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### About the Author

Diane Hartsig earned a journalism degree from Michigan State University and an elementary education degree from Western Michigan University. She has nine years of teaching experience and is currently a fifth-grade teacher. Diane is passionate about promoting children’s acquisition and usage of language. She is the author of *Critical Thinking Detective, Vocabulary Book 1 and 2* and *Vocabulary Riddles—A - Z Catastrophes Book 1 and 2*. She lives in Dowagiac, Michigan with her husband and has three children.

## About This Book

Vocabulary is a key component of this collection of fun mysteries for Grades 5-12 and *Book 2* incorporates all-new words from *Book 1*. The vocabulary in this book was gathered from a multitude of sources including SAT/ACT word lists and the author's reading selections. The *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary* provided many of the vocabulary details including usage, look-up popularity, synonyms, and antonyms.

Each activity features between 18 and 24 vocabulary words and every one of them has the potential to implicate or exonerate a suspect. Solving the mysteries requires the reader to evaluate vocabulary words and to analyze and synthesize pieces of information. Critical thinking improves as students assess evidence found through reading comprehension and deductive and inductive thinking skills.

After solving each case, the second part of the activity gives versatility to the vocabulary words as students practice using them in a different context. Readers choose the appropriate word from the word list to complete each sentence. When the word lists contain synonyms, students have flexibility in their choices.

These activities and their vocabulary words are not easy, but don't despair. If you take the time to decipher the unknown words and reread, you'll have sharper critical thinking skills and an expanded vocabulary.

### How to Solve These Cases

- Read each activity carefully and keep in mind that all statements are true.
- Each activity establishes two to three parameters to identify the culprit. Consider the parameters as you evaluate the statements from the suspects and witnesses. Drawing a picture is helpful.
- Remember that every vocabulary word is important to solve each case. Consult a dictionary as needed for definitions and pronunciations.
- As you look up words, be aware which are synonyms and antonyms of each other.
- Make notes when you find evidence. Synthesizing more than one piece of evidence can often establish innocence or guilt.
- Use the process of elimination to narrow down each list of suspects.

Read the case below to find evidence to identify the innocent and guilty suspects. Remember, the story and suspects' statements are true.

## The Thieving Blatherskite

<sup>1</sup>Earlier this year, authorities in Fenton investigated the Thieving Blatherskite—a thief who stole an expensive dress from Fenton's Finery. <sup>2</sup>Three sales associates described the thief as a disheveled customer, whose incessant clattering caused agitation with the staff.

<sup>3</sup>The information from employees narrowed the list of culprits to the four suspects shown below. <sup>4</sup>After further questioning, one suspect confessed, and police discovered the dress among her chattels later that day.

**Sales Associate #1:** <sup>5</sup>"I have worked for the store for a long time and know the suspects well.

<sup>6</sup>Leila Haskins is notable for her badinage and Ann Peterson for her pell-mell mien. <sup>7</sup>On the day of the theft, I had an immersing conversation with Ella Madison before Petra Cummins interjected."

**Sales Associate #2:** <sup>8</sup>"My shift was just beginning when the thief stole the dress. <sup>9</sup>I overheard my peeved cohorts griping about Ann Peterson and Petra Cummins—the latter for being taciturn."

**Sales Associate #3:** <sup>10</sup>"When she's in the store, Ella Madison commandeers my attention. <sup>11</sup>I have worked exclusively with the natty customer for the past year. <sup>12</sup>She is a pertinacious but loyal customer."



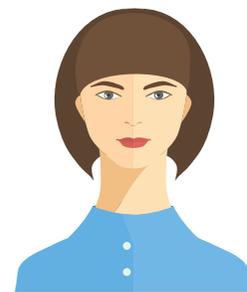
Ann Peterson



Leila Haskins



Ella Madison



Petra Cummins

Based on the evidence, circle the Thieving Blatherskite.

After solving the case, write the best vocabulary word to complete each sentence. Each word can only be used once.

mien	natty	peevled	cohorts	interject
badinage	chattels	clattering	incessantly	taciturn
finery	disheveled	immersing	pertinacious	
agitation	gripe	pell-mell	commandeered	

- The leaky faucet dripped \_\_\_\_\_ all night.
- The \_\_\_\_\_ witness was reluctant to answer questions.
- Speak louder so I can hear you over the group's \_\_\_\_\_.
- I had a/an \_\_\_\_\_ appearance after the windy walk.
- The protestors' \_\_\_\_\_ delayed the start of the project.
- During an emergency, supplies can be \_\_\_\_\_ by authorities.
- My \_\_\_\_\_ was on display during the black-tie event.
- We were in a hurry, so we packed in a/an \_\_\_\_\_ manner.
- The bedroom is too small to contain my \_\_\_\_\_.
- The conversation's flow will be smoother if you don't \_\_\_\_\_.
- The \_\_\_\_\_ in the program have similar backgrounds.
- To discourage their \_\_\_\_\_, the teacher moved the friends apart.
- The first chapter is dull, but the rest of the book is \_\_\_\_\_.
- I entered the makeover contest to improve my \_\_\_\_\_.
- In anticipation of the promotion, I invested in a/an \_\_\_\_\_ wardrobe.