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About This Book

This book offers a collection of fun, easy-to-use detective cases for Grades 3 – 12+. That is a wide grade range, but anyone who can carefully read these cases and is willing to study the evidence can solve them. They are not solved through tricky logic or advanced math concepts.

Some mysteries may be more challenging for younger students, but teachers and parents can always provide hints if absolutely needed. The cases develop critical thinking skills by requiring students to read carefully and analyze and synthesize information to guide their decision-making. The cases also develop observation skills, reading comprehension, deductive and inductive thinking skills. The ability to identify and evaluate evidence is the very heart of critical thinking.

For a more lesson-based approach to teach critical thinking, we recommend *The Basics of Critical Thinking* (Grades 4 – 9) and *Practical Critical Thinking* (Grades 9 – 12+).

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

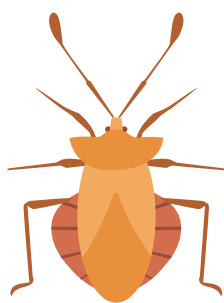
The Stinging Insect

¹On Monday, June 6, around 4 p.m., Debbie James was playing in the living room of her house when she was stung by a flying insect. ²Her two brothers, Greg and Tim, and her friend, Stephanie Boyce, were in the living room with her. ³All the children heard Debbie scream and shout that she had been stung on the arm by an insect.

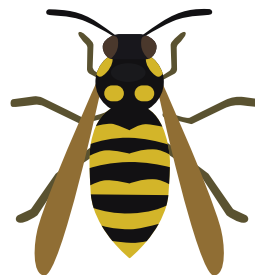
⁴Debbie and her brother, Tim, got a very good look at the stinging insect. ⁵Stephanie saw an insect fly by her after Debbie screamed, but she wasn't certain it was the bug that stung Debbie. ⁶The four children then went into the kitchen to get fly swatters, so they could kill the stinging insect that they believed was still somewhere in the living room. ⁷The children swatted away at the insects in the room and collected the four bugs below. ⁸Then they talked about what they had seen. ⁹After listening to each other, they all agreed that one of the four insects below was the stinging insect.



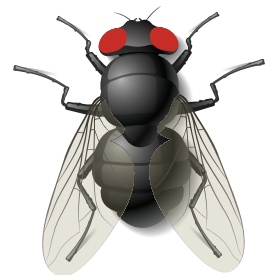
Insect A



Insect B



Insect C



Insect D

Stephanie Boyce

¹⁰The scary-looking bug with white wings flew into my face right after Debbie screamed. ¹¹I turned and watched it fly into a window after that. ¹²After looking at all four insects, I'm certain it was Insect D.

Debbie James

¹³I felt the sting and then saw an insect that had a black and either yellow or orange body fly off my arm.

Greg James

¹⁴I looked at Debbie right after I heard her scream. ¹⁵I saw an insect fly off her leg to a living room window to try to escape to the backyard. ¹⁶It was yellow or orange, but not black.

Tim James

¹⁷The insect I saw fly from where Debbie was standing had an orange and black, or yellow and black body. ¹⁸The yellow and black insect with the longest antennae was dead on the window sill before Debbie was stung.

The Innocent

Fill in the blanks, then use complete sentences and sentence numbers to describe the best evidence for your conclusions.

Sentence _____ is the best evidence that Insect C is not the stinging insect.

Sentences 13 and _____ are the best evidence that Insect B is not the stinging insect.

Sentences _____ and 17 are the best evidence that _____ is not the stinging insect.

The Stinging Insect

Sentences _____ and _____ are the best evidence that the stinging insect was black and either yellow or orange. Only Insects _____ and _____ fit this description. Sentence _____ tells us that Insect _____ was dead before Debbie was stung, so this means the stinging insect is Insect _____.