

Hello, teacher friend!

This free resource for CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.7.1 is designed to help your students master the skill of citing textual evidence to support their analysis of what the text says explicitly, as well as inferences drawn from the text.

We know that teaching this standard can be challenging, so we've created two fun and engaging activities that you can use to help your students practice this skill. We guarantee your students will like these quick, fun lessons!

We hope that this resource will be a valuable tool to aid you in helping your students master CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.7.1. With these engaging activities, students will be able to hone their critical reading and analytical skills in a fun and meaningful way.

Thanks so much!  
Tammy, Jana, Shannon  
ELA Core Plans

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.7.1 - Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.**

## **Engaging Activity #1 Who Is the Culprit?**

The "Who is the Culprit?" activity is a crime-solving exercise where students are given a set of clues and evidence related to a fictional crime. The students are then tasked with using their critical thinking and deductive reasoning skills to determine who the culprit is. This activity can help prepare students for finding text evidence to support an inference in several ways.

- First, students will need to carefully read and analyze each clue and piece of evidence in order to draw conclusions and make inferences about who might be the culprit. This requires close reading skills and the ability to use textual evidence to support their ideas.
- Second, the activity encourages students to think critically and consider multiple perspectives and possibilities. They must use the evidence and clues to support their theories, and they may need to revise their ideas as new information becomes available. This process of inference-making is an important part of developing critical thinking skills.
- Finally, the activity helps students understand how to use evidence to support their ideas, a key skill in both reading and writing. By practicing identifying and analyzing evidence, students will be better prepared to write persuasive arguments that are supported by textual evidence.

## Activity: Who Stole the Test Answers?

**Objective:** Students will work in groups to analyze evidence and identify the culprit who stole the test answers from the teacher's desk.

**Materials:** Clues and evidence (see below), paper and pens for recording findings and theories.

### Directions

1. Divide the class into small groups of 3-4 students, or allow students to work with a partner.
2. Read students the scenario about the answer key being stolen, and inform students that they will be acting as detectives to gather and analyze the evidence in order to identify the thief. Students will not really use this text to find their answers. Instead, they will look to the evidence to piece together the solution.
3. Provide each group with an envelope full of the printable clues and evidence (see below and the next few pages) and give them time to examine the materials and record their findings. You can put all evidence in a manilla envelope and write Classified on the outside, or just paperclip everything together if you don't have time. A third option is to provide the evidence in Google Slides.
4. Once the groups have analyzed the evidence, ask them to share their theories with the class. Tell them that they must explain their reasoning and provide multiple pieces of evidence to support their conclusions.
5. After all the groups have presented their findings, reveal the solution and explain how the evidence points to the culprit.

### Suspects: Give students a copy of the character cards.

Max - the star athlete who was worried about his grades

Emma- the quiet student who always sits in the back of the class

Juan- the new student who seemed nervous about the upcoming test

Lily - the teacher's pet who always gets good grades

### Clues and Evidence: Give each group an envelope with all the printable "clues" printed – clues are on the next page

- A torn piece of paper with writing that says, "I need the answers"
- A footprint on the windowsill near the teacher's desk
- A set of keys found near the desk, with a keychain that has the initial M on it
- A note found in the trash can that says "Thanks for the help, bro"
- A small notebook with notes that match the stolen test answers, found in Emma's backpack
- Juan's backpack, left open on the floor, containing a cheat sheet for the test
- Lily's desk, containing a copy of the test answers hidden under a textbook

# Who Stole the Answer Key?

## The Scenario

It was the day of the big vocabulary test, and the students in Ms. Johnson's class were all gathered in their seats, anxious and ready to start. Ms. Johnson walked to the front of the class and called out some of the words that the students would see on the test, just to make sure they had studied.

“Can anyone tell me what unkempt means?” she quizzed.

Tom raised his hand and replied, “That one means messy.”

“Correct!” replied Ms. Johnson. “What about the word abscond?”

Juan raised his hand and said, “Doesn’t that word mean overused?”

“No,” replied Mrs. Johnson. “You’re thinking of the word trite.”

After a few more questions, Ms. Johnson told the students to clear their desks, and she gave out the test. Then, she walked over to her desk. She was surprised to find that the answer key was missing. Ms. Johnson knew she had left it on her desk the day before, but now it was nowhere to be found. She frantically looked around the room, trying to catch a glimpse of where she may have misplaced the key.

After looking for a few minutes, she started to become suspicious. She walked around the room taking note of the students and things that seemed odd.

Your mission: Find out who stole the answer key.

## The Suspected Students

*Max*

the star athlete  
who was  
worried about  
his grades

*Emma*

the quiet  
student who  
always sits in  
the back of the  
class

*Juan*

the new student  
who seemed  
nervous about  
the upcoming  
test

*Lily*

the teacher's  
pet who always  
gets good  
grades

# Handwriting Samples

Max

My favorite  
subject is PE.

Emma

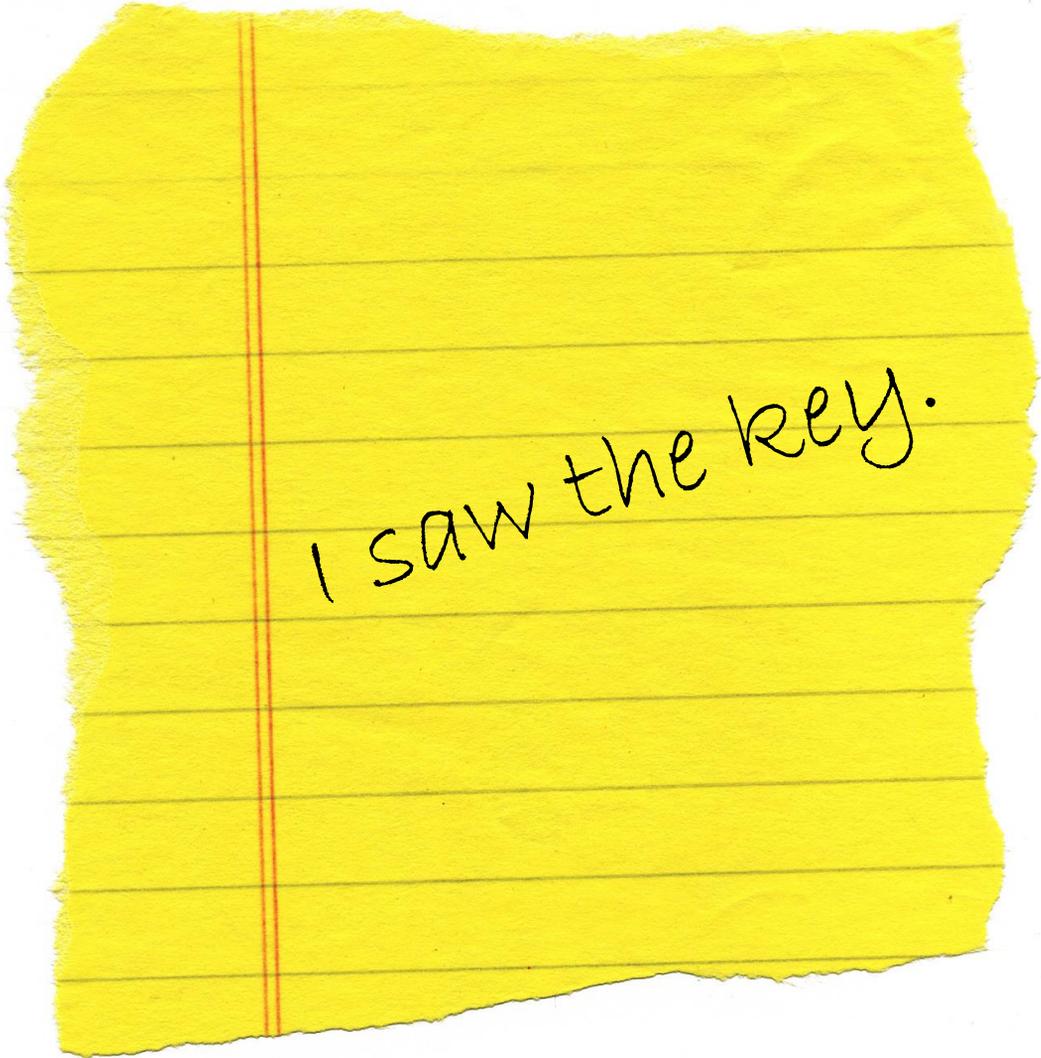
My favorite  
subject is ELA.

Juan

My favorite subject is math.

Lily

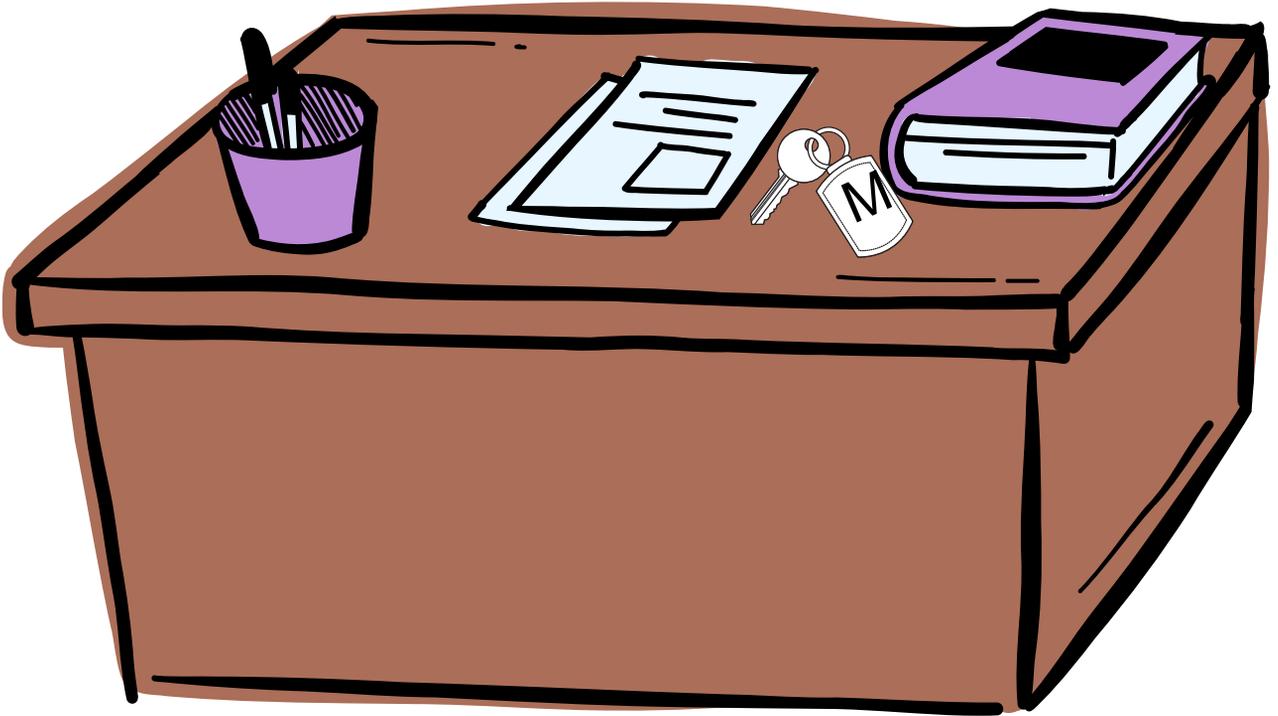
My favorite subject is  
science.



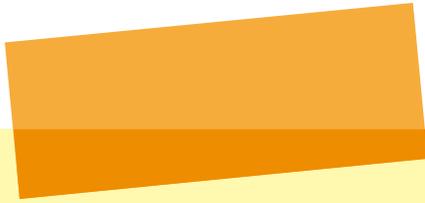
A torn piece of paper with writing that says, "I saw the key".



Size 10 footprint found on windowsill  
beside the teacher's desk



A student's key left on the teacher's  
desk



Thanks for the help, bro.

This note found in the trashcan.



1. *abscond*
2. *smug*
3. *unkempt*
4. *haughty*
5. *trite*

This was found in Emma's backpack. The answers  
matched the key for the test.



1.	haughty - arrogant
2.	Trite-overused
3.	Unkempt- messy, not neat
4.	Abscond - to run and hide
5.	Smug- conceited

Juan's backpack, left open on the floor, containing a cheat sheet for the test.



1. *abscond*

2. *smug*

3. *unkempt*

4. *haughty*

5. *trite*

Lily's desk, containing a copy of the test answers hidden under a textbook.

# Solution

Detective Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Who do you think is responsible for stealing the key?

You MUST list at least three pieces of evidence AND explain how each piece of evidence points to this person.

Evidence 1

Explanation:

Evidence 2

Explanation:

Evidence 3

Explanation:

# Solution Key

Based on the clues and evidence provided, there are a few reasons why Max could be the culprit who stole the test answers:

- The set of keys found near the desk had a keychain that matches Max's backpack, suggesting that he was in the vicinity of the teacher's desk.
- The torn piece of paper with writing that says "I saw the key" could indicate that Max took the key because it matches Max's handwriting and it proves that Max knew where the key was. We also know that he was worried about his grades according to his character card.
- The note found in the trash can that says "Thanks for the help, bro." This handwritten note doesn't match Max's handwriting, but with the word, "bro," it suggests that it was written to another boy. Since Juan is the only other male suspect, he must have written the note to Max. Plus, the handwriting matches Juan's handwriting. This suggests that Juan was thanking Max for assisting him in some way, and since the test answers were stolen, it's possible that Max helped the other students by providing them with the answers.
- Although Lily had a copy of the test answers hidden under a textbook, it's possible that she obtained them from Max, who may have been the original thief. There is no other evidence pointing to Lily being the culprit.
- None of the other suspects' evidence directly points to them as the culprit, making Max the most likely option based on the evidence available.
- Of course, these are only potential reasons and it's important to consider all of the evidence and theories presented by the students before drawing any conclusions.

Objective: Students will analyze a text for evidence and draw inferences based on that evidence.

## Engaging Activity #2 Text Detective

### Step-by-Step Teacher Directions:

1. Introduce the activity: Explain to students that they will be reading a passage from "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer" and analyzing the characters' dialogue to find evidence that supports a given inference.
2. Read the passage: Read the script aloud to the class, or have students read it silently on their own.
3. Introduce the inference: Explain the inference you want the students to make based on the passage. **For example, you might ask students to infer the motivation behind Tom's idea to start a robbers' gang.**
4. Highlight evidence: Have students work individually or with a partner to highlight or underline specific lines of dialogue that support their inference.
5. Discuss evidence: Bring the class together to share their findings. Ask students to share the lines of dialogue they highlighted and explain why they chose those particular lines.
6. Analyze evidence: Encourage students to analyze the evidence they found and discuss how it supports the given inference.
7. Summarize: Summarize the discussion by restating the inference and the evidence that supports it.
8. Reflection: Have students reflect on the activity and what they learned. Ask them to explain how analyzing textual evidence can help them make inferences and better understand the themes and literary elements of a text.

This activity can be repeated with other passages from the text or other literary texts, allowing students to practice their analytical skills and deepen their understanding of literature.

\*Note: This script can be adapted to include more or fewer characters and to fit the needs of the class. Students can interpret the dialogue and analyze the characters' motivations and actions to better understand the themes and literary elements of the text.

# Tom Sawyer's Big Idea

Characters:

Tom Sawyer

Joe Harper

Huck Finn

Mrs. Thatcher (offstage voice)

Schoolmaster (offstage voice)

Setting: The schoolyard

Scene: Tom, Joe, and Huck are in the schoolyard, bored with the school day. They start talking about ways to escape, and Tom suggests they start a "robbers' gang" instead. Joe and Huck are hesitant, but Tom convinces them to give it a try.

(Tom, Joe, and Huck are sitting in the schoolyard, looking bored.)

Tom: (sighs) I can't take this schoolin' much longer. We gotta' find a way to escape.

Joe: (nodding) Yeah, but what can we do?

Huck: (shrugs) I don't know. I ain't got no ideas.

Tom: (excitedly) I got an idea! We could start a robbers' gang!

Joe: (surprised) A what?

Huck: (skeptical) I don't know, Tom. That sounds dangerous.

Tom: (persuasively) Come on, guys! It'll be fun! We'll be famous, like Robin Hood!

Joe: (still hesitant) I don't know...

Huck: (thinking) Well, I guess we could give it a try.

Tom: (grinning) That's the spirit, boys! (stands up) From now on, we're the "Band of Robbers"!

(Offstage voice of Mrs. Thatcher calls)

## Tom Sawyer's Big Idea

Mrs. Thatcher: (offstage) Tom! Joe! Come on, it's time to go home!

Tom: (groans) Aw, man. (to Joe and Huck) We'll have to plan our first robbery tomorrow.

Huck: (smiling) I can't wait!

(Offstage voice of Schoolmaster calls)

Schoolmaster: (offstage) Boys! What are you doing? Get back to class!

(Tom, Joe, and Huck quickly exit the stage, grinning with excitement.)

Note: This script can be adapted to include more or fewer characters and to fit the needs of the class. Students can interpret the dialogue and analyze the characters' motivations and actions to better understand the themes and literary elements of the text. Can you please help me create the text detective activity with this script? Include step by step teacher directions

## Key ~ Sample Answers

**Inference:** Tom's motivation for starting the robbers' gang is to escape the boredom of school and become famous.

**Evidence:**

- "I can't take this schoolin' much longer. We gotta' find a way to escape."
- "Come on, guys! It'll be fun! We'll be famous, like Robin Hood!"
- "That's the spirit, boys! From now on, we're the 'Band of Robbers'!"

**Discussion Points:**

- Why do you think Tom is so eager to start the robbers' gang?
- What does Tom's desire for fame tell us about his character?
- How does Tom convince Joe and Huck to join him?
- What might be the consequences of starting a robbers' gang?

**Analysis:**

Tom's frustration with school and desire for excitement and adventure motivate him to start the robbers' gang. His desire for fame shows his desire for recognition and a sense of importance. Tom convinces Joe and Huck to join him by appealing to their sense of fun and adventure. However, starting a robbers' gang could have serious consequences and the students can discuss what these consequences might be. Overall, this activity allows students to practice making inferences, finding textual evidence to support their claims, and analyzing that evidence to better understand the motivations and actions of literary characters.