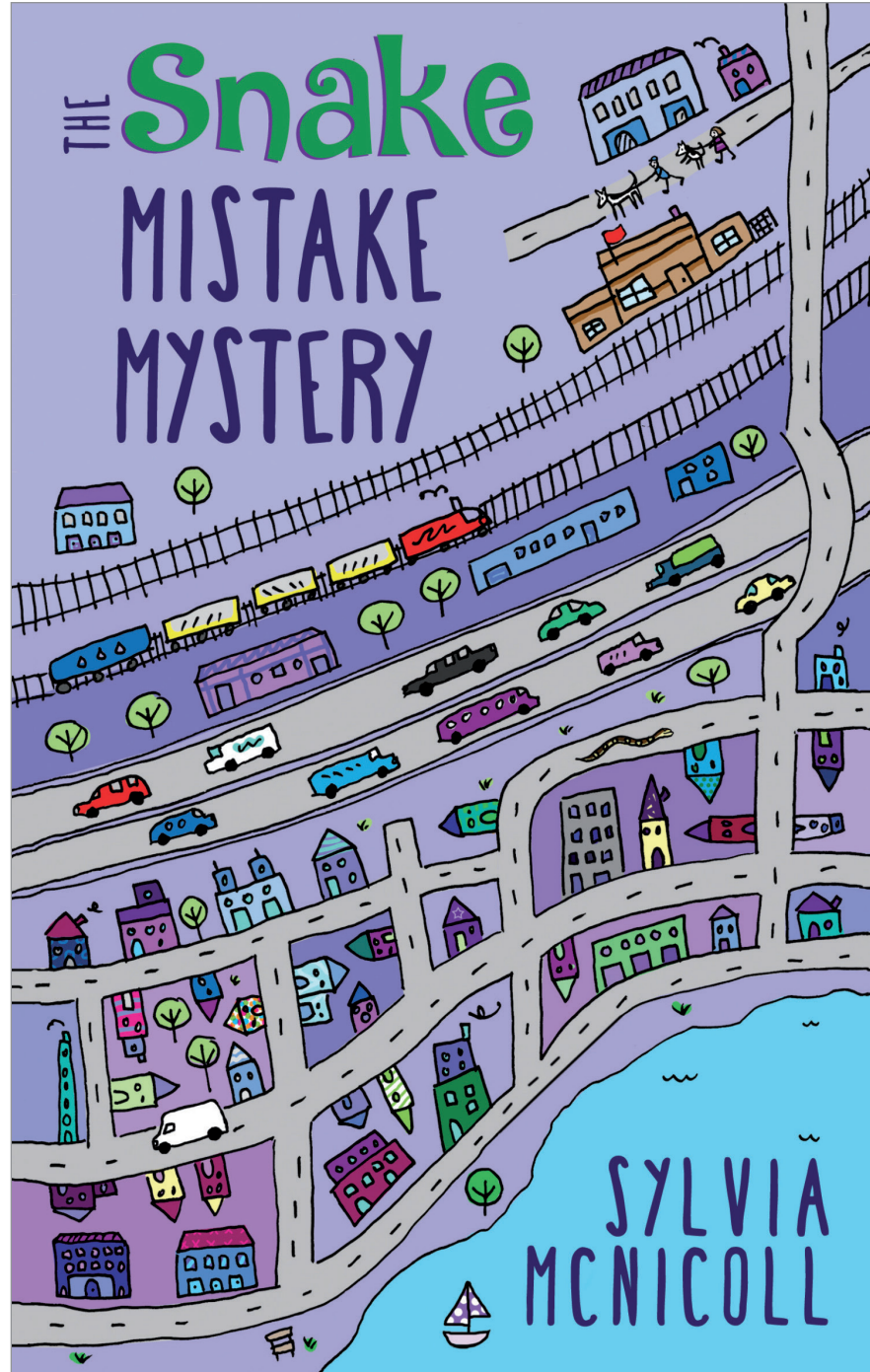


TEACHERS' GUIDE



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ISBN: 9781459744196



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This teachers' guide was made possible by the support of the Ontario Media Development Corporation.

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I. INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THE BOOK

The Snake Mistake Mystery is the third book in the Great Mistake Mysteries series by Sylvia McNicoll. As the series advances, we learn more about the main characters, but each book stands on its own. In the first book, *The Best Mistake Mystery*, the narrator, Stephen Noble, becomes friends with fellow grade seven student Renée. Stephen has a part-time job walking dogs for his father's company, Noble Dog Walking. Their friendship starts when Renée helps Stephen walk two dogs, Ping and Pong. The mystery begins when a bomb threat closes down the school for the day. The next day, Renée's brother, Attila, is questioned by the police after Attila's car is found crashed into the school building. Renée enlists Stephen's help to solve the mystery and exonerate her brother.

In the second book, *The Artsy Mistake Mystery*, Renée and Stephen team up again to solve the mystery of who is stealing outdoor art around the neighbourhood. The stolen art includes a display of painted fish in the kindergarten playground, a painted mailbox, Halloween decorations, and a garden gnome. Attila is out on bail after spray-painting a tank on Champlain High School's wall, and he is making wooden fish for the Stream of Dreams project as his community service. He is once again a suspect. Renée is determined to solve the crime and exonerate her brother.

In the third book, *The Snake Mistake Mystery*, Renée and Stephen team up for a third time to solve the mystery of who is robbing their neighbours' homes. Stolen items include a cellphone, a laptop, a ball python, and seven hundred dollars. This time, Stephen's dad is the main suspect, as all the people who have had their homes robbed are clients of Noble Dog Walking. There is also evidence once again implicating Attila, Renée's brother. Renée and Stephen worry that Attila may be the culprit.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sylvia McNicoll is the author of over thirty novels. *Bringing up Beauty*, her guide dog story, won the Silver Birch Award, launching her to international success. *Crush.Candy.Corpse* was shortlisted for the Red Maple and Arthur Ellis awards. Sylvia lives in Burlington, Ontario.

II. BEFORE READING: BUILDING SCHEMA/PRE-READING IDEAS

THINKING ABOUT MISTAKES

Before introducing *The Snake Mistake Mystery*, display the quotes about mistakes around the room. Have students read the quotes and decide which quote resonates the most with them. At your signal, have students stand in front of their chosen quote and discuss what the quote means to them. Students can either write notes on chart paper and read each other's comments later in a gallery walk or each group can take turns verbally sharing with the whole class the results of their discussion. The purpose of this activity is to get students to think about mistakes and hopefully demonstrate or develop a growth mindset.

"The only real mistake is the one from which we learn nothing."

— Henry Ford, founder of the Ford Motor Company

"You will only fail to learn if you do not learn from failing."

— Stella Adler, actor

"Experience is simply the name we give our mistakes."

— Oscar Wilde, playwright and poet

"All men make mistakes, but only wise men learn from their mistakes."

— Winston Churchill, former British Prime Minister

"It's fine to celebrate success but it is more important to heed the lessons of failure."

— Bill Gates, founder of Microsoft Corporation

"When one door closes, another opens, but we often look so long and so regretfully upon the closed door that we do not see the one which has opened for us."

— Alexander Graham Bell, scientist and inventor

III. BEFORE READING: STUDENT ACTIVITIES

OBSERVING THE FRONT COVER

Provide the worksheet Observing the Front Cover to students.

Examine the Title: *This is the third book in the series. If students have read the other books, they may notice that the word “Snake” is the only difference in the title.*

The title shines a light on the main idea of the story. Have students make predictions about the what this main idea might be. Write their predictions on the board or on an anchor chart. After reading, students will compare their predictions to events in the story.

Examine the Front Cover: *Each of the books in the Great Mistake Mystery series features a hand-drawn map by illustrator Tania Howells.*

The illustrator placed clues about people, places, and objects from the story into the map on the front cover. Invite students to look at the map and list items that they are curious about in a table. Beside each item, ask students to write their predictions about the item’s significance to the story. As students read and discover the actual significance of these items, they should update their table.

Name: _____

OBSERVING THE FRONT COVER

MAP ITEM	PREDICTION	SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ITEM TO THE STORY

IV. CHAPTER SUMMARIES

Students should be able to read this book in four weeks. In the first week, students can complete the Building Schema and Before Reading activities. The reading groups can then meet weekly to discuss days one, two, and three.

DAY ONE

DAY ONE, MISTAKE ONE

Stephen and Renée take the Bennetts' dogs, Ping and Pong, for their morning walk on an unusually warm October day. They are surprised that the dogs are uncharacteristically reluctant to leave the house. An intense thunderstorm begins during the walk. Renée and Stephen drop the leashes as the dogs panic and run away. The dogs run to Stephen's house and desperately scratch the door to get inside. Once inside the house, Stephen notices that the power is out. Stephen's mother, a flight attendant, calls from the airport. One of her passengers (who happens to be their new neighbour), is hysterical, worried about her pet, King, eating ... The phone line goes dead. Mistake one might be speaking on the landline during a thunderstorm.

DAY ONE, MISTAKE TWO

Stephen is about to leave the house to check on King when Renée convinces him to wait until the storm ends. When he looks out the window, Stephen sees a tall white Diamond Drywall van drive by. Stephen's father returns home with the five Yorkies he walks for Mrs. Irving so that the dogs are not left alone during the thunderstorm. They decide to keep all seven dogs in the basement because Stephen's mom is allergic to dog dander. When the lightning seems to have ended, Stephen decides to go check on King, who he believes could become a new client for his father's dog-walking business. Mistake two is Stephen not telling his dad about King as soon as he stepped in the door.

DAY ONE, MISTAKE THREE

As Stephen and Renée walk towards King's house, they see Renée's brother, Attila, and his girlfriend, Star. They are walking, holding their cellphones in front of their faces as they test a new app for a developer. They mention seeing a serpent. Mr. Rupert drives by and yells at Attila and Star for crossing the street while looking at their phones. Mr. Rupert is ex-military and has apparently been seen in the neighbourhood in his military fatigues. Renée and Stephen enter King's house and notice drywall dust on the floor and that the wall between the kitchen and living area has been knocked out. Stephen remembers that his mother told him the owners are house flippers. Renée discovers a terrarium and a cold dead mouse that appears to be defrosting. The power comes back on and Stephen learns that the light hanging over the terrarium is a warming lamp. He suddenly realizes that King is not a dog and that the dead mouse is King's dinner. Mistake three is assuming King is a dog.

DAY ONE, MISTAKE FOUR

Renée and Stephen realize King is a snake and begin searching for him. As they search, they find a pamphlet and deduce that King is a ball python. Stephen receives a text from his father telling him to be sure to lock the Bennett's house when returning Ping and Pong to their home because Mrs. Irwin's home was broken into. On their way back to Stephen's house, they run into Mr. Ron, their old crossing guard, walking Mr. Mason's golden retriever. Stephen worries that Mr. Ron is stealing a client from his dad's business. They also see Principal Watier's son, Serge, skateboarding recklessly in the street, followed by Red, a more cautious teenage skateboarder. As they arrive at Stephen's house, they speak with Stephen's dad as he is leaving to return the Yorkies to Mrs. Irwin's house. They learn that Mrs. Irwin fired Stephen's dad because she believes that he did not lock her door. Mistake four could possibly be Stephen's dad's.

DAY ONE, MISTAKE FIVE

Stephen's dad tells the kids that he is pretty certain that he locked Mrs. Irwin's door when he picked up the dogs. He is concerned about his loss of income resulting from this incident. He also tells them that Mr. Sawyer's gold Mr. Universe medal was the item that was stolen from her house. Mrs. Irwin was creating a special display for the medal. Stephen wonders how the thief knew the medal was at Mrs. Irwin's house. As Stephen and Renée eat lunch, the landline rings. Mr. Mason, the owner of the golden retriever Stephen's dad sometimes walks, wants Stephen's dad to return his house key because his locked house was robbed during the storm. Someone stole his red cellphone and red laptop. Stephen defends his dad, assuming Mr. Mason suspects him — that is mistake five.

DAY ONE, MISTAKE SIX

Stephen worries that Mr. Mason suspects his dad for the theft. He worries about how that suspicion could negatively affect his dad's reputation and his dog-walking business. Renée suggests they find the thief. Stephen suggests they look for King again. On their way to King's owner's house, they cross paths with a jogger (Mrs. Klein) who asks for a Noble Dog Walking business card. She has taken on more work (she owns a cleaning service) and may need Stephen's dad to start walking her Rottweiler, Buddy, again. When Stephen and Renée arrive at King's house, they decide to let the dogs loose, hoping they help them find the python. The dogs instead find pizza crusts in the bedroom and bark at something in the kitchen. The freezer door has been left open. Renée then notices that the dogs are eating mice. Letting the dogs run loose in the house is mistake six.

DAY ONE, MISTAKE SEVEN

As they retrieve the mice from the dogs and put them back into the freezer, Renee notices an empty ring box inside the freezer. She tells Stephen that her mother hides her expensive jewellery in the freezer. They begin to wonder whether King's house was also robbed, which might explain the disheveled master bedroom as well. Stephen worries about the implication of another house that Noble dog walkers have access to being robbed. Renée has an idea. She leads Stephen to the Burlington Animal Shelter. They recognize Ms. Lacey from Animal Control at the counter. Renée asks for a snake trap and when Ms. Lacey tells them they don't carry anything like that, Renée asks

whether it is Ms. Lacey's job to locate escaped animals. Mistake seven is Renée's mistake for making them walk an extra hour to the animal shelter and then giving Ms. Lacey attitude.

DAY ONE, MISTAKE EIGHT

Ms. Lacey shows Stephen and Renée how to make a snake trap. Renée notices an engagement ring on Ms. Lacey's finger and asks her if she is recently engaged. Ms. Lacey shares that she is engaged to herself because she got tired of waiting for the right guy. She also shares that she plans to buy a house and maybe have a baby on her own. Ms. Lacey charges them for the snake trap containing the live mouse (Mickey) and asks the kids to distribute flyers announcing the shelter's annual cat sale, Cat-astrophe, which will take place on the following Monday. She informs them that she will have to make "hard decisions" regarding the cats that are not adopted. Mistake eight is Stephen thinking that Renée will let him use Mickey in a snake trap.

DAY ONE, MISTAKE NINE

Renée feels that Ms. Lacey is heartless because she hinted at having to put down the cats that aren't adopted next Monday. She is determined to pass out the flyers and find a home for every cat. On their way back from the shelter, Stephen suggests they sit for a while by the creek because he and the dogs are tired. Renée sees her brother, Attila, in the cement pipe that carries the water from the creek underneath the road. He is creating graffiti art of a three-headed python. Renée is upset with him. She worries that he will get in trouble and that their parents will argue over it. Attila points out the rocks by the creek with messages written on them and says that's graffiti as well. He suggests they try writing messages on the rocks. Stephen writes "Noble Dog Walking forever!" and is able to better understand how graffiti art is a rush for Attila. Renée writes "I want to keep Mickey" on hers. Stephen understands that she does not want to sacrifice the live mouse and says they will find a creative way to use one of the frozen mice to trap the python instead. This is mistake nine.

DAY ONE, MISTAKE TEN

As they walk Ping and Pong back to the Bennetts' house, they pass several Halloween decorations. Renée remembers how talented Reuven is at making things. She tells Stephen about how Reuven fixed up an impressive interactive Halloween decoration his dad found in someone's trash. While Stephen gives the dogs treats and water and settles them into their home, Renée calls Reuven and asks him to help them animate a mouse corpse for their snake trap. She also asks to borrow a hamster cage. She arranges for Reuven to meet them in front of King's house at 5:00 p.m. Stephen lets Renée and Reuven into King's house. While Renée and Stephen shred newspaper and place Mickey in the cage, Reuven attaches wires to the mouse corpse's legs and connects them to a motor which causes the mouse to jerk and move. They set the trap and leave. Reuven asks them to help him stuff newspapers with flyers and deliver the papers the next day in return for his help. On their way home, they notice white streaks on cars on the street. Renée makes mistake ten by rubbing her finger on the white streak on Mr. Lebel's car and setting off his car alarm.

DAY ONE, MISTAKE ELEVEN

Mr. Lebel comes rushing out of his house, yelling at the kids. The streak on his car is white spray paint. Renée receives a call on her cell. She tells Mr. Lebel to contact the police about the spray paint on his car. She tells Stephen that Attila was arrested for spray-painting the cars because they caught him with spray paint on his way back from the creek. Afraid that her parents will be arguing about Attila that night, she asks whether she could sleep over at Stephen's. When they get to Stephen's house, Stephen's dad shares that he was brought in for questioning by the police because Mr. Mason accused him of stealing his phone and laptop. Stephen's dad tells Renée she can spend the night and mentions seeing her brother at the police station. When he admires Mickey in the cage Renée is holding, she tells him all about the escaped snake, the snake trap, and how because of Reuven's genius she gets to keep Mickey. They try teaching the mouse a trick, and after dinner, watch YouTube videos about training mice. Just as Stephen's head hits the pillow, a few minutes before midnight, he remembers that he and Renée forgot to check the snake trap (mistake eleven).

DAY TWO

DAY TWO, MISTAKE ONE

Renée and Stephen head out just past midnight to check on the snake trap. On their way, they see a couple of teenagers, Red and the principal's son, Serge, riding their skateboards down the street. They also see the white Diamond Drywall van driving towards them. There are two passengers in the front seats. As they pass Halloween decorations, Star jumps out at them yelling "Boo!" They tell Star that they are on their way to check the snake trap. Star tells them that she is looking for Attila's missing white spray-paint can. She tells Renée that she is trying to prove Attila's innocence and informs her that police think he robbed the two houses. When she wonders which car was vandalized last, Stephen says Mr. Lebel's Mustang because the Noble's house is next door and their car wasn't painted. Star heads in the direction of Stephen's house looking for the paint can. At King's house, they see no evidence of the snake. They decide to remove the trap and place a frozen mouse in the terrarium instead. When they leave, Mr. Rupert stops them and asks what they are stealing from the house. Jumping to the wrong conclusions about Stephen and Renée is Mr. Rupert's first mistake of the day.

DAY TWO, MISTAKE TWO

Stephen and Renée explain that they were hired to look after the owner's pet python, but it had escaped. They show Mr. Rupert the snake trap and motor. Mr. Rupert threatens to call the police anyway, but Renée talks him out of it. Stephen suggests that Mr. Rupert teams up with them and shares information since they all want to catch the thief. Renée mentions the speeding Diamond Drywall van. Mr. Rupert informs them that the drywall guy is their snake owner. The kids are surprised because they were hired by a woman who left on a plane. Mr. Rupert tells them the drywall guy and the woman who hired them are a couple. In the morning, Stephen's father wakes him because his mother is on the phone for him. Stephen's mom tells him that the snake owner's name is Salma. She was upset because she had just broken up with her bodybuilding drywaller boyfriend and was worried he wouldn't feed her snake as revenge. Then the flight was delayed because an eavesdropping passenger misunderstood their conversation and thought a snake was loose on the plane. She also told him about a snake on an Air India flight.

She tells him not to worry if the snake does not turn up. When he hangs up, the phone rings again and the caller ID shows Mr. Rupert's name. Afraid that Mr. Rupert is calling to tell his dad about the night before, Stephen tells his dad first. Rushing to confess was mistake two.

DAY TWO, MISTAKE THREE

When Stephen tells his dad that he and Renée went to check the snake trap in the middle of the night, his dad tells him he is grounded and tells Renée she has to go home. It turns out that Mr. Rupert was calling to speak with Stephen, not his dad. Mr. Rupert tells Stephen he found the spray-paint can in Reuven's yard, next door to Renée and Attila's house. Renée's mother calls and asks Mr. Noble if Renée can sleep over at their house again that night. Stephen's dad suspends his punishment until his mother gets home and they can discuss it together. Renée worries because her mother does not want her to come home that night. Mr. Noble works on knitting a yellow Yorkie sweater and hands Renée her knitting project to help calm her. When Stephen and Renée arrive at the Bennett's house to walk Ping and Pong, he realizes that he lost their house key (mistake three).

DAY TWO, MISTAKE FOUR

Renée tells Stephen that there are four common locations where people hide their spare keys: on top of the doorframe, under the doormat, under a flowerpot, and under a fake rock. They find the spare key under the fake rock. As they walk the dogs, they see Mr. Ron crouched beside Mrs. Whittingham's car. He is cleaning the spray paint off her car as well as her interior to earn some money. Renée suggests he offer to clean Mr. Lebel's Mustang and tells him about the Cat-astrophe at the animal shelter. Mr. Ron prefers dogs, but thinks his mother and his boss, Mr. Mason, might be interested. They deliver the yellow sweater to Mrs. Irwin and ask if they can come in and see how it fits. Inside the house, they learn that Mrs. Irwin had the dining room wall taken down the week before to let more natural light into her art studio. Stephen asks Mrs. Irwin who knew she was making the bust of Mr. Sawyer and learned that Mr. Kowalski (who does not have a key to her house) was commissioned to make the bust before she was, but had artistic differences with Mr. Sawyer. Renée hints that Mrs. Irwin should pay Mr. Noble for the sweater and that she might need help with her dogs. Mrs. Irwin makes the fifth mistake when she says "I think I'm at my limit of animals." Renée responds by informing her that her five dogs exceeds the Burlington bylaw of maximum three animals per household.

DAY TWO, MISTAKE FIVE

Mrs. Irwin explains why she has five dogs. Renée tells her that Mr. Noble is too nice to report the dogs to Animal Control. Stephen suggests that her neighbours might, if the dogs bark too much. He recommends walking the dogs often to curb their barking. As they continue their walk with Ping and Pong, Stephen wonders whether Mrs. Irwin hides a spare key outside her house. Renée tells him that most people hide one within ten feet of their front door. She also tells him that people give their keys to workers and don't change their locks afterwards. They notice a squirrel chewing on a jack-o'-lantern next door to Reuven's house. Ping chases the squirrel. Red, the teenager who lives at that house walks with them to the side of the house to retrieve the dogs. Renée notices white spray paint on Red's bike and questions him about the paint can. When he denies knowledge of the vandalism, she

asks him about his friend Serge. She mentions that Serge has been in trouble with the police in the past. Stephen remembers that Serge once dognapped Pong when he was upset about his mother remarrying. Stephen worries that Renée is being too confrontational (mistake five) and changes the subject, inviting Red to the Cat-astrophe event on Monday.

DAY TWO, MISTAKE SIX

Stephen and Renée discuss the missing Mr. Universe medal and question suspects while delivering newspapers with the Cat-astrophe flyer inside. At Mr. Rupert's house, Stephen learns that Diamond Drywall removed the dining room wall for Mrs. Irving. Mistake six is taking the dogs along, slowing them down even more than the questioning does. They discover Mr. Sawyer's house is for sale.

DAY TWO, MISTAKE SEVEN

Renée and Stephen discuss possible reasons for Mr. Sawyer selling his house. They continue delivering newspapers and flyers. Stephen, Reuven, Renée, Ping, and Pong go to the park for lunch — hot dogs and blue Slurpees. Attila's latest graffiti art is sprayed on a pipe there. Ping and Pong lead Stephen and Renée to investigate some rocks near a creek. Ping starts digging, and Pong pulls on his leash, causing Stephen to spill his Slurpee (mistake seven).

DAY TWO, MISTAKE EIGHT

After Pong makes Stephen spill his Slurpee, Renée notices a snake she assumes is King in a little cave beneath a rock. Neither Stephen nor Renée want to pick up the snake, but Stephen does to save Ping from being bitten. Pong barks, and Ping tries to bite the snake. Stephen worries that the snake is going to squeeze his arm too tightly and convinces Renée to unwind the snake's tail from his arm. They decide to call Animal Control for help to get the ball python safely back from the park. Ms. Lacey is the Animal Control Officer who arrives, and she tells the kids that she will take the snake back to the shelter to give back to the owner. Mistake eight is when Stephen asks Ms. Lacey if any other animals are on sale at the shelter.

DAY TWO, MISTAKE NINE

Renée is interested in the new arrival at the pet shelter, another mouse. Reuven looks at Attila's graffiti and notices it is exactly like the snake they just found, King. Renée reminds them that Attila never paints using a live model. Stephen notices a possible clue written on a rock, and all three write a message on a rock as well. Stephen then gets a text from his father saying to come home and that the Bennetts have been robbed. Stephen and Renée worry that they won't be allowed to walk Ping and Pong anymore. Mistake nine was Stephen believing that his message written on a rock could be helpful to him.

DAY TWO, MISTAKE TEN

When Stephen and Renée get to his house, a police cruiser is outside. When they go in, Stephen's father tells them that Constables Jurgensen and Wilson want to ask them some questions. Troy, their police dog, is with them. The constables ask Stephen and Renée how they got in to get the dogs, as Stephen's key was found by his father in the dryer. Renée and Stephen explain that they used and replaced the spare key, and did not notice anyone when they did so. Constable Wilson tells them that Mrs. Bennett tried to use the key to get in and it was not there. She also explains that seven hundred dollars is missing from a cookie jar in the kitchen. When the police leave, Stephen's dad explains that the dogs will stay there while Mrs. Bennett does her next flight, but it is unlikely she'll keep them on after that as dog walkers. Renée stays over another night, and Stephen notices it is awkward having a girl as a friend as they can't sleep in the same room and stay up late watching television together. Stephen realizes that not checking for his key before going to get Ping and Pong was the tenth mistake of the day.

DAY THREE

DAY THREE, MISTAKE ONE

Stephen wakes up worried that he has evidence against Attila and is reluctant to share it with Renée. He notices Renée outside with her father, looking upset. When Renée comes back into the house, she tells Stephen that her father is moving out. Renée and Stephen plan to take the dogs on a walk, and Stephen's dad lets the kids know that Mrs. Bennett will be there at eleven that morning to pick up Ping and Pong. Renée reminds Stephen that they need to identify the criminal at the Cat-astrophe event that evening. She says she thinks she knows who it is. They discuss their suspects. They see Serge, and Stephen makes the first mistake of the day, asking him how he feels about Mr. Sawyer moving.

DAY THREE, MISTAKE TWO

Serge tells Renée and Stephen that he doesn't care that Mr. Sawyer is moving and that he doesn't really want to weight lift with him anymore. They don't believe him. Serge tells them that many people come over to weight lift with Mr. Sawyer. He also tells them that Mr. Sawyer is moving because he wants to open a gym but the neighbourhood is not zoned for businesses. They talk with Ms. Lacey and Harry, the Diamond Drywall man, and learn from Ms. Lacey that Mr. Sawyer is waiting for the insurance money from his stolen medal before opening the gym. Mistake number two is Harry's. He showed his annoyance when Ms. Lacey mentioned the insurance money.

DAY THREE, MISTAKE THREE

Stephen and Renée return home. Mrs. Bennett is waiting for them. She pays the dog walking and boarding bill in cash — seven hundred dollars. The kids learn that she is carrying cash to pay the cleaning lady and Diamond Drywall. They invite her to the Cat-astrophe event, telling her that Harry will be there and that she'll find out who the thief is. When she leaves, Stephen's dad lets them know she has fired Noble Dog Walking. Stephen and Renée both try to give Stephen's dad back their share of the money from walking Ping and Pong. This is the third mistake, as it convinces Stephen's dad to give up the dog walking business.

DAY THREE, MISTAKE FOUR

Stephen's dad tells Renée and Stephen that he has an offer for a job in telemarketing. Stephen tries to convince him to keep Noble Dog Walking running and suggests adding cat sitting to the business, but his dad tells him that no one will employ dog walkers that they believe are also house robbers. Stephen's mom calls with another story and tries to make him feel better about his dad closing the business. Stephen feels that closing the business is mistake four.

DAY THREE, MISTAKE FIVE

Stephen, Renée, and Stephen's dad clean the house to get ready for the arrival of Rottweiler Cleaning Service. They learn that Mrs. Klein also cleaned Mrs. Irwin's house and that she saw a model of the medal there. They ask Stephen's dad to keep the Noble Dog Walking Company running if they identify the thief that evening at the animal shelter. They take Renée's mouse, Mickey, to her home. On the way, they see Mr. Ron walking Mrs. Irwin's five Yorkies. He drops two of the leashes when he waves to the kids, and those two dogs run across the street to greet Stephen and Renée. Renée tries to catch them, as the Diamond Drywall truck is speeding toward them. Mistake five is Mrs. Irwin's for hiring Mr. Ron to walk her dogs.

DAY THREE, MISTAKE SIX

Renée catches the dogs, but can't get them to move off the road. The Diamond Drywall truck does not stop or even slow down but swerves to avoid the kids and the dogs in the road. Renée asks Mr. Ron to tell Mrs. Irwin at the Cat-astrophe event that night that they saved her dogs. Continuing on their way to Renée's house, they meet Star and Attila. Renée blames Attila for their father moving out. Attila gives Renée a hug to apologize and tells Renée to look through his room for a hamster ball she can use with her mouse. Stephen takes this opportunity to share with Renée the evidence he has found against Attila and pretends he does not think Attila is the thief. Renée finds a broken red laptop in Attila's room. The sixth mistake is Attila's for suggesting they look in his room.

DAY THREE, MISTAKE SEVEN

Renée and Stephen realize that the laptop must belong to Mr. Mason. Renée starts searching Attila's room for Mr. Mason's phone. Stephen tries to cheer her up by finding reasons against Attila being the thief. Remembering his mother's advice for handling stress, he suggests they try out Mickey in the hamster ball. Renée's mother comes home and invites Stephen to stay for supper. Mistake number seven is Renée not asking permission from her mother to keep a pet mouse.

DAY THREE, MISTAKE EIGHT

Stephen worries about Renée and her mother arguing if he does not stay, but his father has asked him to go early to the Cat-astrophe event. While walking, Stephen considers his suspects and evidence. He notices a neighbour, Mrs. Whittingham, driving off with a purse and a bag left on the van's roof. This is mistake eight.

DAY THREE, MISTAKE NINE

Stephen walks by Mrs. Bennett’s house on his way home as she is taking the dogs for a walk. He notices she is not able to control both of the dogs and helps her out. As they are walking, Ping finds Mr. Mason’s cell phone in a hedge. Stephen plans to return it to Mr. Mason at the animal shelter and texts Renée, telling her to bring the laptop there. He leaves a note for Salma, telling her where her ball python is. Stephen’s dad decides to keep Noble Dog Walking and Cat Sitting Services open, with a back-up plan of taking a job as an air traffic controller. He takes his new flyers to the animal shelter and starts to hand them out. Serge is there handing out food. Mistake nine is his — not being able to see to avoid bumping into Mrs. Klein with the coffee maker.

DAY THREE, MISTAKE TEN

Stephen texts Constable Wilson, asking him to come to the animal shelter. Stephen’s dad continues to hand out flyers, and Stephen feels hopeful. Ms. Lacey shows the attendees (most of Stephen and Renée’s suspects) the animals up for adoption, including the ball python. Stephen asks Ms. Lacey for time to talk about Noble Dog Walking. Mistake ten is Ms. Lacey thinking he is going to talk about walking and sitting services.

TOO MANY MISTAKES TO COUNT

Stephen explains that Mr. Mason’s laptop and phone were not stolen; they were on the roof of his truck and they fell off when he drove away. Harry tells Mrs. Bennett that he took the seven hundred dollars from her cookie jar in payment for his renovation service. Mr. Sawyer explains that the Mr. Universe medal was worthless and he would not have reported it stolen, and also that he knew who stole it. Serge is accused of spraying white paint on cars, and the police tell him that his fingerprints were identified on the paint can Mr. Rupert found. Salma notices that Ms. Lacey is wearing her engagement ring and accuses Harry of giving it away. Harry explains that he sold it to her. He also does not deny that he left King in the park. Salma and Mrs. Bennett decide not to press charges, but Serge is arrested. Noble Dog Walking is cleared of all suspicion.

THE AFTERMATH

Stephen’s mom arrives at the animal shelter. His dad continues to hand out fliers. All of the cats get adopted. Mrs. Bennett re-hires the Noble Dog Walking Company. Renée and Stephen discuss with their friends and families the great mistakes that led them to solving the mysteries.

V. DURING READING: STUDENT HANDOUTS AND QUESTIONS

NOTES TO TEACHERS

DETECTIVE'S NOTEBOOK

Students begin a Detective's Notebook to record clues and information about the crimes as they read the story. Each row of the table focuses on one crime. As the student learns more about the crime, or clues are revealed, students should jot more notes into their notebooks.

Name: _____

DETECTIVE'S NOTEBOOK

The author has hidden the clues to help you solve the mystery throughout the book. Note any information you discover about the crimes as you read in this table. How observant are you? You will be using this evidence to help you solve the mystery.

VICTIM	CRIME	CLUES

VICTIM	CRIME	CLUES

Name: _____

CHAPTER QUESTIONS — DAY ONE

DAY ONE, MISTAKE ONE

When Renée gives Mr. Kowalski back his cap, he says, “Thanks. It’s an important hat. Have to remind people, all the time.” Explain why the cap is important to him and what he needs to remind people of all of the time. Use information from the text to support your answer.

Why were the dogs reluctant to go on their walk that morning? Use information from the text and your own experience to support your answer.

DAY ONE, MISTAKE TWO

How do pets react during a storm? If you have a pet, describe how your pet reacts to a storm. If you don’t have a pet, ask a friend or a family member who does.

Have you ever experienced a power outage? If so, what did you do to pass the time? If not, what would you do?

Renée borrows a sweatshirt from Stephen. It says “Boy Genius” on the front. Renée asks whether they have the shirt in “Girl” and he says he saw one that said “Little Princess.” What stereotypes do those sweatshirts portray?

Renée prefers “Princess Genius,” which Stephen feels fits her personality. What aspects of Renée’s personality make Stephen feel that way? Use information from the text and your own experience to support your answer.

DAY ONE, MISTAKE THREE

Stephen wonders why Attila and Star are holding their cellphones in front of their faces. He thinks, “They don’t seem the Pokémon-hunting type.” Explain what Stephen means by this thought. Use information from the text and your own experience to support your answer.

Stephen assumes that King is a dog. Once he arrives at King's house, he notices several clues that helps him deduce that King is not a dog. Can you find at least three of those clues and explain how each clue gives information about the type of animal King could be?

Clue #1: _____

Clue #2: _____

Clue #3: _____

Clue #4: _____

DAY ONE, MISTAKE FOUR

What type of snake is King? What do Stephen and Renée learn about this species of snake? How do they learn this information? Use information from the text to support your answer.

Explain how the robbery at Mrs. Irwin's house affects Stephen's dad. Use information from the story to support your answer.

DAY ONE, MISTAKE FIVE

Describe Mr. Noble’s routine for making sure he locks the door when leaving a house.

DAY ONE, MISTAKE SIX

Mistake six is allowing the dogs to run loose in King’s house. Explain why this was a mistake. Use information from the text to support your answer.

DAY ONE, MISTAKE SEVEN

What does Renée discover in the freezer when she puts the mice back? What suspicion does this discovery arouse in Renée?

Why does Renée decide to go to the Burlington Animal Shelter?

DAY ONE, MISTAKE EIGHT

How does Ms. Lacey make the snake trap?

Why should the mouse in the snake trap be alive?

What does Ms. Lacey reveal about herself and her future plans when Renée asks her about her engagement ring?

DAY ONE, MISTAKE NINE

What does the message Renée wrote on the rocks reveal about her feelings? How does Stephen respond?

DAY ONE, MISTAKE TEN

How can Reuven tell that the snake did not pass through the living room?

DAY ONE, MISTAKE ELEVEN

Why does Stephen briefly feel jealousy towards Renée? Explain your thinking, using information from the text to support your answer.

Name: _____

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT — DAY ONE

Good readers create mental images in their minds as they read. Read the description of Attila's graffiti on page 60 and draw what you see in your mind.

Name: _____

CHAPTER QUESTIONS — DAY TWO

DAY TWO, MISTAKE ONE

Explain why Star is creeping around the Halloween decorations at midnight.

DAY TWO, MISTAKE TWO

How does Renée convince Mr. Rupert not to call the police and accuse them of being thieves? Use information from the text to support your answer.

Who is Salma and why is she upset?

Describe the boyfriend that Salma has just broken up with.

Explain how this new information helps Stephen understand what he saw at King's house.

DAY TWO, MISTAKE THREE

Explain why Stephen's dad is knitting in this chapter. Use information from the text and your own experience to support your answer. Hint: There is more than one reason.

Mr. Rupert called to provide information and ask a question. What did Mr. Rupert find? Where? What was his question?

What horrible mistake did Stephen make?

DAY TWO, MISTAKE FOUR

How does Renée help Stephen get inside the Bennetts' house?

Renée drops a couple of hints at Mrs. Irwin's house. In the table below, write down what Renée said as well as the message she meant to convey with each hint.

RENÉE'S HINTS (WHAT SHE SAID)	WHAT SHE MEANT

DAY TWO, MISTAKE FIVE

Mrs. Irwin is worried about being reported to Animal Control. Explain why she is worried. What advice does Stephen give Mrs. Irwin?

Renée notices something in Red’s yard that makes her suspicious of him and his friend Serge. What does she suspect and why? Support your answer using information from the text.

Renée invites Red to the Cat-astrophe event and tells him to bring Serge. She says, “*I know* your friend needs a pet.” Why is the word *know* in italics? Explain your answer using information from the text and your experience.

DAY TWO, MISTAKE SIX

While delivering the newspaper to Mr. Rupert, Stephen and Renée learn a few things about Mrs. Irving and Mrs. Klein. What did they learn?

Why did Mr. Sawyer hire Mrs. Irwin to make the bust for his medal instead of Mr. Kowalski? What is your opinion about the dispute?

DAY TWO, MISTAKE SEVEN

Renée and Stephen come up with several reasons why Mr. Sawyer might be selling his house. Explain at least three of their reasons.

Explain why Renée thinks Mrs. Watier’s house is being robbed.

DAY TWO, MISTAKE EIGHT

How do Stephen and Renée feel about handling snakes? Use evidence from the chapter to support your answer. Provide at least two pieces of evidence each for Stephen and Renée.

DAY TWO, MISTAKE NINE

Reuven reads two of the rock messages out loud. What are the messages? Who do you think left them and why?

What message would you write on a rock and why?

Why does Stephen count mistakes?

DAY TWO, MISTAKE TEN

Why does Mr. Noble let Troy, Ping, and Pong into the house even though Mrs. Noble is allergic to dogs?

Name: _____

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT — DAY TWO

Stephen's mom often calls and tells Stephen about strange occurrences on planes or at the airport. On day two, mistake one, Stephen's mom told him about two things that happened on a plane or at an airport. Which one is fact and which one is fiction (do some research)? Describe both events. Add information from your research that proves one story actually did happen outside of *The Snake Mistake Mystery* (in real life).

Name: _____

CHAPTER QUESTIONS — DAY THREE

DAY THREE, MISTAKE ONE

What message did Renée write on her rock in day two, mistake nine? What happens in this chapter to explain why she wrote what she did?

Renée tells Stephen she thinks she knows who the criminal is. Who do you think it is, and why? Use evidence from your Detective's Notebook to support your answer.

DAY THREE, MISTAKE TWO

Serge has a condition called heterochromia. What is this condition?

What are some causes of heterochromia? Research your answer.

Why do you think Harry is annoyed with Ms. Lacey? Why might his annoyance be significant?

DAY THREE, MISTAKE THREE

What do Stephen and Renée do with the money they earned walking Ping and Pong? Why was this mistake three?

DAY THREE, MISTAKE FOUR

What advice does Stephen's mother give him to help reduce stress?

DAY THREE, MISTAKE FIVE

What do Renée and Stephen learn about the Mr. Universe medal from Mrs. Klein? Why do you think this is significant?

What is mistake five? Make a prediction about the outcome.

DAY THREE, MISTAKE SIX

Do Renée and Stephen think that Mr. Ron is the thief? Why or why not? Use evidence from this chapter to support your answer.

DAY THREE, MISTAKE SEVEN

Complete the table with reasons for and against Attila being the thief.

FACTS THAT SUPPORT ATTILA BEING THE THIEF	FACTS AGAINST ATTILA BEING THE THIEF

DAY THREE, MISTAKE EIGHT

Stephen thinks about who the thief could be as he walks to the shelter. He expresses the process of thinking in a metaphor. What is a metaphor?

What metaphor does Stephen use? Copy it here and include the page number.

Imagine you are Stephen, thinking about the suspects. What metaphor can you use to express your thinking process?

Stephen thinks about his suspects and evidence against them in this chapter. Make sure to add this information to your Detective's Notebook.

DAY THREE, MISTAKE NINE

Stephen texts Renée, telling her he knows who stole Mr. Mason's laptop. Who do you think he suspects and why? Refer to your Detective's Notebook for your evidence.

Stephen leaves a note for Salma, telling her where King is. In previous chapters, he has told Harry and Ms. Lacey that King has been found. Why do you think he feels that he needs to leave a note for Salma as well?

What changes Stephen's dad's mind about closing Noble Dog Walking?

Mrs. Klein says something significant in this chapter. What does she say, and why is it significant?

DAY THREE, MISTAKE TEN

Mrs. Klein has an idea that may increase Noble Dog Walking Services' business. What is her idea?

One of the cats is called Tripod. Why is the cat named Tripod? What is a tripod?

TOO MANY MISTAKES TO COUNT

We find out in this chapter that many of the adults made mistakes. Fill out the table below to explain their mistakes.

Mr. Ron	
Mr. Mason	
Harry	
Mrs. Bennett	
Mrs. Irwin	

THE AFTERMATH

How did Mrs. Whittingham’s mistake help Stephen solve one of the mysteries?

The title of a book or story shines a light on the main idea or the author’s message. On page 220, someone refers to “Harry’s snake mistake.” Think about the references to mistakes throughout the book, especially in the last two chapters. Can you infer the lesson or message the author wants us to understand about mistakes? Support your answer with information from the text and your experience.

Name: _____

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT — DAY THREE

Stephen and his parents talk about making “great mistakes.” What is a great mistake? Have you ever made one? Explain it below. If you have not, discuss with your family at home, or think about a situation in your life, or in a book, TV show, or movie, when a person or character made a great mistake and explain.

VI. AFTER-READING ACTIVITIES

1. In the first chapter, Stephen worries about talking on a landline during an electrical storm. Research to see how this is dangerous and explain why, using scientific vocabulary.
2. In Day One, Mistake Seven, the dogs drink from a puddle in front of the fridge at King's house. What has caused the puddle? Use scientific vocabulary to explain what has happened.
3. In Day One, Mistake Six, Stephen and Renée notice that Red and his Pomeranian look alike. In Day Three, Mistake Three, Stephen notices that Mrs. Bennett and Pong look similar. Some people think that people often look like their pets. Draw yourself and your ideal pet together. Be sure to show a resemblance between the two.
4. Stephen and Renée earn money as dog walkers. Reuven earns money delivering newspapers. Explain what you do to earn money OR what you could do to earn money.
5. Write a persuasive letter to your family to convince them to allow you to get your ideal pet. Be sure to include at least three reasons to support your ideas. Hint: You should also include information on how to care for your pet.
6. Research the natural habitat, interactions and interdependence with other plants and animals, role in the food chain, and survival adaptations of a ball python or other animal of your choice. Present your information as a graphic text (a research report using graphic elements, such as diagrams, images, maps, and graphs).

VII. EXTENSIONS

1. Ask a friend or family member to teach you how to knit. How does learning a new skill make you feel, once you have mastered the skill?
2. If you already know how to knit, teach someone else how to knit. Look for a volunteer organization you could knit items for, such as Blankets for Canada (blankets4canada.ca).
3. Visit or volunteer at an animal shelter or local animal clinic. How can you make a difference?
4. If you or another person in your home has a pet, what do you do to help take care of the pet? How could you do more to look after the pet?
5. This is the third book in the Great Mistakes series. Read one of the other books in the series. While reading, take notes about new information you learn about Stephen, Renée, and Attila. How does reading another book in the series help you better understand one of these characters?

VIII. RUBRICS

PERSUASIVE LETTER RUBRIC (AFTER READING, QUESTION 5)

	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4
Demonstrates understanding of the characteristics of a persuasive letter.	Limited effectiveness	Some effectiveness	Considerable effectiveness	High degree of effectiveness
Complexity of the arguments and connection to the topic.	Chooses and develops arguments with limited effectiveness to persuade the reader.	Chooses and develops arguments with some effectiveness to persuade the reader.	Chooses and develops arguments with considerable effectiveness to persuade the reader.	Chooses and develops arguments with a high degree of effectiveness to persuade the reader.
Demonstrates awareness of audience.	With limited effectiveness.	With some effectiveness.	With considerable effectiveness.	With a high degree of effectiveness.
Communicates to persuade the reader.	Few supporting details to help the reader understand the arguments (may include unrelated info).	Some supporting details help the reader understand the arguments (may include unrelated info).	Related supporting details help the reader understand the arguments throughout the text.	Accurate and relevant supporting details help persuade the reader.

	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4
Use of conventions, vocabulary, and terminology to communicate ideas.	Communicates ideas with limited effectiveness using appropriate language conventions (e.g., vocabulary, spelling, and grammar, sentence types).	Communicates ideas with some effectiveness using appropriate language conventions (e.g., vocabulary, spelling, and grammar, sentence types) in order to influence the reader.	Communicates ideas with effectiveness using appropriate language conventions (e.g., vocabulary, spelling, and grammar, sentence types) in order to influence the reader.	Communicates ideas with a high degree of effectiveness using appropriate language conventions (e.g., vocabulary, spelling, and grammar, sentence types) in order to influence the reader.
Makes connections between the topic and information from personal knowledge and other sources.	Limited effectiveness	Some effectiveness	Considerable effectiveness	High degree of effectiveness

GRAPHIC TEXT RUBRIC (AFTER READING, QUESTION 6)

	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4
Demonstrates understanding of the characteristics of graphic texts.	Limited effectiveness	Some effectiveness	Considerable effectiveness	High degree of effectiveness
Use of planning skills. (Uses relevant information from research to write a graphic text.)	Limited effectiveness	Some effectiveness	Considerable effectiveness	High degree of effectiveness
Communicates to inform the reader.	Few supporting details to help the reader understand the main idea (may include unrelated info).	Some supporting details to help the reader understand the main idea (may include unrelated or repetitive info).	Related supporting details help the reader understand the main idea throughout the text.	Accurate and relevant supporting details help the reader understand the main idea throughout the text.
Selection and display of headings, subtitles, and images to communicate information.	Headings, images, and/or captions communicate information about the topic with limited effectiveness. Connection to information in text is unclear.	Headings, images, and/or captions communicate information about the topic with some effectiveness.	Headings, images, and/or captions communicate information about the topic with considerable effectiveness. Clear connection to information in text.	Headings, images, and/or captions communicate and enhance information about the topic with a high degree of effectiveness.

IX. ONTARIO CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS FOR SECTION V: DURING READING: STUDENT HANDOUTS AND QUESTIONS

LANGUAGE: GRADES 4–6 CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS

Reading

1.4 Demonstrate understanding of a variety of texts by summarizing important ideas and citing supporting details.

Applies to: Chapter Questions — Day One: D1M1, D1M3, D1M4, D1M6, D1M11; Chapter Questions — Day Two: D2M1, D2M2, D2M5, D3M6

1.5 Make inferences about texts using stated and implied ideas from the texts as evidence.

Applies to: Chapter Questions — Day One: D1M1, D1M3, D1M4, D1M6, D1M8, D1M11; Chapter Questions — Day Two: D2M1, D2M2, D2M5, D2M8, D2M9; Chapter Questions — Day Three: D3M6; Homework Assignment — Day Three

1.6 Extend understanding of texts by connecting the ideas in them to their own knowledge, experience, and insights, to other familiar texts, and to the world around them.

Applies to: Chapter Questions — Day One: D1M1, D1M3, D1M4, D1M6, D1M8, D1M11; Chapter Questions — Day Two: D2M1, D2M2, D2M5, D2M8, D2M9; Chapter Questions — Day Three: D3M6

1.8 Express opinions about the ideas and information in texts and cite evidence from the text to support their opinions.

Applies to: Chapter Questions — Day One: D1M1, D1M3, D1M4, D1M8, D1M11, D2M1; Chapter Questions — Day Two: D2M2, D2M5, D2M8, D2M9; Chapter Questions — Day Three: D3M6

2.3 Identify a variety of text features and explain how they help readers understand texts.

Applies to: Chapter Questions — Day Two: D2M5; Chapter Questions — Day Three: D3M8

Writing

1.3 Gather information to support ideas for writing using a variety of strategies and oral, print, and electronic sources.

Applies to: Chapter Questions — Day One: D1M2; Chapter Questions — Day Two: D2M1; Chapter Questions — Day Three: D3M2, The Aftermath

1.5 Identify and order main ideas and supporting details and group them into units that could be used to develop a summary, using a variety of graphic organizers.

Applies to: Detective’s Notebook; Chapter Questions — Day Two: D2M4; Chapter Questions — Day Three: D3M7

1.6 Determine whether the ideas and information they have gathered are relevant and adequate for the purpose, and do more research if necessary.

Applies to: All questions

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: GRADE 4–6 CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS

Grade 5 Conservation of Energy and Resources

2.4 Use appropriate science and technology vocabulary, including energy, heat, light, sound, electrical, mechanical, and chemical, in oral and written communication

Applies to: Chapter Questions — Day One: D1M2

Grade 5 Human Body

3.4 Identify common diseases and the organs and/or body systems that they affect.

Applies to: Chapter Questions — Day Three: D3M2

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS FOR SECTION VI: AFTER-READING ACTIVITIES

LANGUAGE: GRADES 4–6 CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS

Reading

1.6 Extend understanding of texts by connecting the ideas in them to their own knowledge, experience, and insights, to other familiar texts, and to the world around them.

Applies to: Questions 1, 2, 4, 5, 6

Writing

1.3 Gather information to support ideas for writing using a variety of strategies and oral, print, and electronic sources.

Applies to: Questions 1, 2, 4, 5, 6

1.4 Sort and classify ideas and information for their writing in a variety of ways.

Applies to: Questions 1, 2, 6

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: GRADE 4–6 CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS

Grade 5 Conservation of Energy and Resources

2.4 Use appropriate science and technology vocabulary, including energy, heat, light, sound, electrical, mechanical, and chemical, in oral and written communication.

Applies to: Question 1

Grade 5 Stages of Matter

3.3 Explain changes of state in matter.

Applies to: Question 2

Grade 4 Habitats and Communities

3.1 Demonstrate an understanding of habitats as areas that provide plants and animals with the necessities of life.

3.5 Classify organisms, including humans, according to their role in a food chain.

3.7 Describe structural adaptations that allow plants and animals to survive in specific habitats.

Applies to: Questions 5, 6

Grade 6 Biodiversity

3.5 Describe interrelationships within species.

Applies to: Questions 5, 6