



WHO STOLE THE TROPHY?



An Interactive Mystery Writing Prompt for 5th Graders

BREAKING NEWS from Maplewood Elementary!

It's Monday morning and everyone is rushing to the school gym — but something is *WRONG*. The **first-place trophy** from Friday's Science Fair is **GONE**. The glass case is open. The velvet stand is empty. And three students were seen near the gym after school on Friday...

YOUR JOB: Figure out who took it, why, and write the story of how you solved the case!



STEP 1: Meet the Suspects







Read about each suspect. Then circle the clue next to anyone who looks suspicious!

 ALEX <i>the Sore Loser</i>	 BRIANNA <i>the Quiet One</i>	 CARLOS <i>the Forgetful Kid</i>
<p>Alex came in second place at the Science Fair. After the results, a teacher heard Alex say, "That trophy should have been MINE." Alex was spotted near the gym at 4pm.</p> <p>Clue: Alex's backpack was unusually heavy on Monday.</p>	<p>Brianna is very shy and rarely talks to anyone. She was in the library until 5pm — but the librarian left at 4:30. No one knows exactly when Brianna left.</p> <p>Clue: Brianna had a shiny smudge on her sleeve Monday morning.</p>	<p>Carlos forgot his science project at school on Friday and came back to get it. He says he never went near the gym — but his sneaker print matches one found at the scene!</p> <p>Clue: Carlos seemed very nervous during morning announcements.</p>



STEP 2: Pick Your Clues

Check the clues **YOUR** detective will use in the story:

-  **Heavy Backpack** — Something bulky is hidden inside. But what?
-  **Sneaker Print** — One muddy footprint matches a size 5 shoe.
-  **Shiny Smudge** — It looks like trophy polish — the kind used on gold cups.
-  **Missing Key** — The gym key from the front office disappeared Friday afternoon.
-  **Crumpled Note** — A note saying 'Meet me at 4:15' was found on the gym floor.
-  **Blurry Photo** — The hallway camera caught someone in a red hoodie near the gym.

Which clue is your BIGGEST, most important one? Write it here:

STEP 3: Think Like a Detective

Answer these questions BEFORE you start writing. Good detectives always plan first!

Who do you think did it?

Name the suspect you think is guilty!

How did your detective figure it out?

Which clues helped crack the case?

Why did they do it?

What was their reason? (This is called the motive.)

Where did the trophy end up?

Where was it hidden? How was it found?

STEP 4: Write Your Mystery Story!

⚡ STORY STARTER:

Use this opening OR write your own!

"Monday morning, I walked into Maplewood Elementary and felt it immediately – something was wrong. The gym doors were wide open, and a circle of kids stood staring at an empty glass case..."

Writing Checklist:

- Describe the crime scene
- Introduce your detective (that's you!)
- Use at least 2 clues from Step 2
- Include one conversation between characters
- Reveal who did it at the end — with proof!

My Mystery Story:

STEP 5: The Big Reveal!

Every great mystery ends with a dramatic reveal. Fill this in, then add it to your story ending!

"I gathered everyone in the gym and said: **"I know who took the trophy. It was...**

...and I can prove it because...

The trophy was found at...

The lesson of this mystery is...

Case closed. 