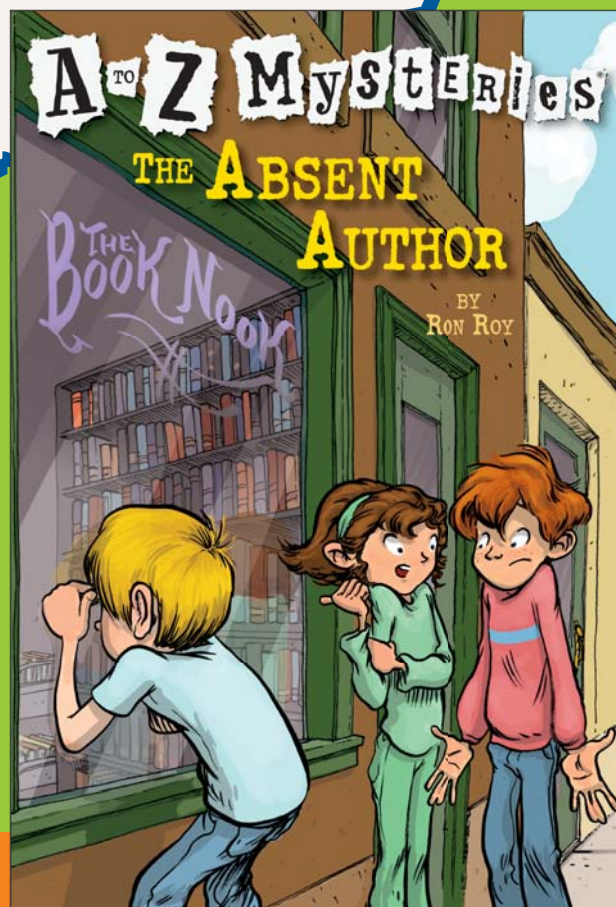


# Aa



## The Absent Author

PB: 978-0-679-88168-1  
EL: 978-0-307-51012-9

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# A TO Z MYSTERIES<sup>®</sup>

## EDUCATORS' GUIDE

with Common Core State Standards Correlations



## Welcome to the World of Dink, Josh, and Ruth Rose!

Teachers:

A to Z Mysteries by Ron Roy are the perfect bridge to the mystery genre. Young readers who love Nate the Great and his adventures are ready for the many mysteries this terrific trio will solve. These books do not have to be read in any specific order; however, it is always good to read the first of a series—in this case, *The Absent Author*—together as a class before tackling the rest, so students will be familiar with the format of the stories.



### Grades 1–4

- Mystery
- Suspense
- Characterization
- Literary Techniques
- Graphing
- Mapping Skills

For more classroom resources, visit [RHTeachersLibrarians.com](http://RHTeachersLibrarians.com).

 **RANDOM HOUSE**  
CHILDREN'S BOOKS

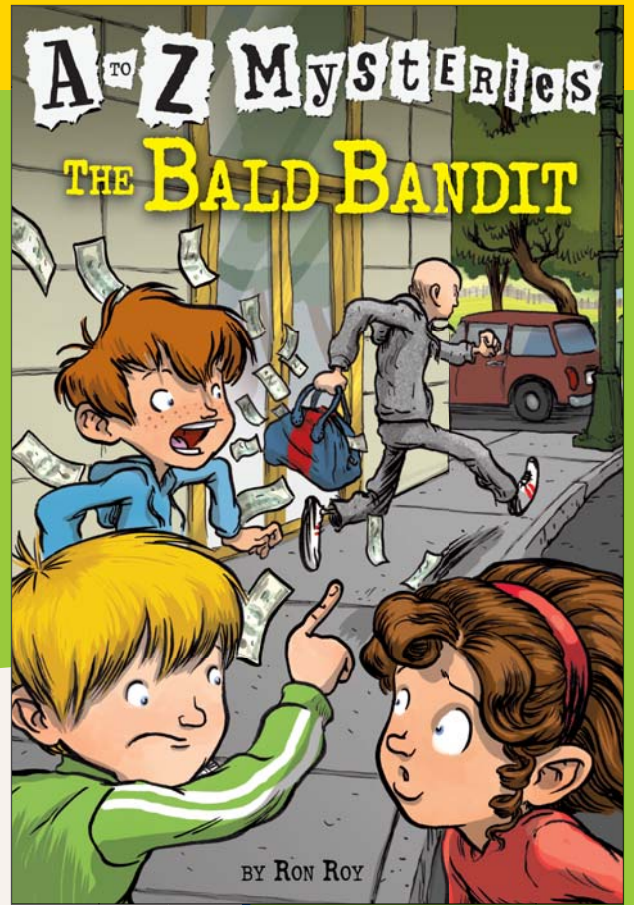
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## The Bald Bandit

PB: 978-0-679-88449-1  
GLB: 978-0-679-98449-8  
EL: 978-0-307-51373-1



# Bald



# A TO Z MYSTERIES®



## About This Guide

Mysteries and problem-solving skills go hand in hand, and the A to Z Mysteries series can be a valuable resource for having students use higher-level thinking skills while reading an engaging tale of mystery and suspense.

Let the A to Z Mysteries inspire the writer in your students. What's better than students reading a compelling mystery? Having them write their own brainteasing, cliff-hanging tale!



Along with activities related to mysteries, this guide also provides resources to help students write their very own stories. Highlighting the steps in the writing process are reproducibles that help your students with pre-writing, drafting, revising,

and publishing, as well as activities to help students develop their story elements—settings, characters, and plots.



 **RANDOM HOUSE**  
CHILDREN'S BOOKS

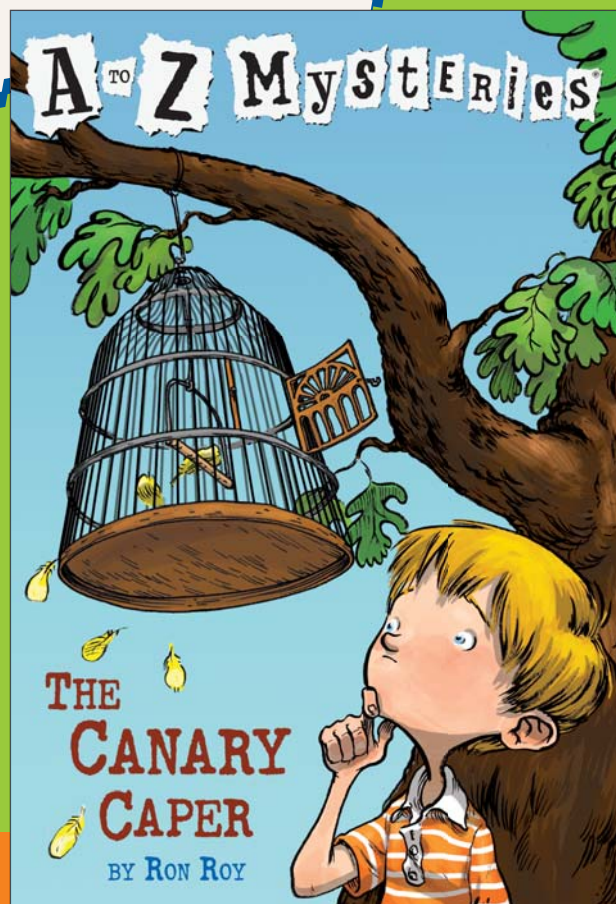
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# C C



## The Canary Caper

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GLB: 978-0-679-98593-8  
EL: 978-0-307-51642-8



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# A TO Z MYSTERIES®



## Pre-reading Activities



### It's a Mystery

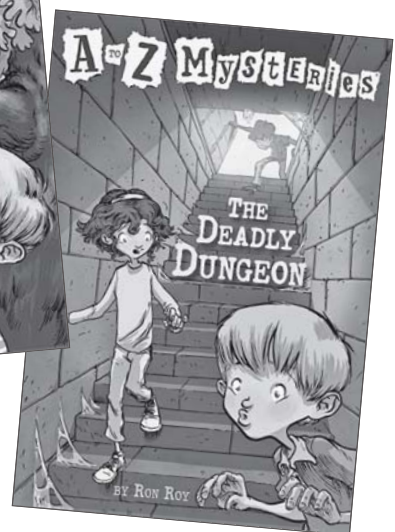
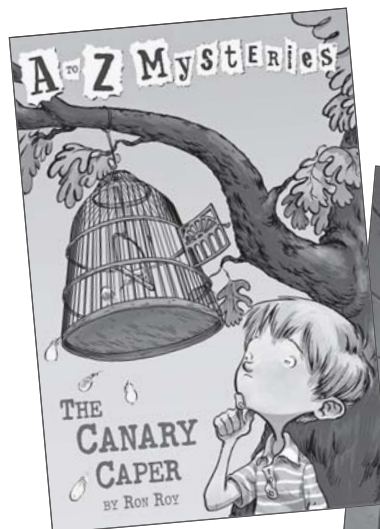
Talk about what makes a story a mystery. Brainstorm the characteristics of a mystery on the board and discuss. You may want to have a collection of mystery titles available to show as examples. As a class, examine various mystery series from your library (e.g., Nate the Great and others). Judging by the covers, brainstorm elements that the class predicts will hold true in mysteries.

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### Red-Flag Words

As a class, begin a list of red-flag words (ones that would definitely be relevant to a mystery book), such as *case*, *missing*, *mystery*, *clue*, *detective*, *sleuth*, etc. This list will not be completed in one discussion, but can be added to as the class is exposed to more titles.

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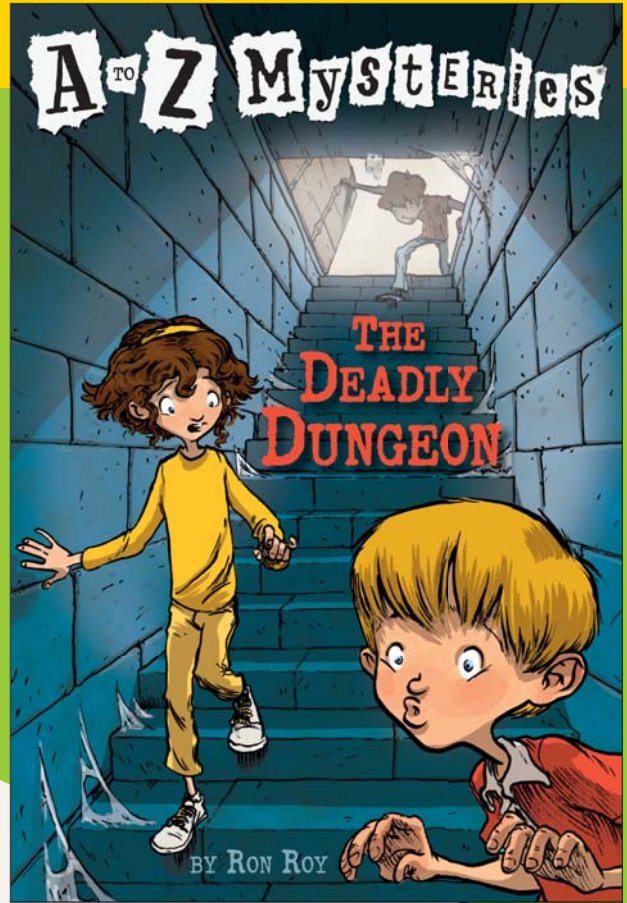
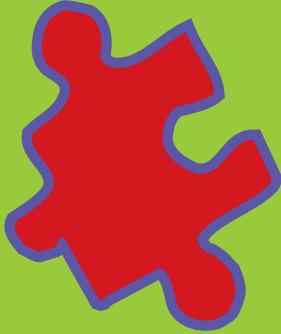


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# The Deadly Dungeon

PB: 978-0-679-88755-3  
EL: 978-0-307-51961-0



# A TO Z MYSTERIES®

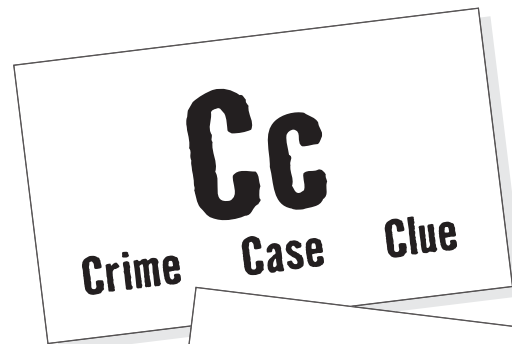


## Pre-reading Activities

### Word Wall

Research shows that readers make writers. Have poster board or index cards available for each letter of the alphabet so children can post words they discover as they are reading each of the mysteries.

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### What Are the Clues?

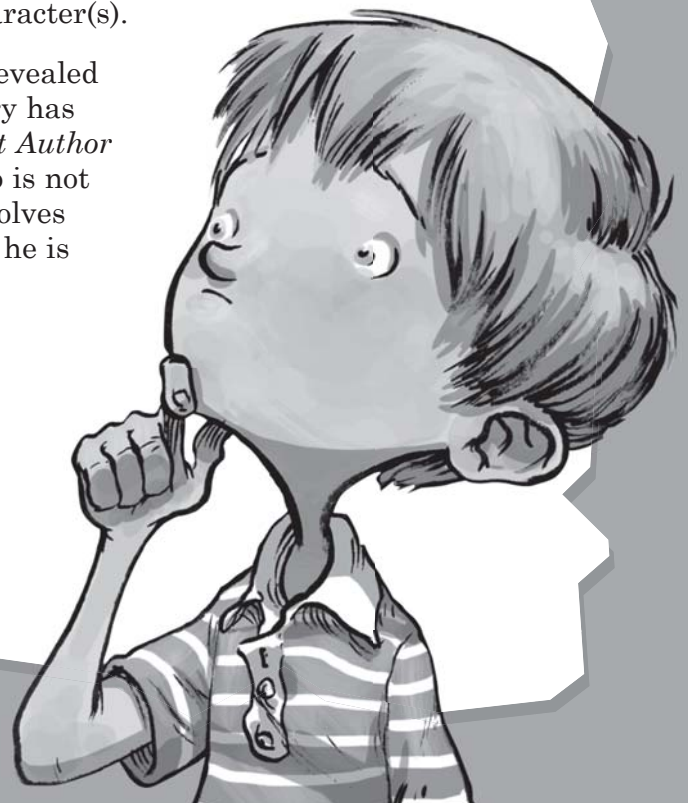
Review story elements, and discuss how mysteries have specific indicators in the plot—who, what, when, where, and why—as all stories do. But with mysteries, one or more of these elements are unknown to readers. It is the author's responsibility to gradually reveal the unknown elements so that the clues lead to solving the mystery.

**Detective or Sleuth**—Identify the main character(s).

**The Problem**—Sometimes the problem is revealed in the title, although more often the story has to be read to learn what it is. *The Absent Author* is obviously a story about an author who is not where he is supposed to be. The plot revolves around locating him—finding out where he is and why he is missing.

**The Solution**—How is the problem solved?

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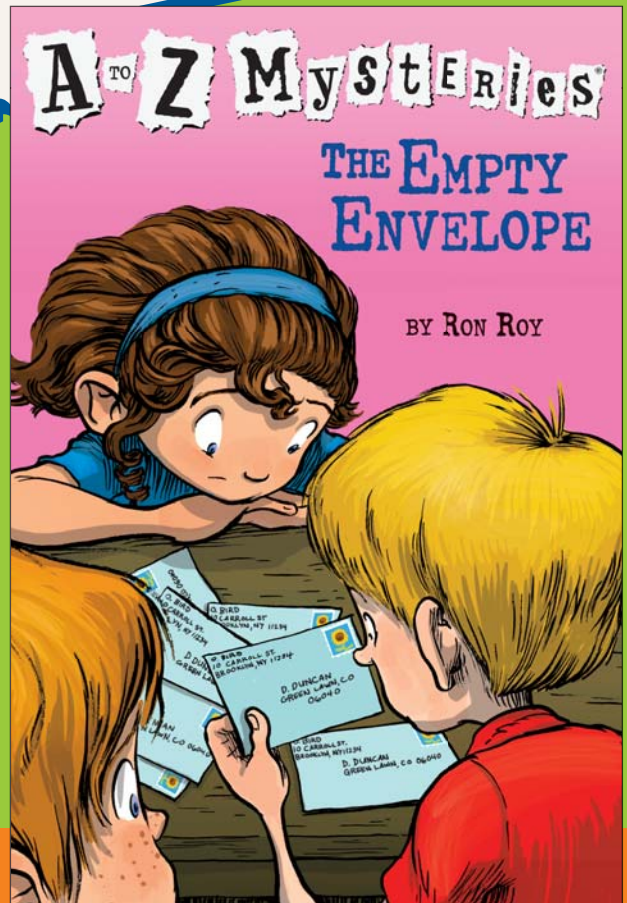
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# EEB



## The Empty Envelope

PB: 978-0-679-89054-6  
EL: 978-0-307-52288-7



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# A TO Z MYSTERIES®



## Language Arts

### Alliteration

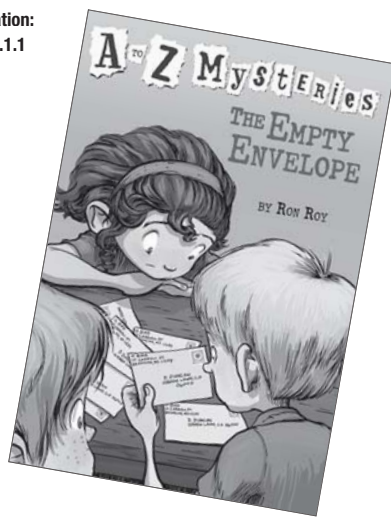
The A to Z Mysteries have alliterative titles: *The Absent Author*, *The Bald Bandit*, *The Canary Caper*, etc. The author even has an alliterative name—Ron Roy!

Discuss the titles with the class. Have the letters of the alphabet printed on paper squares. Ask each child to pick a letter. Using the dictionary, the students should come up with a title using their assigned letters. Make sure that they are not titles of Ron Roy books.

### Whodunit? Trivia Question Cards

As the books are read, the students can make question cards to be used by the class as a review game. Have each child, or pairs of children, record questions about specifics in the story. The junior detectives must prove their answers to the teacher by recording text evidence before they are allowed to ask the class the questions.

● Common Core Correlation: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.1



### Literature Circles

Divide your class into groups and have each group read a different A to Z Mystery. Ask each group to discuss their book with each other, and then have them put together a presentation so that the whole class learns about all the A to Z Mysteries books. Then students can read their favorites on their own.

Use the provided Literature Circle Roles Sheet with your students to help establish roles, assignments, and expectations in the literature groups.

● Common Core Correlations: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.1.1.A-C, SL.1.2, SL.1.3, SL.1.4, SL.1.6

### Variations

- Have students read books with a partner and then do a book report to present to the class.  
● Common Core Correlations: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.1.4, SL.1.6, RL.1.10
- Use a Venn diagram to have students compare and contrast two different A to Z Mysteries.  
● Common Core Correlation: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.9

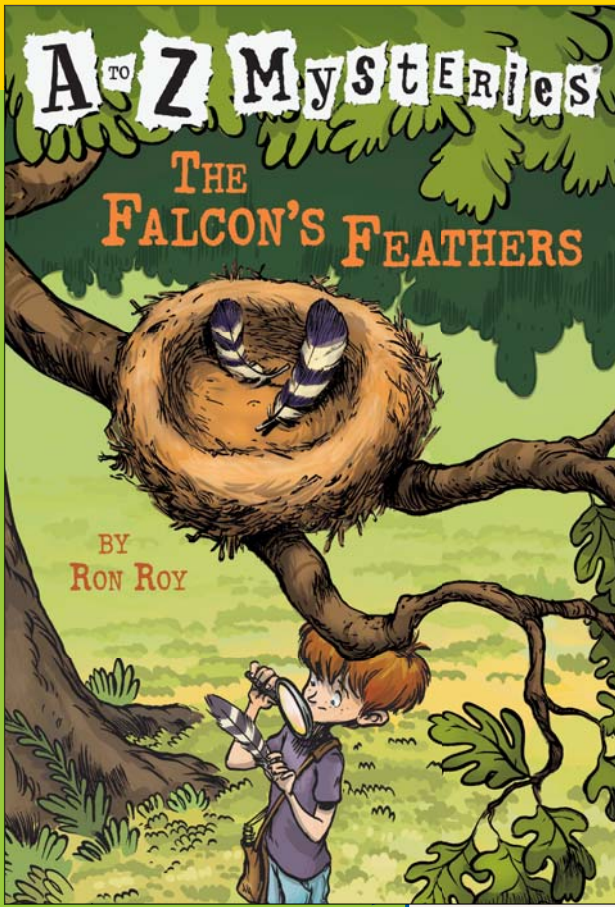
## Dramatics

### Character Caper

Children really get to know the characters in this series. Have a contest that encourages students to dress as their favorite character. Allow the class to brainstorm the categories on which they will be judged. The contest can be based on originality rather than on who looks the most like a character. Awards are optional.

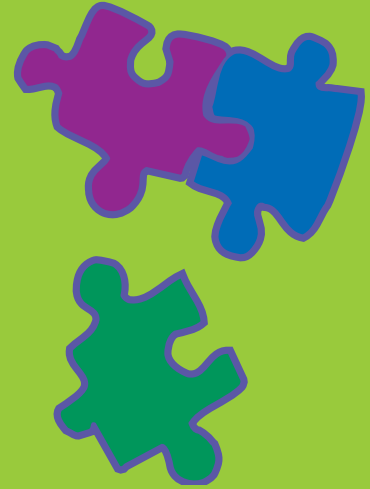
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## The Falcon's Feathers

PB: 978-0-679-89055-3  
EL: 978-0-307-52335-8



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# A TO Z MYSTERIES<sup>®</sup>

by Ron Roy



## Literature Circle Roles Sheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Author: \_\_\_\_\_

1.	<p><b>Artful Artist:</b> Draw a picture of a favorite scene and character using details and write a paragraph about the scene.</p>
2.	<p><b>Connector:</b> Make a thoughtful connection to your life, another book, or another author and give a reason why you have made that connection.</p>
3.	<p><b>Discussion Director:</b> Write higher-order thinking questions—based on opinions that lead to detailed and specific questions. Have your answers to these questions ready with supporting evidence.</p> <p>© Common Core Correlation: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.2.1</p>
4.	<p><b>Passage Picker:</b> Select an important passage to share good writing details, foreshadowing, a flashback, a climax, or a conclusion. Tell the group why you selected this particular passage.</p> <p>© Common Core Correlation: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.4</p>
5.	<p><b>Word Finder:</b> Select new or interesting words that you come across as you're reading the selection. Make sure to learn the meaning of each word before meeting for discussion. Tell why you selected these words and how they fit in the story. Mark the passages with these words with a Post-it.</p> <p>© Common Core Correlation: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.2.4.E</p>

### Discussion Rules

- Encourage Others
- Participate Actively
- Listen Attentively
- Use Polite Interruptions
- Give Others the Chance to Speak
- Come to the Discussion Prepared

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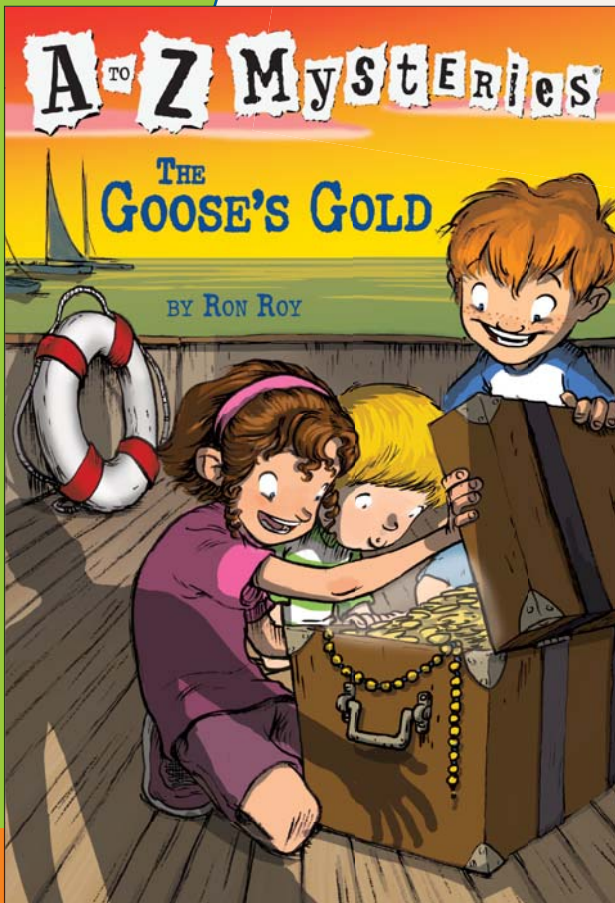


To read all the books in the A to Z Mysteries series,  
visit your local library or bookstore.

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# Gg



## The Goose's Gold

PB: 978-0-678-89078-2  
EL: 978-0-307-52905-3

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# A TO Z MYSTERIES®



## Math

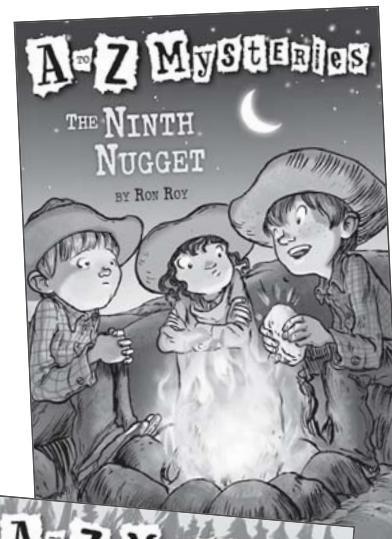
### Which Is Your Favorite?

Use the chart provided to tally the students' favorite A to Z Mysteries. After completing the survey, the students can design a graph recording the data.

© Common Core Correlation: CCSS.Math.Content.1.MD.C.4

Example:

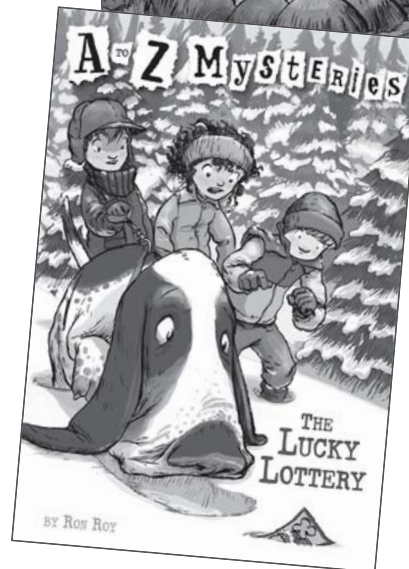
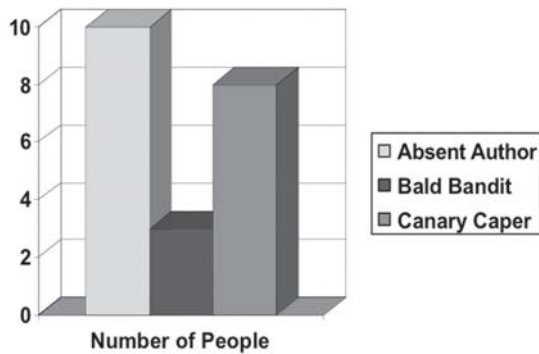
Title	Number of People
The Absent Author	### ###
The Bald Bandit	
The Canary Caper	###



### Graphing Your Results

After tallying up the totals from your chart, have your students make a graph that is a visual representation of the class's favorite titles.

Example:



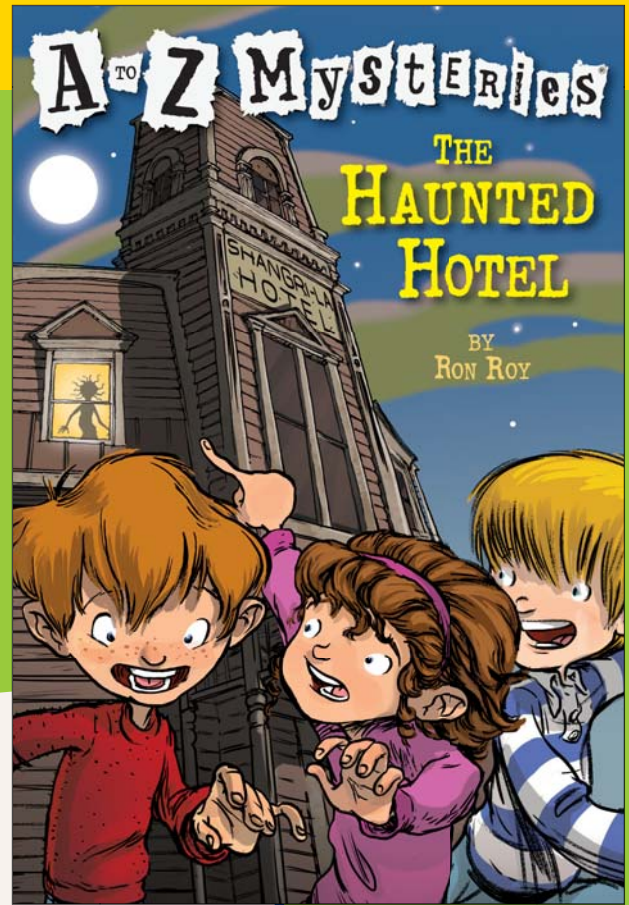
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## The Haunted Hotel

PB: 978-0-679-89079-9  
GLB: 978-0-679-99079-6  
EL: 978-0-307-53065-3



# A TO Z MYSTERIES<sup>®</sup>

by Ron Roy



Title	Number of People
The Absent Author	
The Bald Bandit	
The Canary Caper	
The Deadly Dungeon	
The Empty Envelope	
The Falcon's Feathers	
The Goose's Gold	
The Haunted Hotel	
The Invisible Island	
The Jaguar's Jewel	
The Kidnapped King	
The Lucky Lottery	
The Missing Mummy	
The Ninth Nugget	
The Orange Outlaw	
The Panda Puzzle	
The Quicksand Question	
The Runaway Racehorse	
The School Skeleton	
The Talking T. Rex	
The Unwilling Umpire	
The Vampire's Vacation	
The White Wolf	
The X'ed-Out X-Ray	
The Yellow Yacht	
The Zombie Zone	



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Common Core Correlation: CCSS.Math.Content.1.MD.C.4

To read all the books in the A to Z Mysteries series,  
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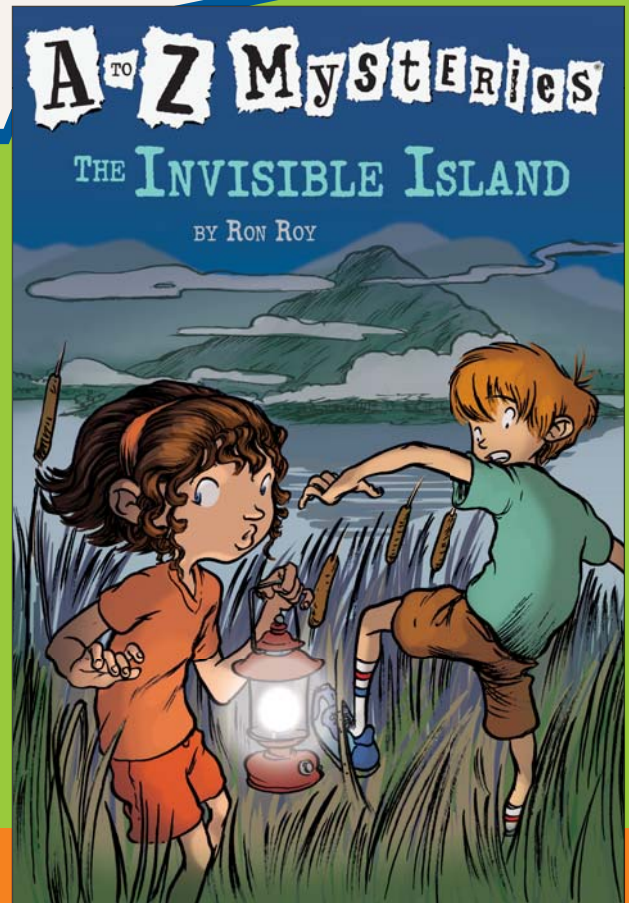


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## The Invisible Island

PB: 978-0-679-89457-5  
EL: 978-0-307-53293-0



# A TO Z MYSTERIES®



## Social Studies/Map Skills

### Where Did It Happen?

A map of the setting is one of the standard elements in each A to Z Mystery, and it offers a perfect link to social studies. Using an overhead projector, place an enlarged transparency copy of the map from the front of an A to Z book under a grid transparency to reinforce map skills, as well as provide a story map of the mystery. Have the students locate different areas in the story by using the grid.

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### Giving Directions

Using the map provided on page 10, ask students to write directions to and from the various places listed. For example, give directions from the town baseball field to the police station or from Dink's house to the boat launch. It may be helpful to reproduce the enclosed map so students can trace their way through the town to help write their directions.

### Map Legends

Discuss the need for a key or legend for maps. Show examples of a few common symbols used to indicate rivers, lakes, towns, forests, highways, mountains, etc.



Crosswalk



Dining



Mountains



Bridge

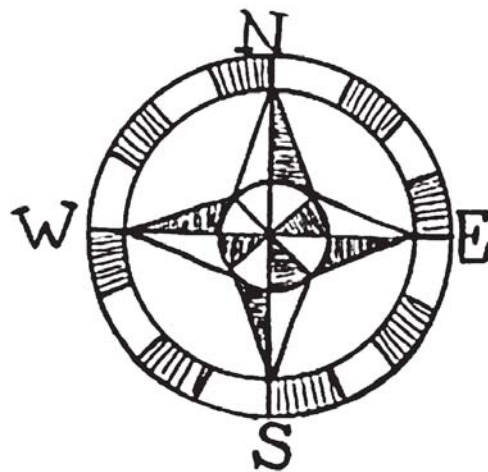
### Map Your Town

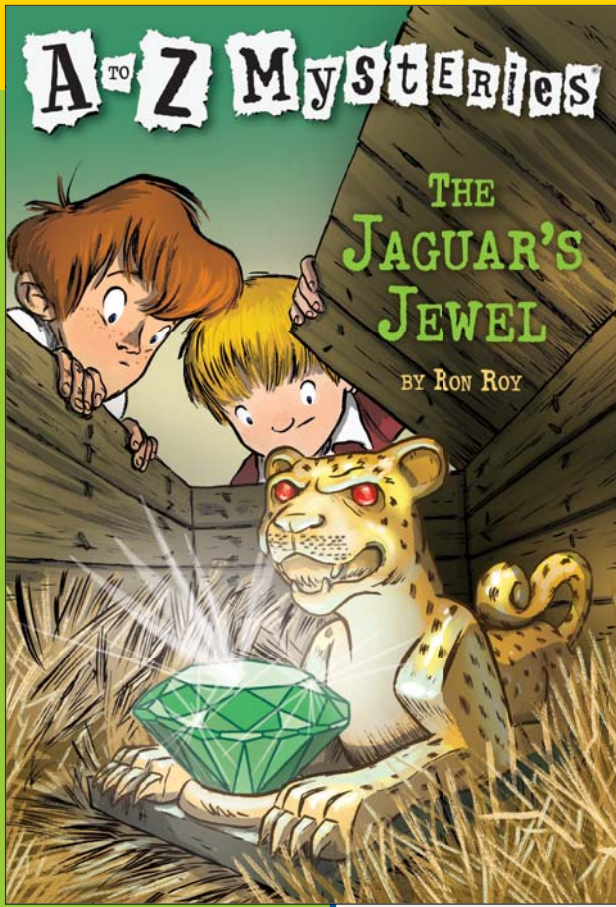
Have students make a map of their own neighborhood or of their school. Make sure that the students include a legend for their maps.



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## The Jaguar's Jewel

PB: 978-0-679-89458-2  
EL: 978-0-307-53304-3

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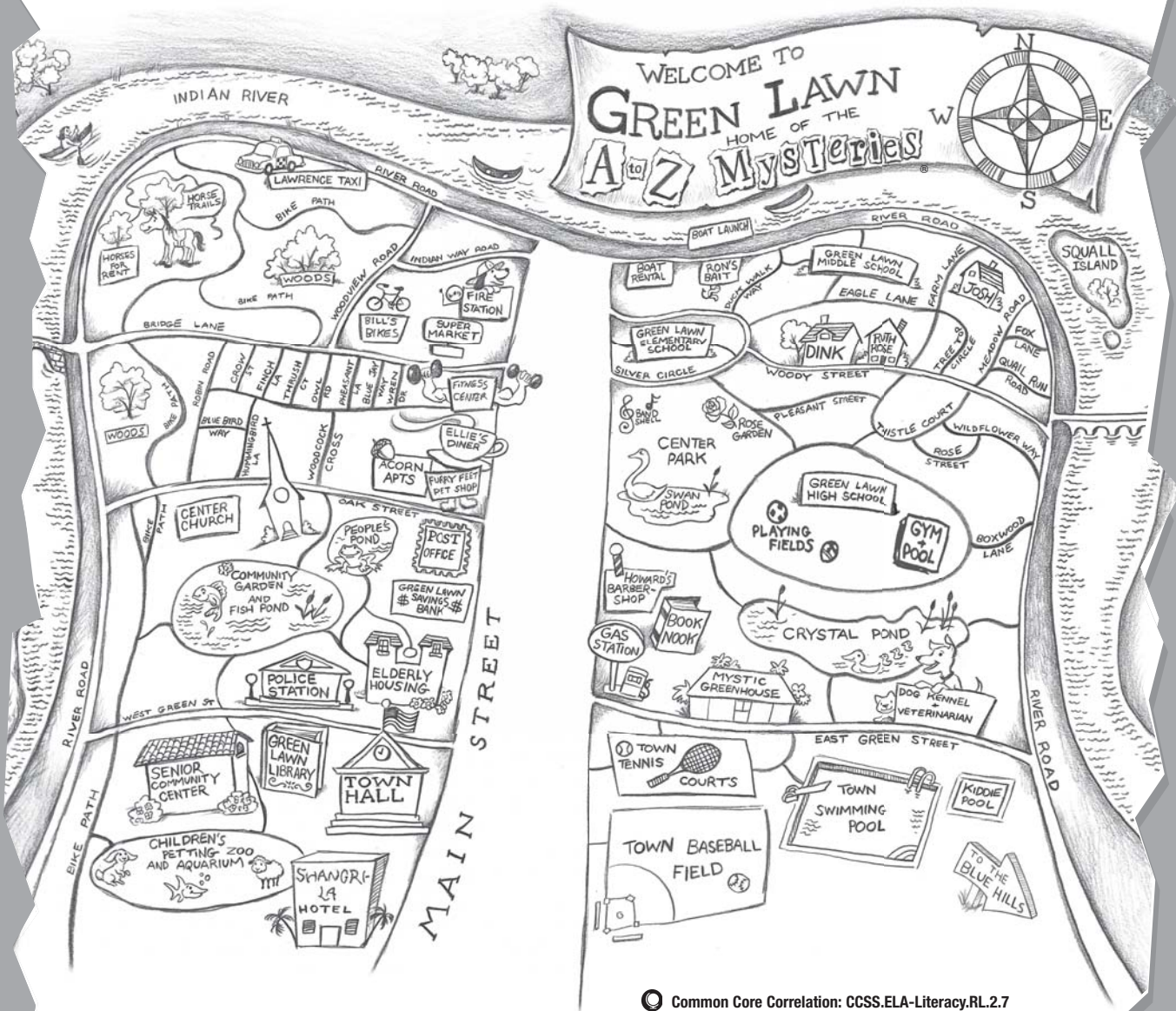


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by Ron Roy



Name: \_\_\_\_\_



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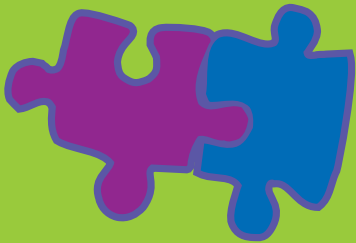
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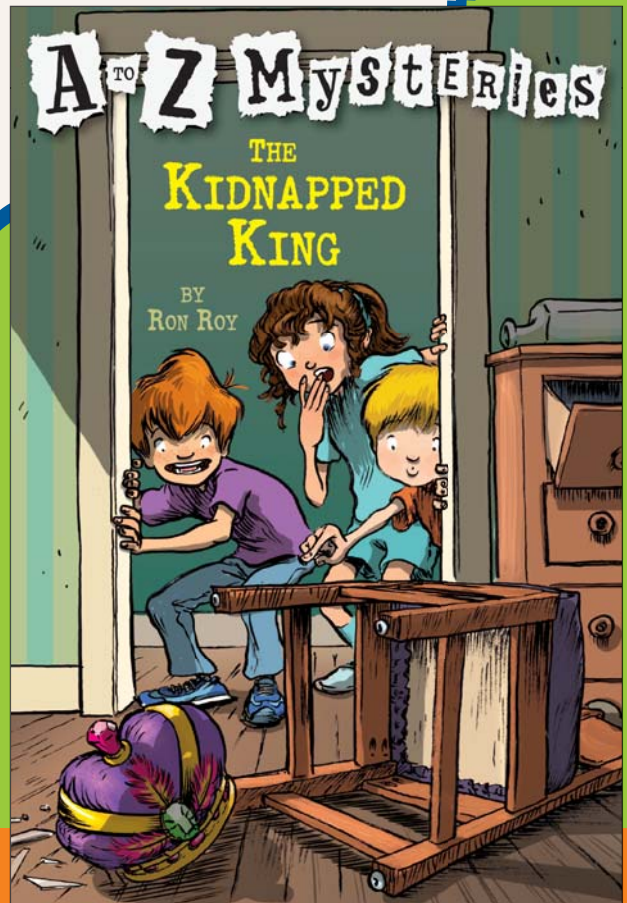
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# KK



## The Kidnapped King

PB: 978-0-679-89459-9  
EL: 978-0-307-53564-1



# A TO Z MYSTERIES®



## Character Analysis

The development of characters in a mystery is paramount. Using a Venn diagram, students should record things they discover about the main characters as they read the series. In most beginning reader series, the author does a wonderful job of making the characters familiar in each book, and A to Z Mysteries is no exception.

**Venn Diagram:** Using the Venn diagram provided on page 12, have students choose two of the three main characters (Dink, Ruth Rose, and Josh) to compare and contrast. Brainstorm common characteristics in the overlapping center section of the Venn diagram first. For example, Dink and Ruth Rose live on the same street. Next, brainstorm characteristics that are different about each character and write them in the outer sections.

Common Core Correlation: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.9



## Pre-Writing—Making Your Own Characterization

Discuss with students how authors describe characters in a story in the following ways:

- What they look like
- What they do
- What they like
- What other characters say and think about them

Ask students to think about Dink, Josh, and Ruth Rose and discuss traits they know about each of the characters. Then ask students to think about writing their own mysteries. Ask them to think about the characters they would want in their own stories. Encourage students to think about how they look and how they behave.

Common Core Correlation: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.3

## Pre-Writing—Creating Your Characters

Discuss the writing process and note there's planning that needs to be done before a story is written—pre-writing exercises such as creating your characters, establishing the setting, making a plot, and choosing an ending. Using the enclosed Create Your Own Characters reproducible, have your students create the characters for their own mysteries.



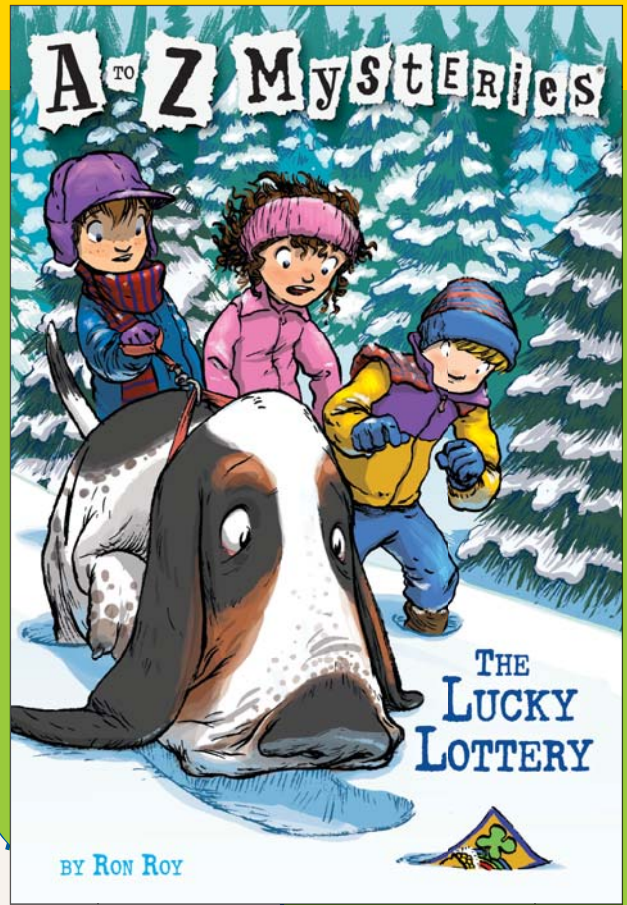
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Teaching ideas provided by Jamay Johnson, second-grade teacher, and Melinda Murphy, media specialist, Reed Elementary School, Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District, Houston, Texas.

# The Lucky Lottery

PB: 978-0-679-89460-5  
EL: 978-0-307-53794-2



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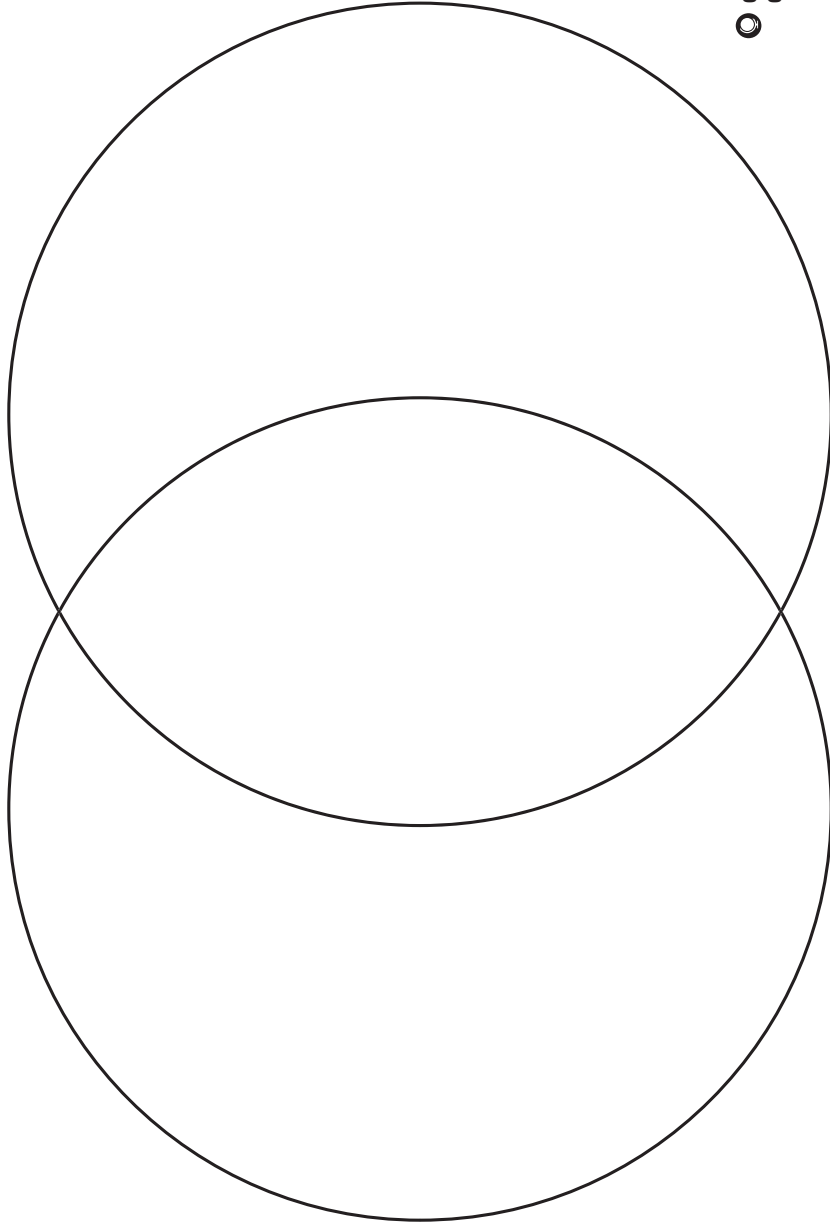


# A TO Z MYSTERIES<sup>®</sup>

by Ron Roy



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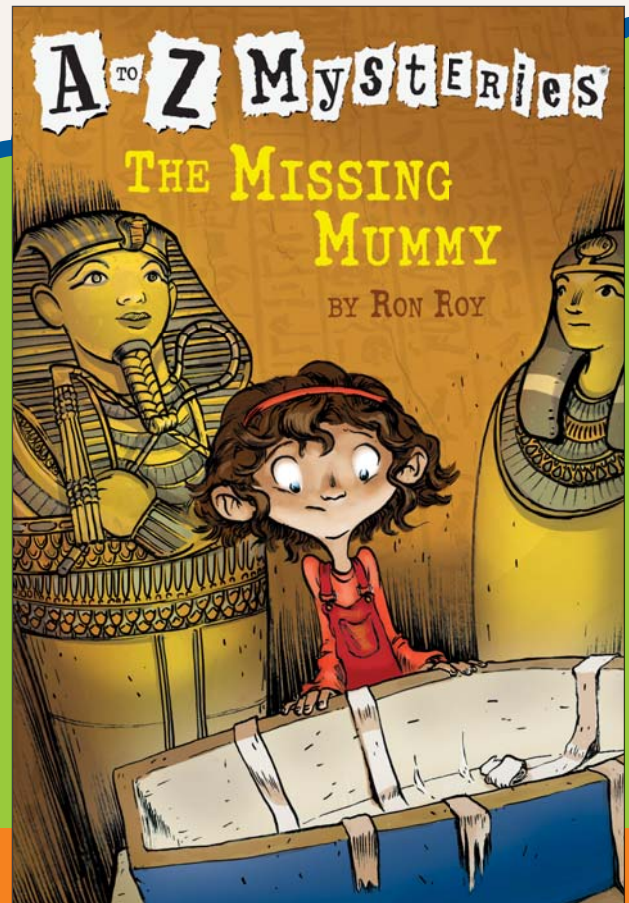
# M m

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## The Missing Mummy

PB: 978-0-375-80268-3  
GLB: 978-0-375-90268-0  
EL: 978-0-307-53846-8



# A TO Z MYSTERIES<sup>®</sup>

by Ron Roy



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Getting to Know the Characters

You have gotten to know Dink, Josh, and Ruth Rose very well after reading several of the A to Z Mysteries. Write down some things you know about each of these characters and then share them with the class.

Common Core Correlation: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.3

### Josh

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Dink

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Ruth Rose

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

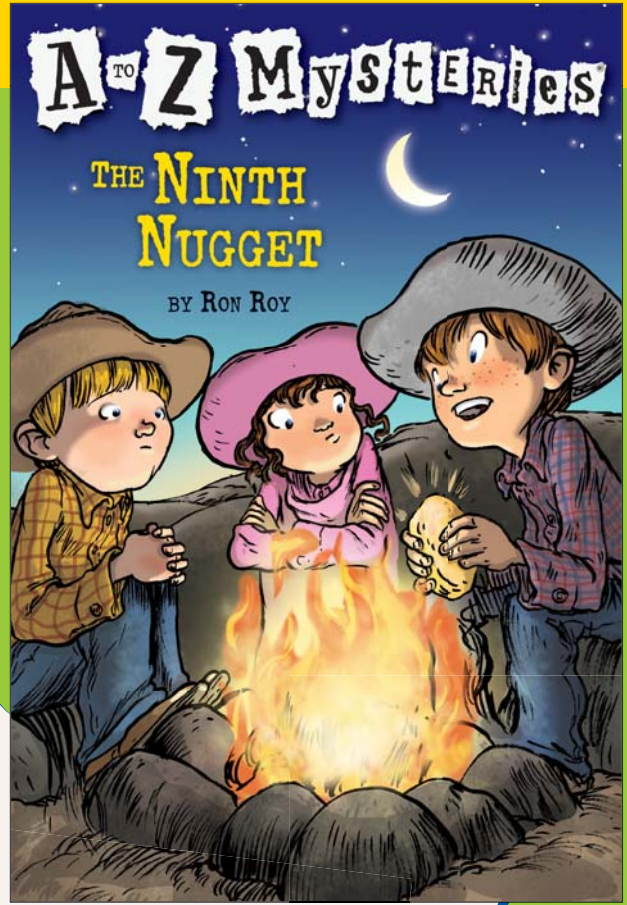
To read all the books in the A to Z Mysteries series, visit your local library or bookstore.



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# The Ninth Nugget

PB: 978-0-375-80269-0  
EL: 978-0-307-53895-6



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# A TO Z MYSTERIES<sup>®</sup>

by Ron Roy



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Create Your Own Characters

In order to write a story, you must do some pre-writing activities to plan your story. Creating your characters is the first step. Using the boxes below, make up new characters for your own mystery. Choose names and assign some interesting information to your characters.

**Character #1**

---

(Name)

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Character #2**

---

(Name)

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Character #3**

---

(Name)

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Character #4**

---

(Name)

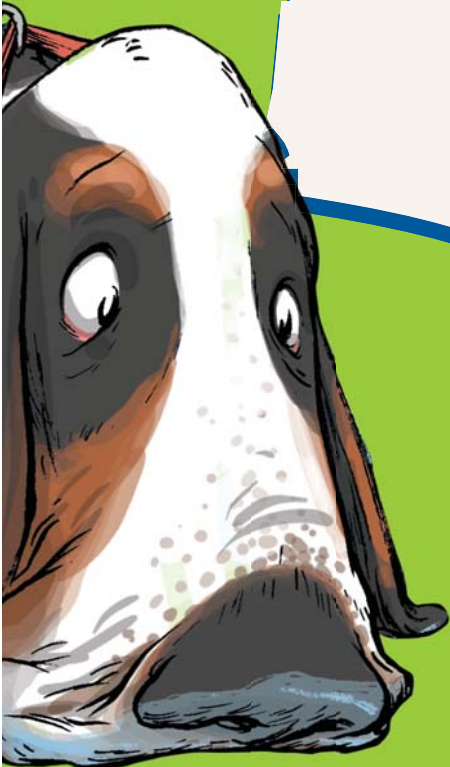
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



To read all the books in the A to Z Mysteries series, visit your local library or bookstore.

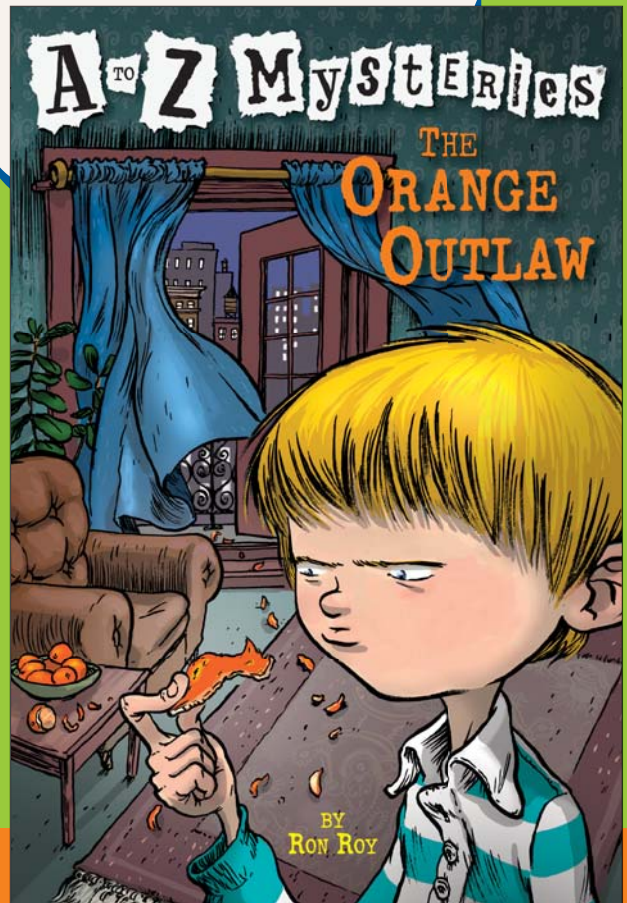
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# OO



## The Orange Outlaw

PB: 978-0-375-80270-6  
EL: 978-0-307-53938-0



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# A TO Z MYSTERIES®



## Pre-Writing—Setting

Define the setting of a story as where the story takes place—year, country, actual places, etc. Ask students to think about where they would like their story to take place. Ask them to draw a picture of the setting for their story. They should say whether it is in the past, present, or future.

## Pre-Writing—Beginning, Middle, and End

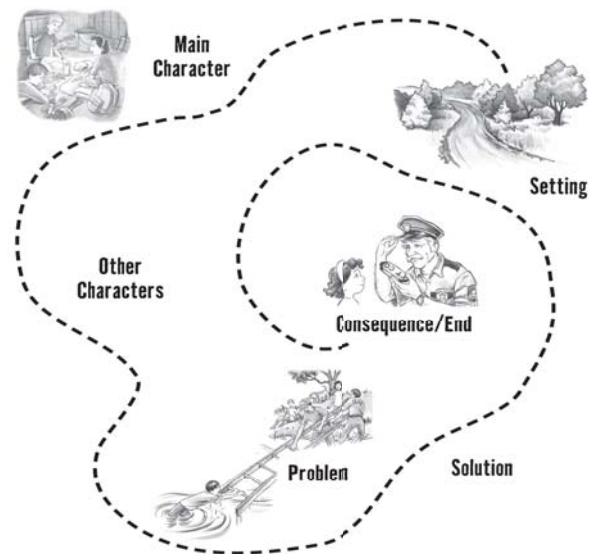
Every story has a beginning, middle, and end. Have your students start thinking about how they would like their story to begin. What is an opening line they would like to use? Show students an example on the board of a story they know well. On the chalkboard create three boxes: one box for the beginning of the story, one box for the middle, and one box for the end. Ask students to start thinking about the middle and end of their own stories.

Beginning	Middle	End
There were three little pigs. One built his house out of straw, one built his house out of sticks, and the third built his house out of bricks.	The wolf paid a visit and blew down the house of straw and the house of sticks, and then went to the third pig's house.	The wolf huffed and puffed, but could not blow down the brick house, and the third little pig outsmarted the wolf.

## Pre-Writing—Mapping a Story

Every story has certain elements that make it a story, such as the setting, main characters, other characters, plot, and resolution. After your students read one of the A to Z Mysteries, have them mark the story map on page 16 with the labeled elements.

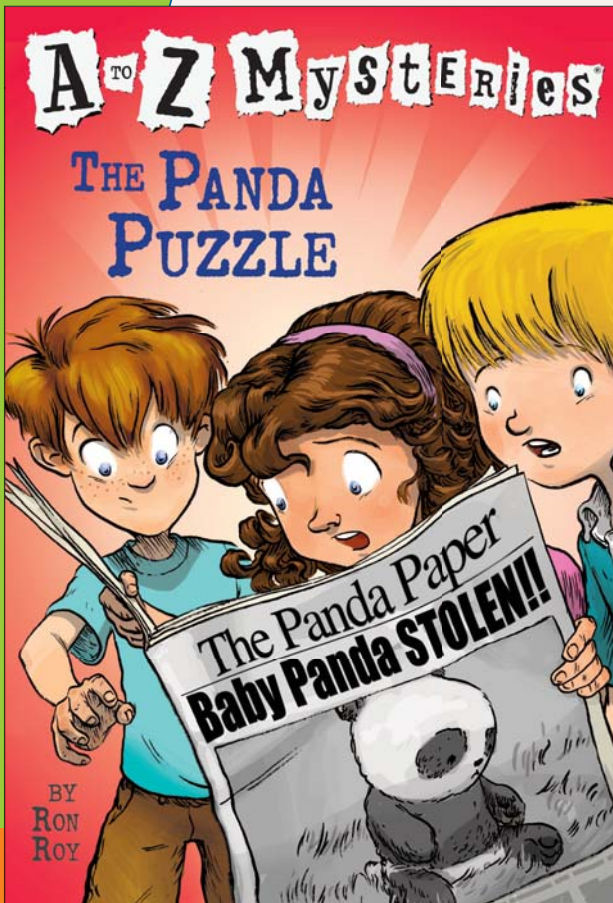
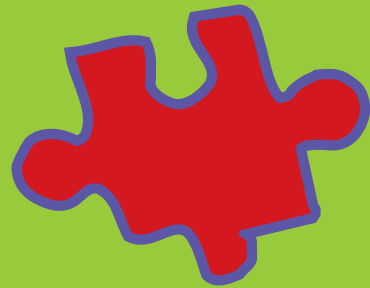
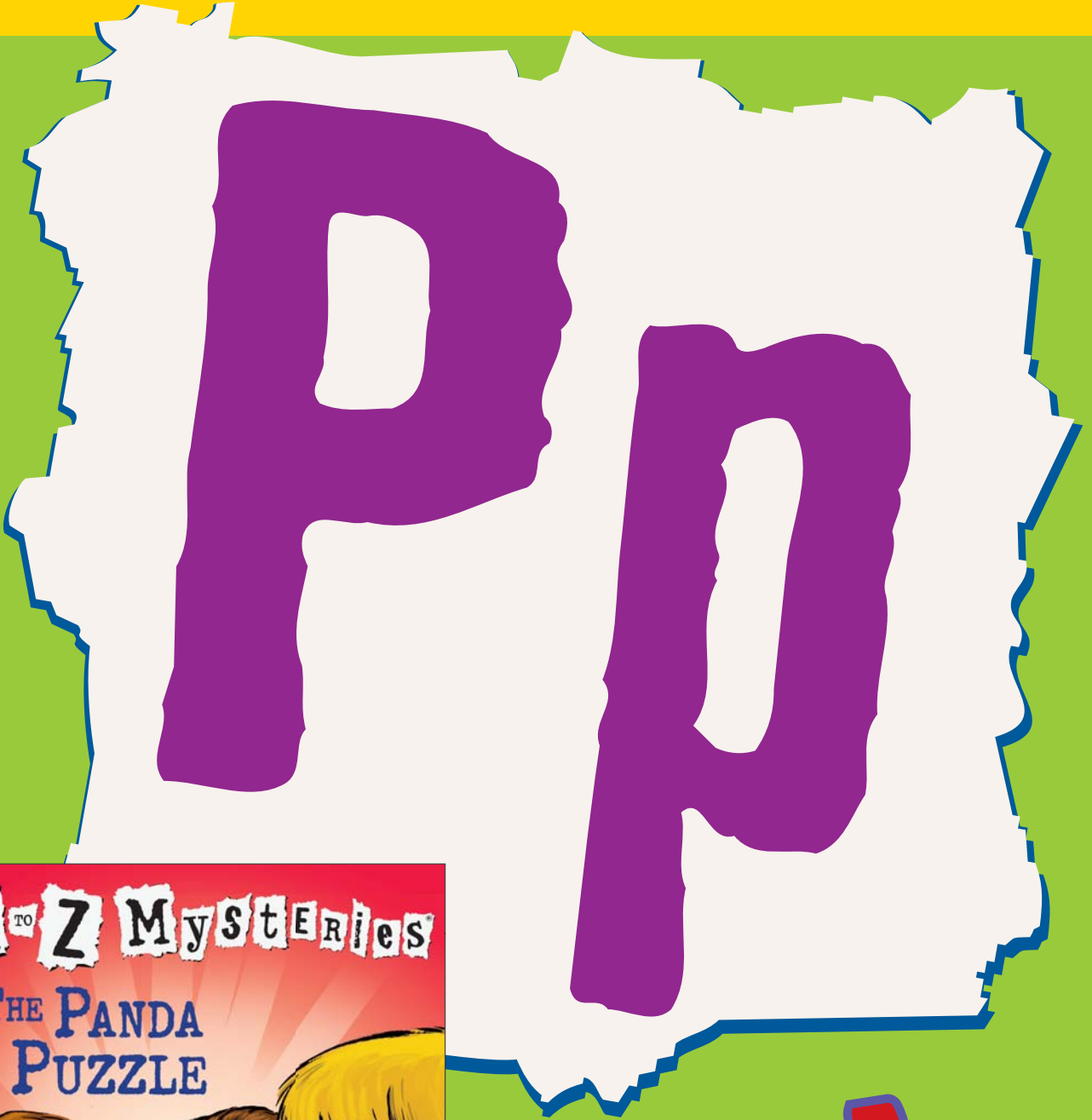
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# A TO Z MYSTERIES

by Ron Roy



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Plan Your Own Story

Plan your own story by writing your ideas on this map. It will become a path through your story and organize your ideas for writing.

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**Main Characters**



**Setting**

**Other Characters**



**Resolution**



**Problem**

**Solution**



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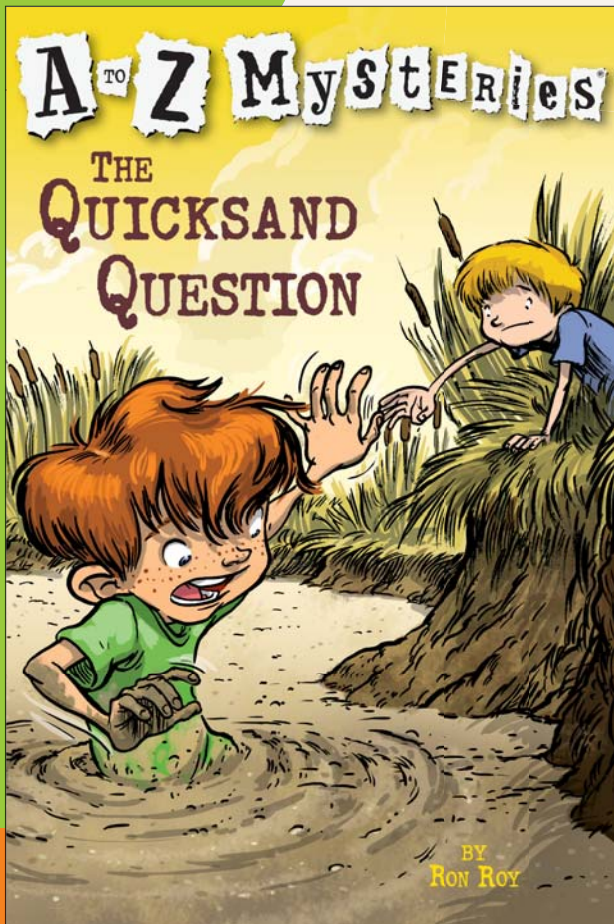
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# A TO Z MYSTERIES®



## Pre-Writing—Plot Development

The plot of a story contains:

- The setting—where and when the story takes place
- The characters—the people or creatures in the story
- The problem—the conflicts that need to be solved
- The solution—how the author solves the problem

As a class, identify the problems and solutions in one of the A to Z Mysteries. Discuss some different outcomes that could have taken place. Ask students to rewrite the ending of one of the stories. Then have them create their own plots for their own stories by brainstorming some different problems and solutions that could happen. Using the Story Problems and Solutions reproducible, have students plan the problems and solutions in their own stories.

## Pre-Writing—Conclusions

Discuss the importance of thinking of a story's ending before one begins writing. Ask students to refer to their notes to see how they planned on ending their stories. Will the ending be happy, sad, or mysterious, or will the ending involve a twist with a surprise? Using the Conclusion reproducible, have students start drafting some ideas for their ending sentence and share them with the class.

## Drafting—Writing the First Draft

Once the pre-writing mini-lessons are complete, reproduce the My First Draft reproducible and have students use their story maps to help them write the first draft of their story.



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## Revising—Making Changes to the Story

Explain that authors often need to write more than one draft to ensure a story is perfect. These revisions can take time, but are well worth the effort. When the students have their first drafts complete, go over revision steps that will help them to improve their writing. Ask students if they can:

- Add details
- Make a stronger beginning or ending sentence
- Rearrange ideas to make a story line clearer
- Delete details so the story stays on topic
- Choose a more descriptive or exciting title
- Use adjectives and adverbs to make the story more interesting

## Editing—Proofreading the Story

Explain that once authors have a good draft of their story, fine-tuning must be done, and that is where the students will need to edit their own stories or ask a friend or teacher to look them over for grammatical errors.

Have them look for ways to improve their stories by:

- Using capital letters and the correct punctuation
- Checking the spelling
- Going over the length of sentences to ensure there are no run-on sentences
- Making sure that each sentence makes sense

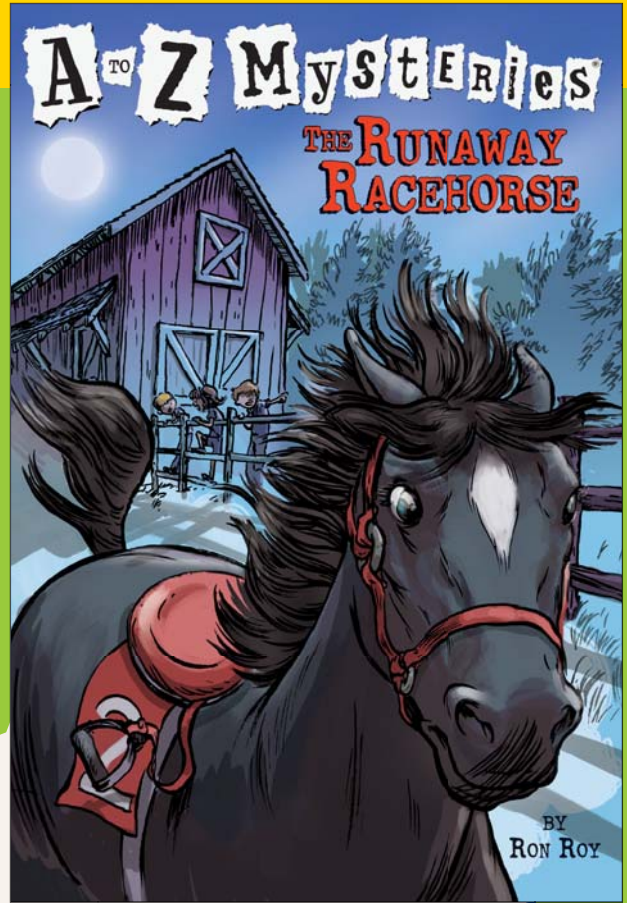
## Publishing—Producing the Final Draft of the Story

Celebrate the writing process by having your students “publish” their stories. Ask students to type their stories on the computer or rewrite their final drafts on nice paper. They can use a piece of construction paper as a cover. Use the Design Your Book Cover reproducible to help students plan the front and back covers for their books. Have the students share their books with their classmates or with students in other classes.

● Common Core Correlations: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.1.3, W.1.5, W.1.6, L.1.1.A, L.1.2.A-B

# The Runaway Racehorse

PB: 978-0-375-81367-2  
GLB: 978-0-375-91367-9  
EL: 978-0-307-54467-4



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# RH



# A TO Z MYSTERIES<sup>®</sup>

by Ron Roy



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Story Problems and Solutions

Every story has a problem—or else you wouldn't have a story! Discuss some of the problems Dink, Josh, and Ruth Rose have had in their many mysteries and how Ron Roy, the author, wrote the solutions or consequences. Create a problem for your own story and come up with a solution to resolve it.

Common Core Correlation: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.2

<b>Problem or Conflict:</b> _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
--

<b>Solution or Consequence:</b> _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
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## Conclusion

When planning a story, it is important to know how you would like it to end. Write a brief draft of how you think your story might end. Are there multiple endings you would like to try? Is it happy, sad, surprising, or mysterious? Discuss some of the ways Ron Roy ended the A to Z Mysteries, then plan an ending to your very own story.

Common Core Correlation: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.1.3

<b>Conclusion #1:</b> _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
--

<b>Conclusion #2:</b> _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
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To read all the books in the A to Z Mysteries series, visit your local library or bookstore.

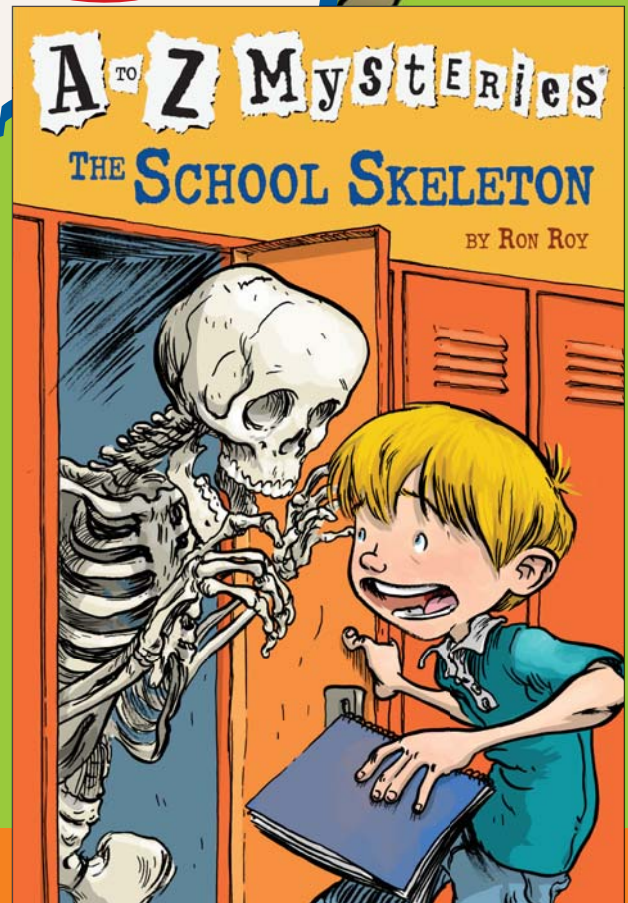
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# A TO Z MYSTERIES<sup>®</sup>

by Ron Roy



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## My First Draft

Now that you have the story map, the setting, the characters, the problems, the solution, and the ending, you are ready to write the first draft of your story! Review all the pre-writing decisions you have made and read over all of your notes, then use the lines below to help draft your very own story!

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\_\_\_\_\_ Title

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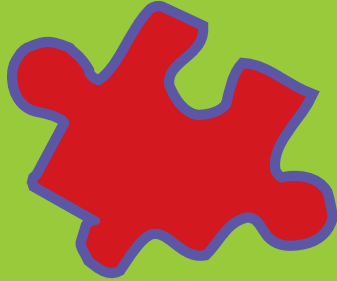
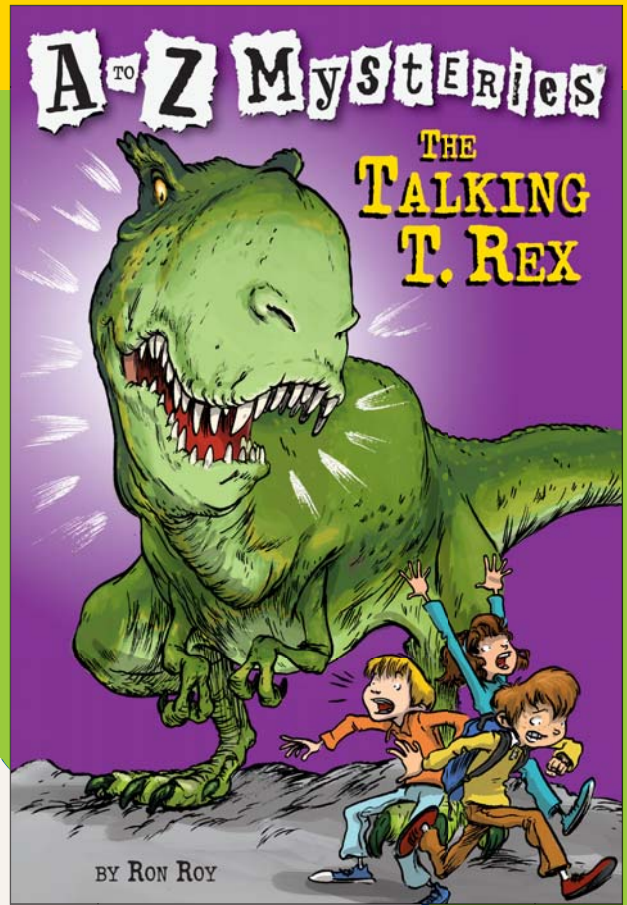
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# A TO Z MYSTERIES<sup>®</sup>

by Ron Roy



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

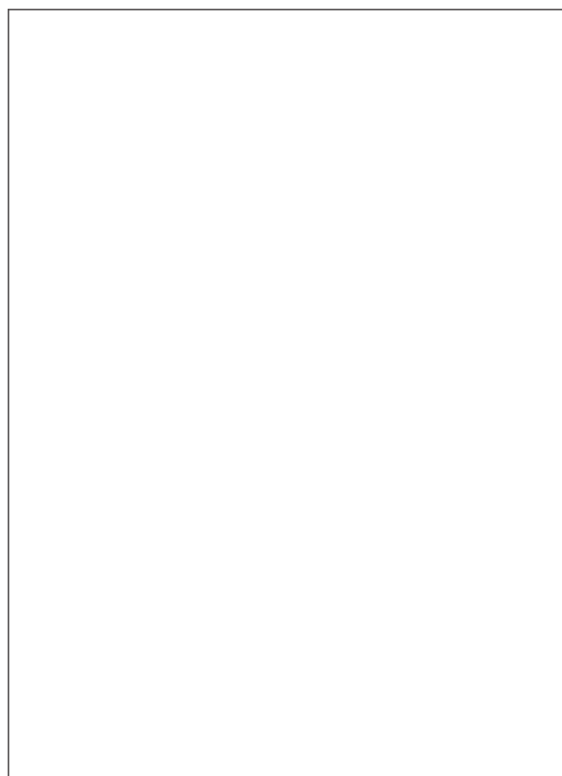
## Design Your Book Cover

Now that your story is written, design the cover for your book. Artists have to plan and do many sketches, drawings, and paintings before they get a cover just right. Make sketches of what you would like your cover to look like by using the templates below. Be sure to note the title and author name on the front cover!

### Front Cover



### Back Cover



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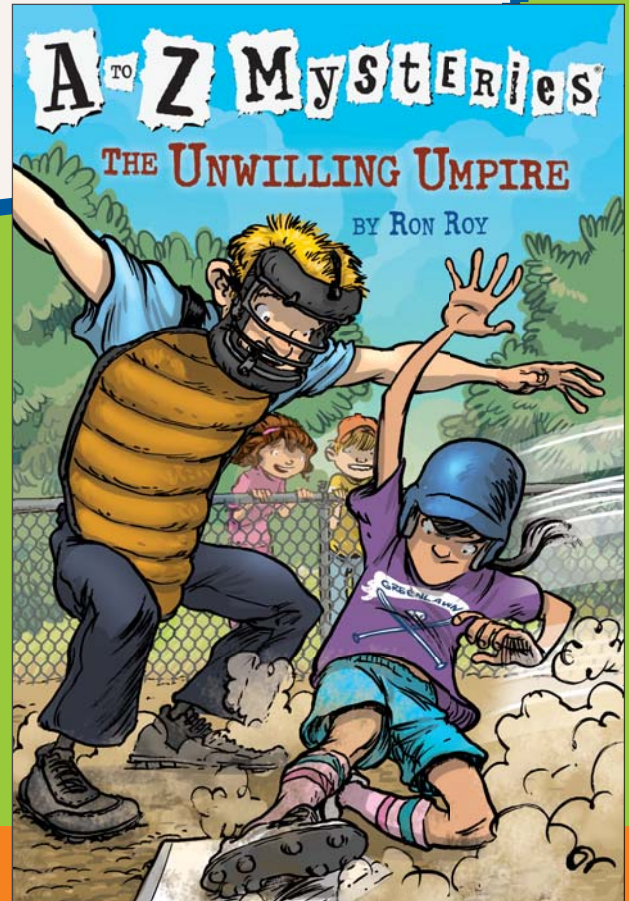
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# A TO Z MYSTERIES®

## Author Study

A to Z Mysteries are written by Ron Roy. Read other chapter books with your students—such as the Junie B. Jones and Magic Tree House series, or any Stepping Stones books or other Random House Children’s Books titles—then have your students do research on the authors to complete an author study. Ask the students to look for fun tidbits about the authors, then complete the enclosed Author Study reproducible sheet and share their findings with the class.

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Some suggestions:

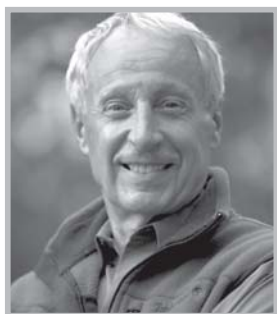


Photo © Craig Norton.

Ron Roy also writes the



and



David A. Kelly writes the



series.



Photo © Will Osborne.

Mary Pope Osborne writes the



series.

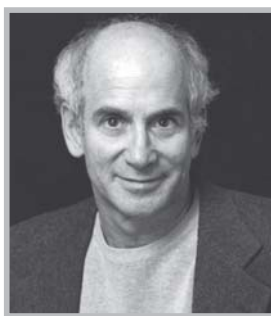


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Louis Sachar writes the



series.



Patricia and Fredrick McKissack write the



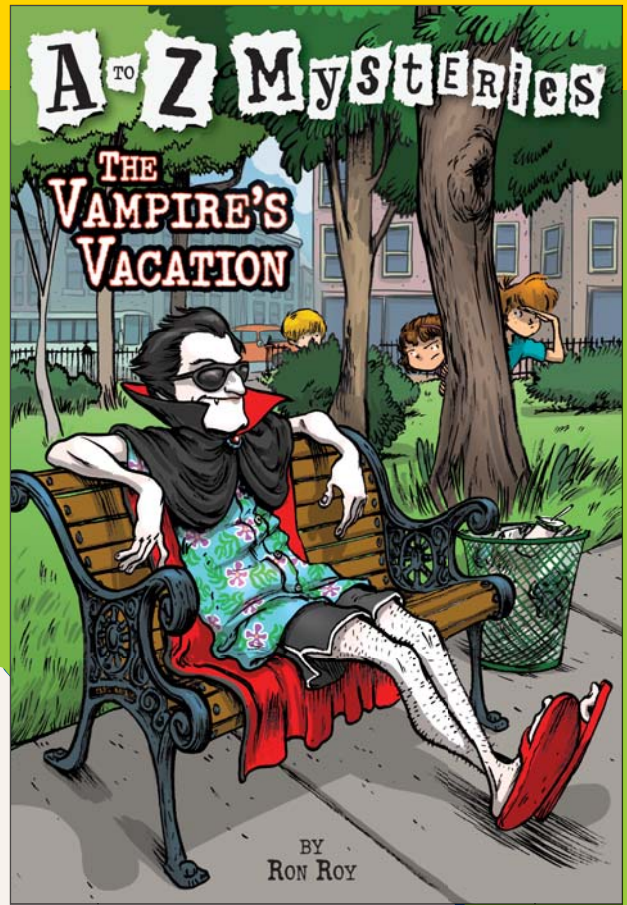
series.

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# A TO Z MYSTERIES<sup>®</sup>

by Ron Roy



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## AUTHOR STUDY

Author Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Books Written by Author:

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Place a  
picture of  
the author  
here.

### Fun Facts:

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### I Like This Author Because . . .

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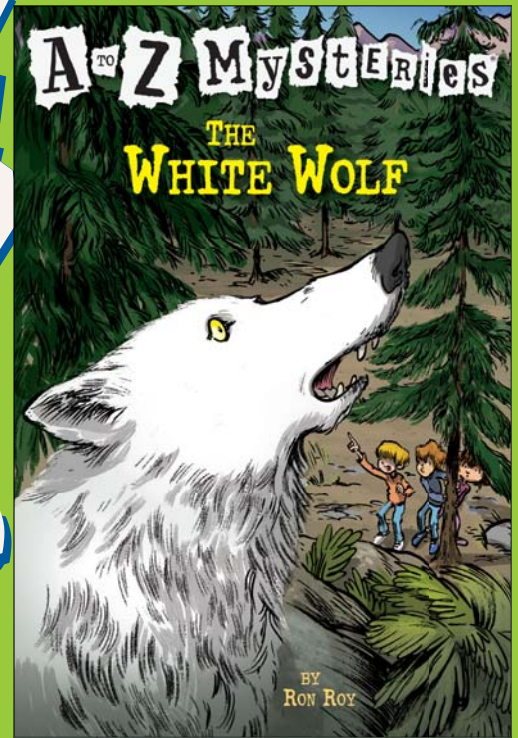
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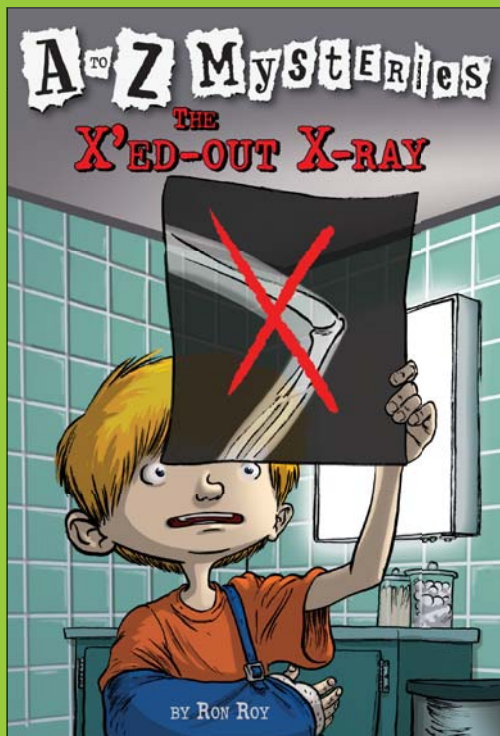
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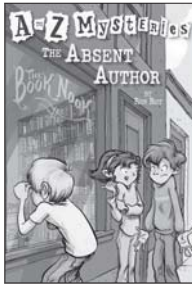
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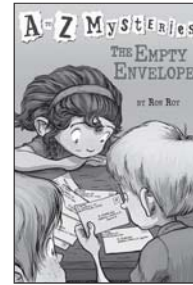
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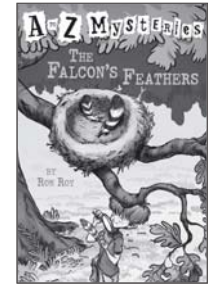
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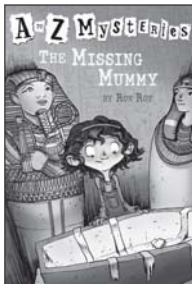
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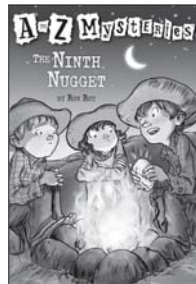
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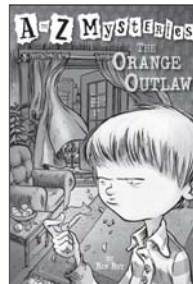
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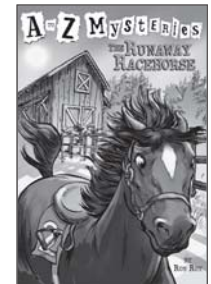
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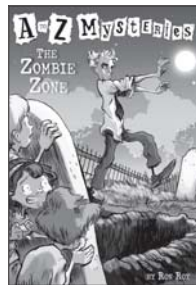
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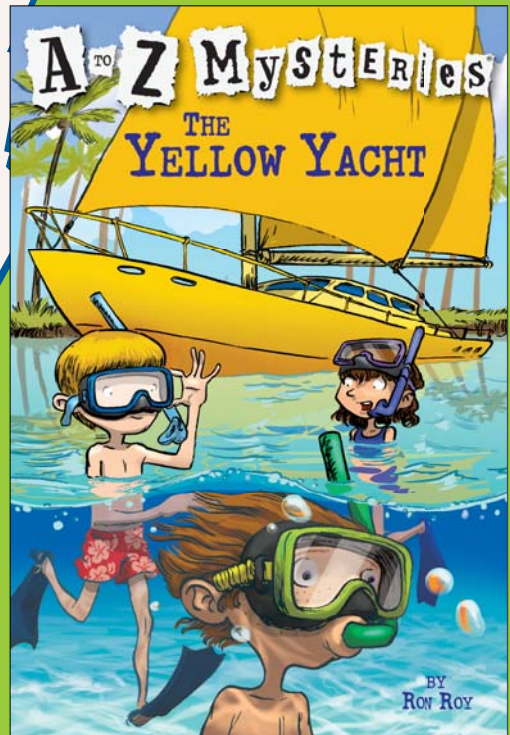


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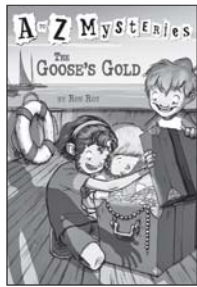
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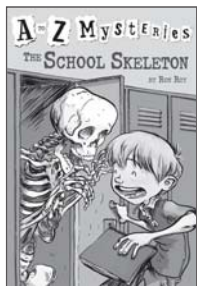
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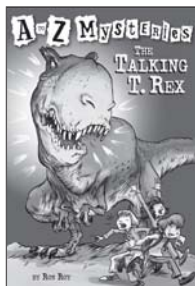
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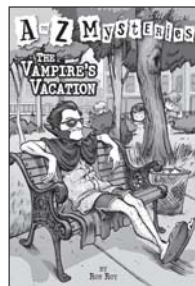
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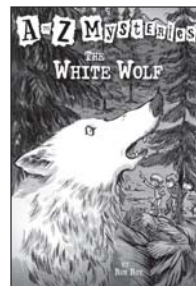
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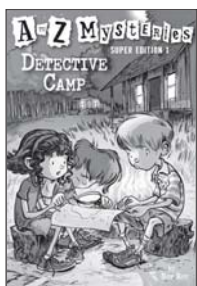


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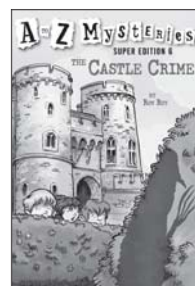
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