## FERN VERDANT & THE SILVER ROSE

**Diana Leszczynski**

When Fern's mom, a talented botanist, disappears, it's up to Fern to save her. Luckily Fern is just like her mom—they both can communicate with plants! And Fern will need the help of her potted allies to solve this mystery.

Grades 3-7  
HC: 978-0-375-85213-8  
GLB: 978-0-375-95213-5  
PB: 978-0-440-42254-9

***In the Classroom*** Have your students uncover the mysteries of their favorite plant or tree. For example, some ferns are noted in folklore as representing happiness and secret treasures and riches. Each student can present one unique “Did you know...” bit of information to the rest of the class.



## I SO DON'T DO MAKEUP

**Barrie Summy**

Sherry (short for Sherlock) Holmes Baldwin—with the help of her mother who just happens to be a ghostly coed at the Academy of Spirits—is ready to solve her third mysterious occurrence. Can she get to the bottom of the case of tampered makeup at the mall?

Grades 5 up  
HC: 978-0-385-73788-3

***In the Classroom*** Sherry has her ghostly-but-friendly mom and grandfather as her trusty sidekicks. Have your students pick their own ghostly sidekick. They must choose an actual person from history or literature, and state why they chose that particular person. Perhaps they'll choose Agatha Christie or Edgar Allan Poe as each helped establish the popularity of mysteries.

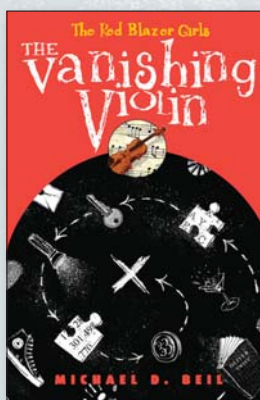
*Also available in this series:*



**I So Don't Do Mysteries**  
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GLB: 978-0-385-90583-1  
PB: 978-0-385-73603-9



**I So Don't Do Spooky**  
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## The Red Blazer Girls: THE VANISHING VIOLIN

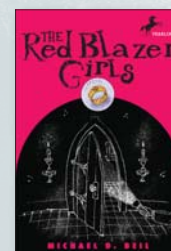
**Michael D. Beil**

The New York City trio of school girls is back for a second case. This time, the girls must follow a trail of brain-teasing cryptic clues involving logic, literature, history, and complex codes to find a missing rare violin. A story full of bowstrings and betrayal, crushes and clues.

Grades 5 up  
HC: 978-0-375-86103-1  
GLB: 978-0-375-96103-8

***In the Classroom*** The Red Blazer Girls decipher lots of codes to uncover their clues. Have your students devise their own set of clues based on the formats used in the book (e.g., an answer grid, p. 57, or a substitution cipher, p. 121). Students can work in pairs or small groups. The clues should be based on a selection of books the class is currently reading or has read recently.

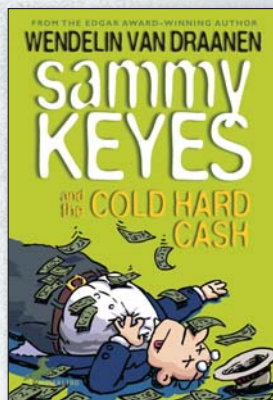
*Don't forget the first book in this series:*



**The Red Blazer Girls: The Ring of Rocamadour**  
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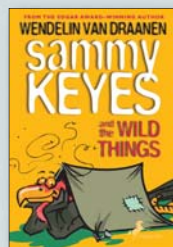




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## SAMMY KEYES AND THE COLD HARD CASH

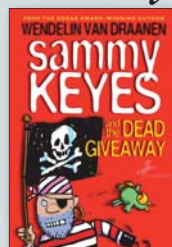
**Wendelin Van Draanen**  
 Samantha "Sammy" Keyes, girl sleuth extraordinaire, is at it again. This time the case involves three wads of cold hard cash and a dying old guy. Another entertaining and edgy page-turner, written by an Edgar Award-winning author, starring this likable heroine with a big heart.



**Sammy Keyes and the Wild Things**  
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 GLB: 978-0-375-93525-1  
 PB: 978-0-440-42112-2

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**Sammy Keyes and the Curse of Moustache Mary**  
 PB: 978-0-440-41643-2

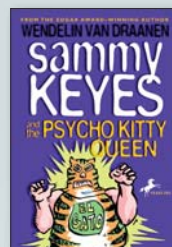


**Sammy Keyes and the Dead Giveaway**  
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 PB: 978-0-440-41911-2

**Sammy Keyes and the Hollywood Mummy**  
 PB: 978-0-440-41866-5

**Sammy Keyes and the Hotel Thief**  
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**Sammy Keyes and the Runaway Elf**  
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**Sammy Keyes and the Search for Snake Eyes**  
 PB: 978-0-440-41900-6

**Sammy Keyes and the Sisters of Mercy**  
 PB: 978-0-375-80183-9

**Sammy Keyes and the Skeleton Man**  
 PB: 978-0-375-80054-2

*Share the entire series with your students:*

## In the Classroom

Sammy's adventures take place in California, where the author lives. Actual street names and landmarks are mentioned, even though they're placed in fictional cities/towns. Have the students reset the location of a Sammy Keyes book to their own home-town. Have them rewrite the setting to include local streets, businesses, and landmarks.



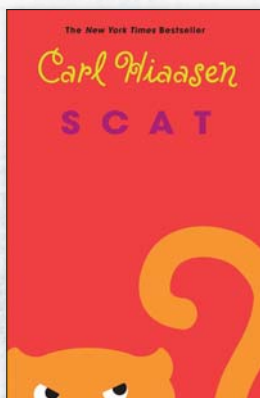
## THE RING OF FIVE

**Eoin McNamee**

Danny Caulfield somehow ends up at the mysterious Wilsons academy—a school for spies. During his training, as he prepares for his journey into the treacherous Lower World, he finds true allies and deadly adversaries. His final secret mission: to join the notorious Ring of Five, master spies, and betray them.

Grades 5 up  
 HC: 978-0-385-73731-9  
 GLB: 978-0-385-90658-6

*In the Classroom* All spies need special equipment to assist with their missions. Danny is given his spy gear, which includes a special coat with hidden pockets. (p. 48) Have your students devise their own spy kit; encourage them to use their imagination to create new gadgets.



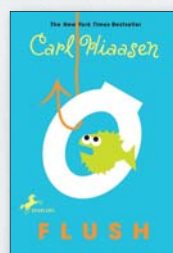
## SCAT

**Carl Hiaasen**

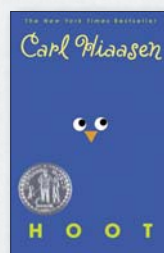
When Mrs. Starch, the most feared biology teacher ever, disappears during a field trip, Nick and Marta are determined to find out why. Soon, they're enmeshed in multiple mysteries involving the headmaster, the class delinquent, an eccentric eco-avenger, an endangered panther, and more.

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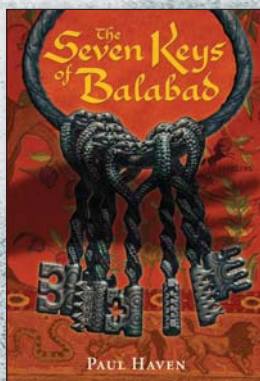
**Flush**  
 Grades 5 up  
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 Grades 5 up  
 HC: 978-0-375-82181-3  
 PB: 978-0-375-82916-1  
 PB: 978-0-440-41939-6

## In the Classroom

Have the class investigate an actual local environmental concern, including having them check for any endangered or threatened animal life or flora in their area. Make certain it's no mystery to whom they should write to express their concerns.



## THE SEVEN KEYS OF BALABAD

**Paul Haven**

Oliver Finch is an American living in the dull war-torn country of Balabad. Things change radically when an ancient sacred carpet—and then one of Oliver's friends—disappears. He'll have to unlock a centuries-old secret and deal with a secret society to solve this mystery.

*New in paperback!*  
 Grades 3–7  
 HC: 978-0-375-83350-2  
 GLB: 978-0-375-93350-9  
 PB: 978-0-375-83351-9

*In the Classroom* Keys play a part in this book's mystery. Have students design their own key to unlock a "favorite" mystery in their life. Topics can include a sport, hobby, book, or animal. For example, a Harriet the Spy fan could include a notebook and eyeglasses in their key's design. The keys are displayed; students have to solve the mystery of each key.





# MORE MYSTERIES

## FOR YOUR MIDDLE-GRADE STUDENTS TO UNCOVER

*From Caroline B. Cooney*

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Grades 7 up



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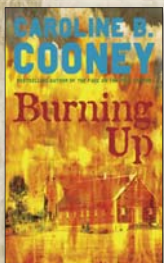
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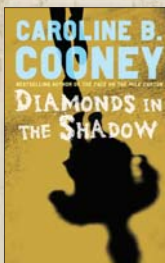
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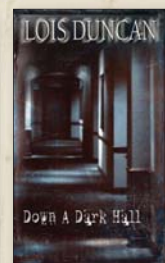
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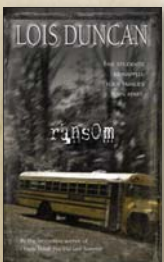
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*by P.D. Baccalaro;*

translated by Leah D. Janeczko

Grades 5-8



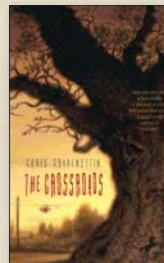
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*From Chris Grabenstein*

Grades 4-7



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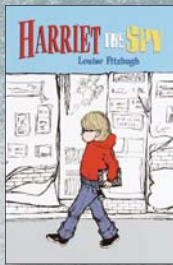


**The Smoky Corridor**  
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## Harriet the Spy Books

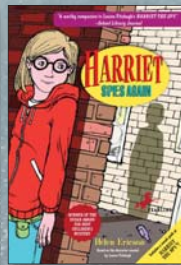
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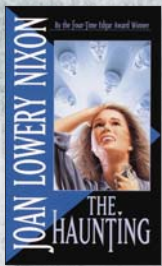
## From Patricia Reilly Giff



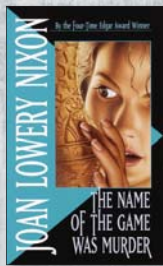
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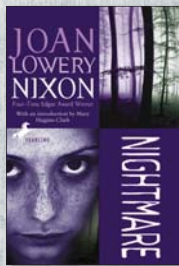
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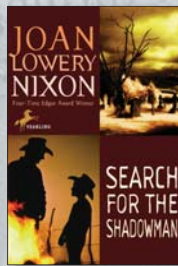
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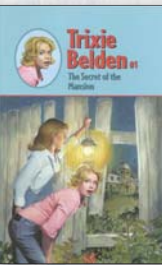
## From Donna Gephart



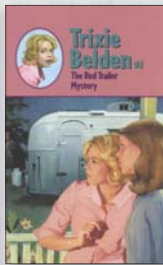
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Isn't Bad Enough,  
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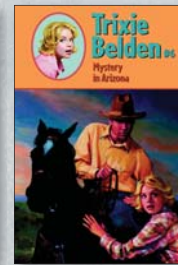
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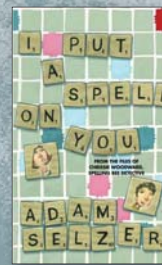


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## From Adam Selzer



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