

# Curious Cases

Title	Genre	Summary	Aspects of theme explored
The Escapee	Narrative	While Jessie has her nose in a book, Sara discovers a real-life mystery close to home.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• mysterious behaviour</li> <li>• noticing coincidences</li> <li>• intrigue</li> <li>• assumptions and suspicion</li> </ul>
Lost in the Ocean	Report	This report investigates the mysteries of the Bermuda Triangle.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• unsolved mysteries</li> <li>• beliefs versus facts</li> <li>• scientific explanations</li> </ul>
It's a Mystery	Poem	This poem explores the cultural gap between two generations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• feeling baffled</li> <li>• inter-generational contrasts</li> <li>• different tastes and interests</li> </ul>
Lost and Found	Play	Identical twins create confusion for the Lost and Found Department in this humorous play.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• surprise</li> <li>• creating confusion</li> <li>• misinterpreting clues</li> <li>• humorous solutions</li> </ul>
The Mysteries of Migration	Explanation	This text examines the navigational skills of migrating birds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• scientific mysteries</li> <li>• asking questions</li> <li>• investigating theories by conducting experiments</li> <li>• research leading to new questions</li> </ul>

## Suggestions for using *Curious Cases*

### Guided reading

See the following lesson plans.

### Theme studies

This book could be used as part of a theme study on solving unexplained mysteries, developing and researching hypotheses, or inquiry that is based on curiosity.

- Introduce the theme and look at the contents page with the students. Discuss the different genres. Ask the students to read the item summaries and discuss the way each piece relates to the main theme. The students could choose one of the items to begin the theme study.
- Use the whole book or items from it in your content-area teaching.
- Use 'The Mysteries of Migration' to examine the scientific method – observing, making predictions, developing hypotheses and testing theories.
- Use the Find Out More section as a springboard for further independent research.

### Text comparisons

Comparing the report 'Lost in the Ocean' with the explanation 'The Mysteries of Migration' will allow the students to explore how scientific fact is used to support or refute theories. They can discuss the difference between a theory and a proven fact and find examples of each.

### Shared reading

The poem 'It's a Mystery' is suitable to enlarge for shared reading.

### Independent reading

'The Escapee' can be used for independent reading for pleasure or as an introduction to mystery writing.

## The Escapee

While Jessie has her nose in a book, Sara discovers a real-life mystery close to home.

### Features of the text

- First-person narrative
- Character development
- Mystery
- Plot development that builds suspense
- Realistic fiction

### Purpose

'The Escapee' can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills:

- analysing the relationships between characters;
- making inferences;
- making, confirming and revising predictions;
- exploring plot development.

### Introducing the text

Select one or more of these discussion starters:

- *Imagine you are 'people watching' in a public place. What things might you notice?*
- *What things might make you suspicious?*
- *Have you ever misinterpreted someone's actions? Why did this happen?*

### Reading and discussing the text

Use some of the following suggestions to guide the students through the text:

- *Read pages 2 and 3. Why might Sara dislike staying with her cousin? How is Sara different from Jessie?*
- *Why is Sara suspicious of the man?*
- *Read the rest of the story. When was the suspense the greatest? When did you change your mind about the man?*
- *Why does Jessie finally start talking to Sara?*
- *Why do you think the author chose this title?*

### Following up

The students can:

- write a conversation between Sara and Jessie that shows the differences in their personalities
- list the advantages and disadvantages of being a famous 'bad guy' actor
- write a script for an episode of *Savage Valley*.

## Lost in the Ocean

This report investigates the mysteries of the Bermuda Triangle.

### Features of the text

- Map, diagram and fact boxes
- Non-linear timeline
- Historical information
- Specialised vocabulary

### Purpose

'Lost in the Ocean' can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills:

- analysing the features of a non-fiction text;
- distinguishing between fact and opinion;
- drawing conclusions based on evidence from the text;
- formulating ideas.

### Introducing the text

Select one or more of these discussion starters:

- *Why might a ship or plane get lost at sea?*

- *Why do some people believe in UFOs while others don't?*
- *What is the Bermuda Triangle?*

### Reading and discussing the text

Use some of the following suggestions to guide the students through the text:

- *Read pages 10 and 11. What do you notice about the design? What do the different fonts add to the text?*
- *Read the rest of the text. Why do some people believe in theories that haven't been proved and others don't?*
- *Are these statements fact or opinion: ships and planes reported a loss of power; navigation equipment is unreliable in the Bermuda Triangle; the plane crashed due to whiteout conditions?*
- *What is the main idea of the compass variation fact box on page 15? Which side of the debate does it support?*
- *What is your opinion about the Bermuda Triangle? Why do you believe that?*

### Following up

The students can:

- list five facts and five opinions from this report
- write a persuasive text arguing their opinion about the Bermuda Triangle
- identify resources and websites to research other unsolved mysteries.

## It's a Mystery

This poem explores the cultural gap between two generations.

### Features of the text

- Poem
- Colloquial language
- Different rhyme schemes
- Rhetorical questions

### Purpose

'It's a Mystery' can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills:

- comparing points of view;
- analysing the writer's craft;
- identifying and evaluating the use of colloquial language.

### Introducing the text

Select one or more of these discussion starters:

- What are the main differences between the interests of young people and older people?

- What complaints do older people make about young people?
- How does the use of slang differ between generations? What are some examples?
- How would you explain what you do when you 'hang out'?

### Reading and discussing the text

Use some of the following suggestions to guide the students through the text:

- In your own words, describe the two worlds that are explored in this poem.
- Discuss the poet's use of slang. What message is she trying to convey? Is she successful? Why/why not?
- What does the poet think of young people?
- In what ways does the poet reveal her knowledge of, and respect for, youth culture?
- What other images would represent the values of your generation?

### Following up

The students can:

- write answers to all the poet's questions
- write a similar poem describing the things that puzzle them about older people
- make a list of the similarities and differences between the two generations.

## Lost and Found

Identical twins create confusion for the Lost and Found Department in this humorous play.

### Features of the text

- Humour
- Stage directions
- Dialogue
- Character development

### Purpose

'Lost and Found' can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills:

- comparing characters;
- interpreting dialogue;
- evaluating the writer's craft.

### Introducing the text

Select one or more of these discussion starters:

- What does 'mistaken identity' mean? (Encourage the students to think of examples from books, movies or their own experience.)
- Have you ever confused identical twins?
- Why are these mix-ups sometimes amusing?
- Why might an author write a story as a play rather than a narrative?

### Reading and discussing the text

Use some of the following suggestions to guide the students through the text:

- Read the play to yourself. How do we know the two Ms Stanleys are twins?
- Which character would you prefer to play? Why?
- Choose some dialogue that reveals that character's personality.
- Which character is the funniest? Which is the most serious? Which is the smartest?
- How has the author used humour in this play?

### Following up

The students can:

- write a different ending to the play
- write a sentence describing a character, then design a costume that would reflect their personality and role
- list all the props needed to perform this play
- rehearse the play in groups of four.

## The Mysteries of Migration

This article describes the amazing navigational skills of migrating birds.

### Features of the text

- Explanation
- Wildlife photography
- Specialised vocabulary
- Map showing migration routes

### Purpose

'The Mysteries of Migration' can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills:

- questioning the text;
- using prior knowledge to deepen comprehension of a text;
- making inferences;
- developing a thesis.

### Introducing the text

Select one or more of these discussion starters:

- *What is migration?*
- *Why do some animals migrate?*
- *How is animal migration affected by the seasons?*
- *What might be mysterious about bird migration?*

### Reading and discussing the text

Use some of the following suggestions to guide the students through the text:

- *Read pages 26 and 27. What questions do you have about migration?*
- *Read pages 28 and 29. What are some similarities between the ways birds and people navigate?*
- *What things might all migratory species have in common? How could we investigate this further?*
- *Discuss how people might affect the migratory habits of animals.*

### Following up

The students can:

- research how salmon migrate using the subheadings in this article to guide their investigation
- write to the local Forest & Bird Society to find out more about migratory birds in their area
- research and create a map of the migratory routes of Canadian geese.

