Math Mystery Cases

45 Detective Puzzles for Grades 3 to 5: Solve the Sums, Rule Out Suspects and Catch the Culprit, Answer Key Included

The No Job Lifestyle

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First edition.

How to Be a Math Detective

Something has gone wrong at school, and you are the detective. Each case shows a table of suspects with their hat color, snack, locker number, height and step count.

Each clue has a math problem in it. Work out the answer in the box first, then use the clue to cross out every suspect who does not fit.

"More than 83" means 84 or higher, and "less than 83" means 82 or lower.

When you have used every clue, only one suspect is left: that is the culprit! Every case was checked by computer, so there is always exactly one answer.

The book starts with Grade 3 cases, then Grade 4, then Grade 5. The answer key at the back gives every math answer and the culprit.

Grade 3 Cases

Adding, subtracting and times tables

CASE 1 | GRADE 3

The Case of The Class Hamster's Treat Jar

Oh no! This morning the class hamster's treat jar went missing from the science room. 10 students were nearby. Use the clues on the next page to find the culprit.

#	Name	Hat	Snack	Locker	Height	Steps
1	Cora	yellow	pretzels	62	148 cm	908
2	Pia	purple	apples	42	151 cm	656
3	Omar	red	carrots	25	143 cm	241
4	Mia	yellow	grapes	10	144 cm	386
5	Finn	red	pretzels	37	139 cm	252
6	Max	blue	pretzels	85	136 cm	914
7	Remy	red	cookies	41	151 cm	768
8	Quinn	green	carrots	41	119 cm	378
9	Ezra	green	cookies	91	126 cm	905
10	Jade	green	apples	92	149 cm	272

CASE 1 CLUES

1. The culprit's locker number is less than the answer to 39 + 39.

Work it out: 39 + 39 = _____

2. The culprit did not bring carrots for snack.

3. The culprit's locker number is more than the answer to 152 − 141.

Work it out: 152 − 141 = _____

4. The culprit's step count today is less than the answer to 835 − 48.

Work it out: 835 − 48 = _____

5. The culprit's step count today is less than the answer to 585 + 143.

Work it out: 585 + 143 = _____

6. The culprit's step count today is less than the answer to 596 − 224.

Work it out: 596 − 224 = _____

The culprit is: _____

CASE 2 | GRADE 3

The Case of The Last Cupcake

Oh no! This morning the last cupcake vanished from the teachers' lounge. 10 students were nearby. Use the clues on the next page to find the culprit.

#	Name	Hat	Snack	Locker	Height	Steps
1	Kai	purple	apples	61	135 cm	801
2	Liam	purple	carrots	63	146 cm	605
3	Quinn	purple	crackers	55	145 cm	646
4	Nia	yellow	cookies	33	134 cm	707
5	Jade	green	carrots	38	143 cm	761
6	Remy	purple	carrots	35	122 cm	613
7	Uma	purple	pretzels	71	118 cm	729
8	Isla	blue	cookies	18	121 cm	615
9	Max	green	apples	22	120 cm	489
10	Bea	yellow	apples	86	131 cm	783

CASE 2 CLUES

1. The culprit's height is less than the answer to 465 − 327.

Work it out: 465 − 327 = _____

2. The culprit's locker number is more than the answer to 8 + 14.

Work it out: 8 + 14 = _____

3. The culprit's height is not the answer to 35 + 83.

Work it out: 35 + 83 = _____

4. The culprit's step count today is more than the answer to 231 + 411.

Work it out: 231 + 411 = _____

5. The culprit's locker number is more than the answer to 73 − 26.

Work it out: 73 − 26 = _____

6. The culprit's locker number is less than the answer to 7 × 10.

Work it out: 7 × 10 = _____

The culprit is: _____

CASE 3 | GRADE 3

The Case of The Gold Star Stickers

Oh no! This morning the gold star stickers disappeared from the art cupboard. 10 students were nearby. Use the clues on the next page to find the culprit.

#	Name	Hat	Snack	Locker	Height	Steps
1	Zoe	yellow	pretzels	57	142 cm	956
2	Mia	purple	apples	55	120 cm	944
3	Kira	yellow	grapes	60	146 cm	483
4	Pia	purple	pretzels	25	138 cm	402
5	Faye	blue	apples	17	145 cm	909
6	Nora	yellow	cookies	84	149 cm	530
7	Isla	yellow	apples	70	119 cm	368
8	Ezra	red	pretzels	47	147 cm	839
9	Maya	purple	apples	34	151 cm	160
10	Kai	red	grapes	24	139 cm	742

CASE 3 CLUES

1. The culprit's step count today is more than the answer to 567 − 137.

Work it out: 567 − 137 = _____

2. The culprit's height is more than the answer to 32 + 108.

Work it out: 32 + 108 = _____

3. The culprit's height is less than the answer to 428 − 279.

Work it out: 428 − 279 = _____

4. The culprit's locker number is not the answer to 269 − 252.

Work it out: 269 − 252 = _____

5. The culprit's height is more than the answer to 98 + 45.

Work it out: 98 + 45 = _____

6. The culprit's locker number is more than the answer to 8 × 6.

Work it out: 8 × 6 = _____

The culprit is: _____