

What's the Motive?

Morning Message

Language Arts Content

Understanding character

Common Core Standards

RL.3.1 Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text

RL.3.3 Describe characters; explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events

SL.3.1a Come to discussions prepared; explicitly draw on that preparation to explore ideas

SL.3.1d Explain their own ideas and understanding

Materials Needed

None

Vocabulary

Evidence, motive

How to do it:

1 Display a message like the following:

Dear Sleuthing Students,

Yesterday we got to a very exciting part in *Sleepover Sleuths*. Hollywood Heather has gone missing, and we've got a number of suspects on our list. What we're trying to understand is **why** any one of these characters would have taken her.

On a sticky note, name one person who might have taken Hollywood Heather, his or her motive, and one piece of evidence. Place your idea in the space below.

2 Read through the message. For each mystery-themed word, make a physical gesture, such as pantomiming moving a magnifying glass up to your eye.

3 Share some of the ideas students posted.

VARIATION

- Although mystery is a natural genre to use when exploring motive, you can expand your students' thinking about motivation by using different genres in your messages. For example, for nonfiction you might ask, "Why do you think explorers would choose to go to challenging places like the polar regions? If you decided to go, what would be your reasons?" For poetry, you might ask, "What do you think made our poet for today decide to write this poem? Does the poem give you any clues?"

EXTENSION FOR A LATER LANGUAGE ARTS LESSON

- Students can discuss character motivation during book clubs. Post questions such as "Why did ____ act in this way?" and "What makes ____ say/do this?" to help students begin a conversation.