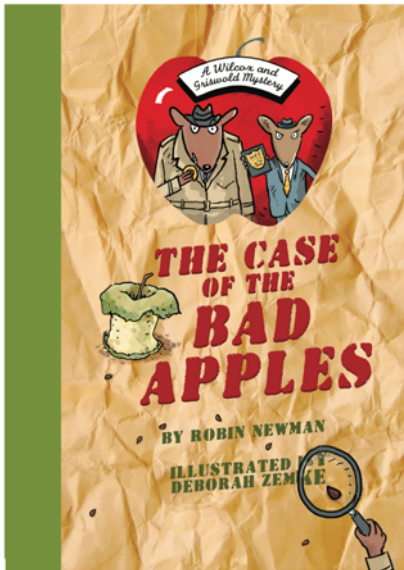


# A Curriculum Guide for Educators & Readers



Discussion points, activities, and writing prompts to help educators use *A Wilcox and Griswold Mystery: The Case of the Bad Apples* as a classroom read-aloud or as a selection for independent reading. Great for book clubs, too!

## About the Author

Raised in New York City (a/k/a the Big Apple) and Paris, **Robin Newman** was a practicing attorney and legal editor, but she now prefers to write about witches, mice, pigs, and peacocks. She lives in New York with her husband, son, two English Cocker Spaniels, and one French Bulldog. Visit her at [www.robinnewmanbooks.com](http://www.robinnewmanbooks.com).



## About the Illustrator

**Deborah Zemke** puts words and pictures together in unexpected and lively ways. The author and illustrator of more than fifty children's books and a frequent contributor to *Ranger Rick* magazine, she lives in Columbia, Missouri. Visit her at [www.deborahzemke.com](http://www.deborahzemke.com).



This guide was created by Marcie Colleen, a former teacher with a BA in English Education from Oswego State and a MA in Educational Theater from NYU. Marcie can often be found writing books of her own at home in San Diego, California. Visit her at [www.thisismarciecolleen.com](http://www.thisismarciecolleen.com).

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## Common Core Aligned for Grades 1-3

1<sup>st</sup> grade: ELA.RL.1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.6, 1.7, 1.9, 1.10, ELA.SL.1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5

2<sup>nd</sup> grade: ELA.RL.2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, ELA.SL.2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4

3<sup>rd</sup> grade: ELA.RL.3.1, 3.3, ELA.SL.3.1, 3.3, 3.4

### Before You Read...

1. Take a close look at the cover illustration of *A Wilcox and Griswold Mystery: The Case of the Bad Apples*. Can you predict what this book is about? What about when and where it takes place? What from the cover supports your prediction?
2. Read the prologue text. What do you learn about the story from this blurb? What questions does it raise about the story?
3. Read the chapter titles. Do the titles give any further information regarding what the book might be about?
4. Using all of this information, can you make any predictions about what might happen in the book?



### Vocab Detectives

*The Case of the Bad Apples* contains many “detective-related” words which may be new for students. Encourage them to use context clues from both the text and illustrations to infer their meanings.

investigate	anonymous	attempted	inspected
crime scene	headquarters	suspects	“the third degree”
database	scrounging	scoured	banned
“positive ID”	calculations	facts	

### Additional Exploration:

- While they read, ask students to look carefully for words they do not know. As soon as they come across a new vocabulary word, they should jot it down.

- Look up the unknown word in the dictionary. (Depending on the level of your students, a student volunteer can do this or the teacher can.) Read the definition.
- Students will notice that Captain Griswold does not say one word throughout the entire book (and the series). Detective Wilcox is able to understand what the captain says through his “looks” and “gestures.” Similarly, students can come up with a way to remember what a word means by Using Total Physical Response. Students can create an action or gesture to symbolize the meaning of a word and subsequently remember it. Some examples might include: thinking = pointing to one’s head; listening = holding a hand to one’s ear; confusing = scratching one’s head.



### The Recipe for a Mystery

Like other genres, mysteries contain some special story elements. As your students read through *The Case of the Bad Apples*, instruct them to look for these key mystery ingredients.

- Characters:
  - Detectives ~ characters trying to solve the mystery
  - Witnesses ~ characters who saw the crime being committed
  - Suspects ~ characters who may have committed the crime

When reading a mystery, keeping track of suspects can help students better solve the crime. As they read through *The Case of the Bad Apples*, students should record information regarding each of the suspects.

Suspect's Name	Evidence FOR Suspect's guilt	Evidence AGAINST Suspect's guilt	Alibis	"Detective's Hunch"*	Check this box if the character is no longer a suspect

\* "Detective's Hunch"—Do you feel in your gut this character is guilty or innocent? Why or why not?

- **Setting:**
  - The location where the mystery takes place
  - The time of day/month/year the mystery takes place
- **Plot:** Mysteries include one of the following:
  - a problem that needs to be solved
  - something that is lost or missing
  - a crime that has been committed



Using a table, such as the one below, students can track the parts of *The Case of the Bad Apples*, including suspects and clues, either individually or as a class.

<b>Beginning</b>	<b>Middle</b>	<b>End</b>
<p>Introduction of characters:</p>   <p>Enter problem/conflict:</p>	<p>Detectives investigate clues and interrogate suspects.</p> <p>Suspects:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> </ol> <p>Clues:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> </ol> <p>Finally...</p>	<p>The mystery is solved. How?</p>

### Making Connections:

Detectives, and readers of mysteries, need to have a keen eye for details and a good memory. Here is an activity to develop observational skills.

THE MYSTERY VISITOR: Have someone unannounced (a teacher or a student from a different class) come into your classroom while students are working quietly on a task at their desks. Plan with the mystery visitor ahead of time to make sure he or she does several things in your class during his or her brief visit such as:

- Borrow something like a book, a craft supply, money, etc.
- Talk to a student in the class
- Give a note to the teacher
- Ask a question
- Set something down on a table

After the visitor leaves the room, have the students write down as many details as they can remember about the visit.

- What details do they recall? What was the visitor wearing? How long was the visitor in the room? What did the visitor borrow while in the room? Whom did he or she talk to? What did he or she say?


Once everyone has finished writing, ask students to share their observations. Compare notes. What are the similarities and differences between student reports?






**Fight Food Crime! Join Captain Griswold and Detective Wilcox on the Missing Food Investigator team!**

Make your own MFI badge and help sniff out the crummy thieves who steal food on Ed's Farm. Print this sheet out on cardstock or paper.




M·F·I



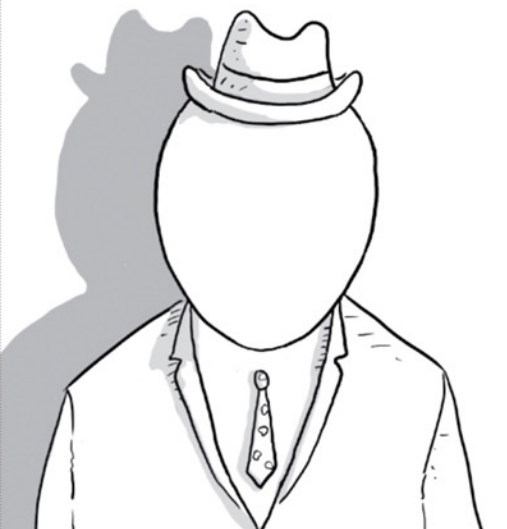
*Captain* \_\_\_\_\_

1. Captain or Detective? You decide. Draw your face on one of these two badges.
2. Sign your name.
3. Color the badge and ID.
4. Cut along the solid line.
5. Fold along the dotted line.
6. Glue your badge together.

Make the second badge for a friend or make up your own hardboiled detective.



M·F·I



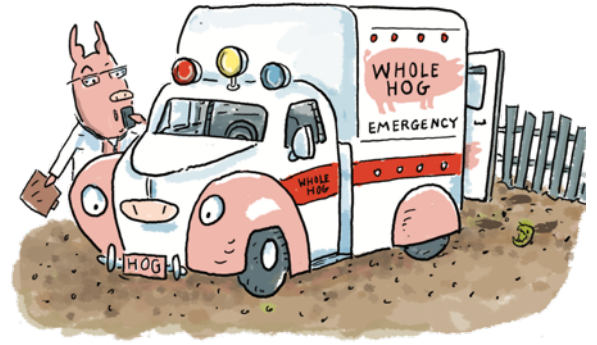
*Detective* \_\_\_\_\_



You can solve **The Case of the Missing Carrot Cake** by Robin Newman, illustrated by Deborah Zemke, a mouthwatering Wilcox and Griswold Mystery published by Creston Books.

## Chapter 1—Case File #92959: The Bad Apples

1. What causes Dr. Alberta Einswine to contact the detectives at the MFI?
2. Why does Porcini's situation seem suspicious to Dr. Einswine? Describe the situation in your own words.
3. Make a list of the case details provided by Dr. Einswine. Of those details, what sounds like a possible clue? Why?
4. If you were a member of the MFI, how would you start your investigation?



### Making Connections:

Author, Robin Newman, skillfully uses word play and figurative language (e.g., similes, metaphors, onomatopoeia, hyperbole, and idioms) throughout *The Case of the Bad Apples*. The result is a funny, delightful, and well-crafted story.

Example:

"Then he got sick as a dog. Thing is he's not a dog." (simile)

"I went hog wild and made a pig of myself." (metaphor)

"Bonk! An apple almost hit the captain on the head." (onomatopoeia)

"Porcini turned lime green, his knees buckled..." (hyperbole)

"He wolfed down most of the apples—cores, seeds, and part of the basket, too!" (idioms)

Read through *The Case of the Bad Apples* again. In each chapter, can you identify the different types of figurative language used? How is figurative language used to enhance the text?

Then, try your hand at creating your own similes, metaphors, onomatopoeia, hyperbole, and idioms.

## Chapter 2—The Crime Scene

1. What happened, according to Porcini?
2. What are some of the questions that the detectives ask Porcini? Give us the facts and just the facts.
3. What happened recently that Porcini says made everyone mad at him?
4. Whom does Porcini name as possible suspects? Why are they suspects?
5. What are some observations that Wilcox and Griswold make about the basket and apples from the crime scene?
6. What evidence do Wilcox and Griswold collect at the crime scene?

### Dusting for Fingerprints

**Dactyloscopy** [dak-tuh-**los**-kuh-pee] is the study of fingerprints. Fingerprints are made of a series of ridges and grooves on the surface of a finger; the loops, twists, and arches formed by those ridges and grooves generally follow a number of distinct patterns. The police, detectives, and FBI use fingerprints to investigate crime scenes. (Source: SAG-AFTRA Foundation Storyline Online, Teacher's Guide for *The Case of the Missing Carrot Cake*).

Press a sticky or oily finger on the side of a drinking glass or other hard surface. Then cover the fingerprint with a dusting of cocoa powder (or talcum powder if the surface is dark). Brush the cocoa gently away with a soft paintbrush, the fingerprint will remain. Place the sticky side of tape on the dusted fingerprint. Lift the tape and place on light colored construction paper. The fingerprint should remain intact and visible.

## Chapter 3—Suspects and Clues

1. Be sure to carefully record all evidence, clues, and suspects, using the chart in **Recipe for a Mystery** in the Before You Read section, before moving on to help solve the mystery. Can you predict who the thief is?
2. Who is the first suspect questioned by Wilcox and Griswold? Why do you think they chose to question this individual first?
3. Why does Sweet Pea's squeaky, clean pen appear suspicious?
4. Herman is the second suspect questioned. He had a beef with Porcini. What was that about? What do you think Wilcox and Griswold expected to find in Herman's truck? What is a warrant? How are the detectives able to search Porcini's truck without a warrant? What kind of evidence would make Herman appear guilty?

**EVIDENCE:**  
Anything that  
will help us  
crack this case.



5. Based on Herman's story of where he was the night before, write your own version of the scene. Be sure to include the dialogue and description, staying as close to Herman's account as possible, while also adding your own creativity.
6. Do you think Hot Dog is guilty of poisoning Porcini? Why or why not?
7. All three suspects have a solid alibi. Be sure to record all three alibis in your detective notebook.
8. If you were Wilcox and Griswold, what would you do next?

### Making Connections:

It is important for detectives to listen very carefully and ask a lot of questions when investigating a crime scene. Luckily, Wilcox & Griswold have large ears that help them pay close attention to what is told to them.

Here is a fun activity to promote careful listening and questioning skills.

Set up an imaginary crime scene in which someone's lunch has gone missing. Include some crumbs, a half-eaten piece of food, fingerprints, footprints, and any other items that would be of interest.

Then, allow the student detectives to formulate their questions based on the scene. Each student is allowed only three questions, so they must choose them carefully and word them precisely.

Everyone should take careful notes while listening to the victim explain what happened. After the interview is complete, ask students to recall the information they received, in as much detail as possible.



## Chapter 4—Forensics

1. Be sure to carefully record all clues and suspects before moving on to help solve the mystery. Can you predict who the thief is?
2. Dr. Phil is a forensic scientist. What does that mean? What observations does Dr. Phil make about the evidence collected by Wilcox and Griswold from the crime scene?
3. What is the only missing piece of the puzzle that Dr. Phil was not able to solve?
4. Do you still think Sweet Pea, Herman, and Hot Dog are suspects? Why or why not?

### Captain's Log

Detectives Wilcox and Griswold need to keep careful records of each step of their investigation.

Using the timestamps throughout the book, create a time log of their day. Be sure to indicate each hour using a drawing of a clock face.

Be creative and observant. Use context clues throughout the book to fill out the log.

### Making Connections:

By examining the crime scene photographs under magnification, Dr. Phil was able to determine that the prints belonged to two different pigs, a rat, and a dog.

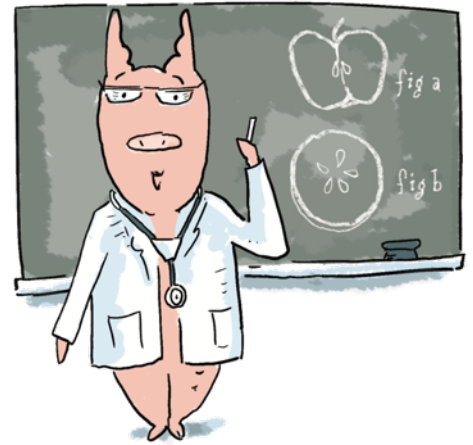
Using a washable non-toxic paint, make a footprint of one of each student's shoes. Once dry, randomly choose a footprint from the group. Pretend that this footprint was found at the scene of a crime.

Through careful investigation, the class must try to find out whose shoe print was chosen. Ask students to write down in detail what led them to their answer.



## Chapter 5—Hogs and Kisses

1. Be sure to carefully record all clues and suspects before moving on to help solve the mystery. Can you predict who the thief is?
2. The detectives tell Sweet Pea “it’s time to fess up.” Why is she accused of being the culprit who poisoned Porcini? What is the evidence against her?
3. Dr. Einswine finally reveals the results of the toxicology screen. What are the results? What made Porcini so sick?
4. Now that the case is closed, be sure to record all of the details in a “Detective Case Report.” Be as specific and thorough as possible.



### Case Closed Celebration

Solving a crime requires a lot of teamwork. In *The Case of the Bad Apples*, Dr. Einswine and Dr. Phil were instrumental in helping Detectives Wilcox and Griswold crack the case.

To celebrate a job well done create a detective-themed party that includes an apple scavenger hunt and finishes with Mollie Katzen’s super yummy Apple Pockets.

For extra fun, invite parents and caregivers!

- a. Characters (detectives, victim, suspects)
  - b. Setting (where the story takes place)
  - c. Clues (in the order they were discovered)
    - i. Cite contextual reasons for why something is considered a clue
    - ii. Who discovered the clue?
  - d. Red Herrings (clues intended to mislead or distract)
  - e. Conclusion
    - i. Who committed the crime?
    - ii. What evidence led to the solving of the crime?
5. Read the epilogue at the end of the book. *“Every day there’s a food problem on the farm. Sometimes it’s missing or lost. Sometimes it’s stolen. Sometimes it’s just applesauce.”* Write your own mystery for the MFIs using a **Recipe for a Mystery** in the Before You Read section.

## Lie Detector

Sweet Pea's behavior when she finds out Porcini was poisoned is quite suspicious. She stutters and appears nervous. "He was poi-pei-pei-soned!" said Sweet Pea. She turned pea green, her knees buckled, and she fainted." What can you learn from Sweet Pea's behavior?

How do characters behave when questioned? Do they act suspicious?

Can you tell when someone is lying? How?

When lying, people are more likely to:

- offer shorter responses
- laugh nervously
- talk really fast
- get emotional
- make more speech errors - more um's, er's ah's...
- blink often
- fidget more

Here's a short activity to help students develop the skill of catching a lie.

1. Have everyone in the classroom close their eyes.
2. While eyes are closed, place a small item into the hands of one student. This item must remain hidden.
3. Once the item is hidden, have students open their eyes.
4. A detective volunteer can begin questioning students on the whereabouts of the item:
  - Do you have the item?
  - Do you know who has the item?
  - Could you describe the item to us? What does it feel like when you hold it?
  - If you had the item, would you let us know?

When questioned, all students must answer honestly, *except* for the student who holds the item. The guilty student must lie.

The detective, and other students, must keep an eye and ear out for the lie.

5. After everyone in the class has been questioned, ask if anyone has an idea of who was lying. What are the reasons that suspect's answers led to the accusation?
6. Play can go on by changing up the detective and the thief in each round.

## After You Read...

Here are a few extension activities to further the learning and the fun!

1. Have students work together to create a newscast about the mystery to present to their classmates. Students will write a script and take on the roles of anchors and on-site reporters. Students can choose to interview suspects from the case or even eyewitnesses to the crime. Videotape the final newscasts so that students can watch themselves on TV. Students can use their completed Detective Case Reports to help them write a script.
2. Invite a local police officer or detective to talk to students about solving real cases in the community. Students should prepare questions ahead of time. Topics can include fingerprints, DNA, and other clues they collect to solve crimes.
3. Visit the FBI's Kids website (<http://www.fbi.gov/fun-games/kids/kids>) for further research. Ask students to browse the site and to find five interesting facts about the FBI that they did not know. Share those facts with the class.

