

The Mystery of the Missing Pencil

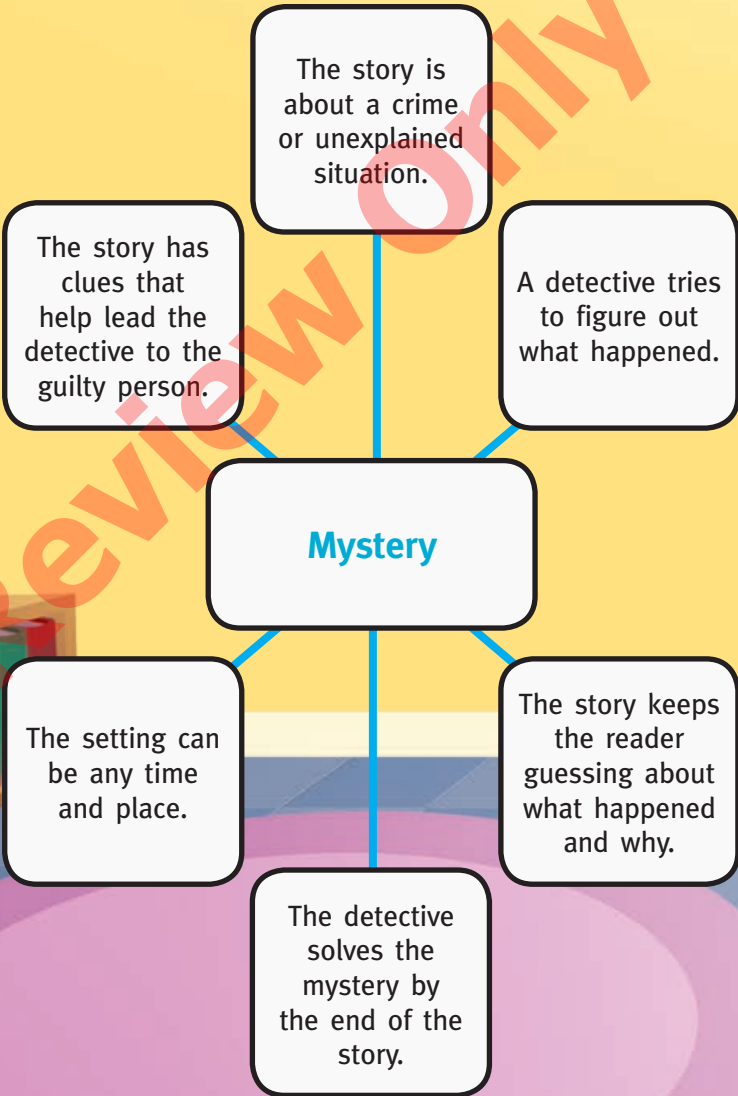


**MYSTERY
LITERATURE**

Level	N/30
Lexile®	530L

Mystery

Look for the genre features noted below as you read this book. Use the features to help you understand the text.



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ISBN: 978-1-5322-5759-9

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Tess

Tess was having a good morning at school. She finished her classroom map early, just as she had planned. Her map was bright and colorful. She even drew a compass rose.





She wheeled her chair to Ms. Bell's desk and turned in the map. Now she had some free time! Tess was going to make a new map, just for fun. It would show the horse stables where she took riding lessons.

Tess went back to her desk in the row by the windows. It was bright and sunny there, and Tess liked being near the classroom hamster. Peppy's cage sat on a table close to her desk. He was curled up in his bed, asleep.





Tess took out a fresh sheet of paper. She loved horses and ponies and planned to hang the new map in her room. She'd brought her box of colored pencils from home. The classroom packs had only one kind of brown, and Tess wanted to show each horse in its stall. Her box from home had four browns. One of them, "chestnut," was the same red-brown as Peg, Tess's horse.

Tess slid her pencils out of the box and lined them up on her desk. They were all brand-new, and their tips were fresh and sharp. Perfect pencils for a perfect map!

Suddenly, the classroom door flew wide open. All the kids looked up as Jay Jackson rushed in, late as usual.



He hurried across the room toward his seat in Tess's row. He skidded into Peppy's table, then bumped into Tess's desk. Tess's colored pencils went flying. Some landed in her lap, and others fell on the floor.

"Sorry!" Jay told Tess, quickly scooping pencils off the floor. He tossed them onto her desk, then dashed to his own seat.



A few pencils still lay scattered. Tess moved her wheelchair around, picking them up. Then she gathered the pencils from Peppy's table. She wished Jay would be more careful.

Tess lined her pencils up again—but now the chestnut pencil was gone! It wasn't in the box or on her desk. It wasn't in her lap or under her wheels. Had someone taken it?





Only one person had been near Tess's desk. Tess looked back at Jay, who was now working on his own map. His whole map was one color: chestnut. Jay was drawing with the chestnut pencil!

Tess turned her chair around and went to get her pencil back.