



Wildlife Mysteries Common Core State Standards Teacher Resource

Wildlife Mysteries by author Carole Marsh are an excellent source of literature, necessary for meeting Common Core State Standards for ELA for grades 2-6.

The following discussion questions and activities are based specifically on the Common Core State Standards, and can be used in conjunction with any of the 6 Wildlife Mystery books. Questions may be modified to fit a specific grade level.

Common Core State Standards
Question Correlation Guide

RL: Reading: Literature

RI: Reading: Informational Texts

SL: Speaking & Listening

W: Writing

1. Research Using 21st Century Technology

RI.3.5

SL.3.4, 4.4, 5.4

W.3.2, 4.2, 5.2; W.3.6, 4.6, 5.6; W.3.7, 4.7, 5.7

a. In the Wildlife Mystery series, Avery, Ella, and Evan go on many amazing adventures and learn many new things. Ask students to go online and locate information on something that's new to them, about which they would like to learn more. Students should be able to use key words, sidebars, hyperlinks, etc., to find the correct information. Ask students to present their information as an informative writing assignment or present an oral report to the class. Students may choose to use audio or visual displays to enhance their presentations.

2. Writing Genres

RL.3.9, 4.9, 5.9

W.3.3, 4.3, 5.3

a. Have students answer the following question: Are Wildlife Mystery books written in first or third person narration? As a class, discuss the differences between these two types of narration.

- Ask students to write their own narrative account about an experience that happened to Avery, Ella, or Evan, as if they had been there with them when it happened.

b. Discuss with the class different types of genres. To what genre do Wildlife Mystery books belong? Have students compare and contrast several different Wildlife Mystery books. Have them describe the differences in themes, settings, plots, characters, etc.

3. Identifying Key Details

RL.3.1, 4.1, 5.1; RL.3.2, 4.2, 5.2; RL.3.3, 4.3, 5.3

RI.3.7, 4.7, 5.7

a. In her Wildlife Mystery books, Carole Marsh provides many key details in the text to support the main ideas. Have students read a chapter, and then identify one example of how key details supported the main idea.

b. Choose a chapter from any Wildlife Mystery book. Ask students to describe the “who, what, when, where, why, and how” of what is going on with Avery, Ella, Evan, Mimi, Papa, or any other interesting character in the book.

c. Sometimes chapters have more than one main idea. Select a chapter from any Wildlife Mystery book and have students determine two or more main ideas of the chapter. Have students explain how the key details support the main ideas.

d. Ask students to create a chronological timeline using the key events in the story.

- e. Ask students to describe a character from any Wildlife Mystery book — Avery, Ella, Evan, Mimi, Papa, or any character mentioned – and include information about their traits, motivations, and feelings.
- f. Have students paraphrase portions of a Wildlife Mystery book. Then, have them paraphrase what Avery, Ella, or Evan meant when they said...or did...
- g. In all 6 Wildlife Mystery books, Avery, Ella, and Evan learn about many animals while trying to solve the mystery. Choose a book and ask students to explain one animal fact they learned about in the book.
- h. In each mystery, Christina and Grant discover new ideas and challenges throughout the story. Ask students to explain one new idea, concept, or challenge that they learned. Then, ask them to explain the relationship between the new ideas and challenges, including what happened and why.
- i. In the Wildlife Mystery books, Avery, Ella, and Evan follow many clues to solve the mystery in the story. Ask students to list the clues in chronological order – the order they happened in the story. Then, ask them to explain how each clue contributes to the order of events.

4. Knowledge and Use Text Features

RL.3.5

RI.2.5

- a. Wildlife Mystery books include several features that are common in many books. Talk to students about the features of a book and how they help the reader locate information in a text efficiently. Discuss with the class the purpose of each feature: chapters, glossaries, table of contents, etc. Ask them to look up certain items until they are familiar with each feature.

5. Exploring Explicit and Inferred Meanings

RL.3.1, 4.1, 5.1

- a. Choose a chapter from any Wildlife Mystery book. Ask students to refer to details in the story to explain the following:
- Describe what happened in the chapter.
 - What can you infer about the chapter based on the chapter title?
 - Provide examples of how Carole Marsh explicitly describes a character, a place, or an event.

6. Compare and Contrast

RL.3.1, 4.1, 5.1; RL.3.3, 4.3, 5.3; RL.3.6, 4.6, 5.6; RL.3.9, 4.9, 5.9

- a. Have students analyze two or more events that happened to Grant and Christina in any Wildlife Mystery mystery. Have them explain what similarities and differences there are between the two events.
- b. Ask students to compare and contrast different points of view: their own point of view with Carole Marsh’s point of view, Avery, Ella, and Evan’s different points of view on how to solve the mystery or what to do next, or different points of view of other characters in the story.
- c. Have students compare and contrast two or more characters in any Wildlife Mystery book. How are they alike or different? Ask them to explain how the characters interact with each other, including their different motivations and feelings.

- d. Choose a setting that Avery, Ella, and Evan are exploring in any Wildlife Mystery book. Ask students to compare and contrast two or more settings in the book. Explain what is important about those settings and how they contribute to the story.
- e. After reading a Wildlife Mystery book, have students compare and contrast the challenges that Avery, Ella, and Evan faced. Be sure students include how they overcame those challenges.

7. Literal/ Nonliteral/Figurative Language Discovery

RL.3.4, 4.4, 5.4

- a. Wildlife Mystery books contain many uses of figurative language. Talk about the figurative language used in the book students are reading. Ask students: What is a metaphor? What is a simile?
- Explain the terms literal language and nonliteral language.
 - Create a list of examples of figurative language on the board and then have the class explain what the words really mean. Include examples from the book.
 - Make a class book of figurative language. Assign each student a figurative language expression and have them draw a silly illustration of its literal meaning and then write what it really means.

8. Point-of-View Analysis

RL.3.1, 4.1, 5.1; RL.3.6, 4.6, 5.6

- a. Choose a Wildlife Mystery book for the students to read. Ask students to compare and contrast their point of view with the characters’.
- Ask them to describe Avery, Ella, and Evan’s points of view and explain how they can tell what they are. Have them compare and contrast Avery, Ella, and Evan’s different points of view.
- b. Explain how Carole Marsh uses reasons to support key parts of the story. Ask students: “What is Carole Marsh’s reason for telling you...?”

9. Sequence of Events

RL.3.1, 4.1, 5.1; RL.3.3, 4.3, 5.5

- a. Have students explain how a series of chapters fit together to move the story along in a Wildlife Mystery book.
- b. Have students create a timeline of the main events in the story.

10. Academic Vocabulary

RI.3.4, 4.4, 5.4

- a. Have students start a vocabulary journal to keep track of new words they learned in the books they have read. One section should be labeled General Academic Words (Tier 2 words) and the other section should be labeled Domain-specific Words (Tier 3 words). Students should keep these all year and add to them whenever they learn a new word.

11. Speaking and Listening

SL.3.1, 4.1, 5.1

a. As an informal assessment at any time during the reading of a Wildlife Mystery book, engage in collaborative discussions (one-on-one, small groups, or teacher-led). Be sure students come to discussions prepared, express their ideas clearly, follow rules of discussions, and contribute to the discussion in an appropriate manner.

12. Writing Opinion Pieces

W.3.1, 4.1, 5.1

a. Explain to the class that in Wildlife Mysteries, Avery, Ella, and Evan have many opinions of their own, just like they do! Ask students to write an opinion piece on something they feel strongly about that happened in the book, or choose one of the following:

- Would you like to visit the place in the book? Why or why not?

- Would you have done the same thing as Avery, Ella, and Evan in a particular situation? Why or why not?

- Choose a situation in the book in which Avery, Ella, or Evan faced a challenge, made a choice and took action. Do you think it was a dangerous thing to do? Would you have done it?

Be sure to remind students to use reasons from the text to back up their opinions.

13. Writing Informative/Explanatory Texts

W.3.2, 4.2, 5.2

a. Carole Marsh describes characters and their emotions throughout the Wildlife Mystery books. For example, she might tell us that Evan is scared during one chapter. Have students write a paragraph explaining how they know a character is feeling a particular emotion (for example, how they know Evan is scared). Have them answer the following questions: What details in the text tell you that? Do explicit details tell you that, or do you infer that he is scared?

b. Every Wildlife Mystery book has “red herring” characters, or characters that appear in the story and cause the reader to think that they are “bad guys.” Have students write an informative paragraph about a “red herring” character and explain why they thought he or she was the “bad guy” in the story. Then have them explain who that person really turned out to be.