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About This Book

This book offers a collection of fun, easy-to-use detective cases for Grades 4 – 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 cases 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 suspects' statements are true.

The Headphone Thief

¹At 3 p.m. on Tuesday, police in Lakeside, Oregon, arrested one of the four suspects below for stealing an expensive set of headphones from Otto White's car. ²White had locked his headphones in his car before going into the grocery store. ³When he returned to the car 30 minutes later, his window was broken, and his headphones had been stolen. ⁴The police arrived 10 minutes after the victim discovered the theft. ⁵The police received the information below from witnesses and suspects.

⁶One witness told police that she saw a suspect, in the parking lot where White's car was parked, put some headphones in his backpack. ⁷A second witness who saw the theft said the thief had left the parking lot before White left the store. ⁸A third witness said that she saw a female suspect in a skirt walk by White's car and look in the window. ⁹A fourth witness saw someone in a sweater open White's car door. ¹⁰A fifth witness said the thief looked like a student and had a backpack or purse.

¹¹After police listened to all four suspects' statements below, the police asked to search one of the suspects, and then the suspect confessed and revealed the hidden headphones.



Sareal Strain

¹²I was in the parking lot at the time of the theft, but I don't use headphones to listen to music.



Main Freeman

¹³I know Otto White and I don't like him. ¹⁴I had fun watching the look on his face when he realized his headphones had been stolen.



Lucas Parvin

¹⁵I parked next to the victim before he entered the store. ¹⁶I wasn't around when he walked back to his car.



Rowen Colby

¹⁷White looked over at me with anger in his eyes as soon as he realized his headphones had been stolen.

The Innocent

Use complete sentences and sentence numbers to describe the best evidence for your conclusions.

_____ (suspect name)

_____ (suspect name)

_____ (suspect name)

The Headphone Thief

_____ (suspect name)
