

Clues Beyond Earth

Find how setting details and clues shape a story.

8.8.A “demonstrate knowledge of literary genres such as realistic fiction, adventure stories, historical fiction, mysteries, humor, fantasy, science fiction, and short stories;”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two details that show the world is different from present-day life. Then number three clues that help Lina identify the person who took the meteorite.

The Dust Trail

- ① At 06:10, Lina woke to the station’s gentle hum and the alert from the greenhouse dome: a meteorite sample was missing. The dome door was sealed, and only three people had entered after midnight. Lina checked the floor with a pocket scanner. It showed a thin trail of iron dust leading away from the empty display case. On Earth, a thief might leave muddy footprints. On the Mars research station Aurelia, every visitor wore magnetic boots that could carry metal dust.
- ② Near the air lock, Lina found technician Bo polishing his boots. He said he had been repairing a solar panel, but the station log showed no repair request. Then Lina noticed that his left boot had a fresh scrape, shaped like the broken latch on the display case. Bo claimed the scrape came from a ladder. Lina sent a tiny camera drone through the ventilation shaft. The drone returned with an image of the meteorite tucked inside Bo’s tool bag, beside a cracked latch.
- ③ Bo admitted taking the meteorite because he wanted its rare crystals for a private experiment. Lina returned it to the case and reported what happened. Later, she watched the pale sky darken through the observation window. The station’s computer announced that a dust storm would reach Aurelia in eight hours, forcing the crew to secure the solar panels before visibility vanished. Lina pocketed the recovered camera drone. Its lens had recorded a second figure near the dome, someone whose boots left no magnetic dust at all.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Which two genres are most strongly shown in this passage? Give one detail that supports each genre.

2 What are two clues that point to Bo, and what does each clue suggest?

3 How does the Mars station setting change what counts as a clue? Use two details from the passage.

4 What makes the ending an open mystery instead of a fully closed ending?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write 4 to 6 sentences. First, name two genres you choose from this list: realistic fiction, adventure, historical fiction, mystery, humor, fantasy, science fiction, or short story. Then write an original scene that includes one detail showing the first genre and two clues or events showing the second genre. Do not use characters or a setting from the passage.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline two details that show the world is different from present-day life. Then number three clues that help Lina identify the person who took the meteorite. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which two genres are most strongly shown in this passage? Give one detail that supports each genre.	Science fiction and mystery. The Mars research station and advanced devices support science fiction, while the missing meteorite and evidence used to identify a thief support mystery.
2	What are two clues that point to Bo, and what does each clue suggest?	The station log shows that Bo lied about repairing a solar panel. The scrape on his boot matches the broken display-case latch, suggesting that he opened the case.
3	How does the Mars station setting change what counts as a clue? Use two details from the passage.	Iron dust on magnetic boots can act like footprints, and Lina can use a pocket scanner and a camera drone to track evidence in the station.
4	What makes the ending an open mystery instead of a fully closed ending?	The drone recorded a second figure near the dome, but the passage does not reveal who that person is or why the person was there.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I chose historical fiction and mystery. In 1903, fifteen-year-old Nora worked at a bicycle shop in Dayton, Ohio, while the Wright brothers traveled to North Carolina to test their flying machine. One morning, the shop's brass propeller gauge vanished from a locked drawer. Nora found fresh blue paint on the drawer handle and a train ticket to Indianapolis beneath the workbench. She followed the clues and discovered that a rival mechanic had hidden the gauge in his tool chest.

Accept science fiction and mystery as the primary genre combination when students support both choices with accurate passage evidence. For the original scene, accept any two listed genres if the student includes the required genre-specific details, two clear clues or events, and a new setting and characters.