

# A to Z Mysteries®

by Ron Roy  
Illustrated by John Steven Gurney

## Welcome to the world of Dink, Josh, and Ruth Rose!

A to Z Mysteries are the perfect bridge to the mystery genre. Young readers who love Nate the Great and his adventures are ready for the many mysteries this terrific trio will solve. These books do not have to be read in any specific order; however, it is always good to read the first of the series—in this case, *The Absent Author*—together as a class before tackling the rest, so students will be familiar with the format of the stories.

The activities in this guide can be used with any of the books in the series. Each book corresponds to a letter in the alphabet, so teachers can have their mystery buffs read them on their own, assign partners for buddy reading, or assign groups and read different titles in literature circles.



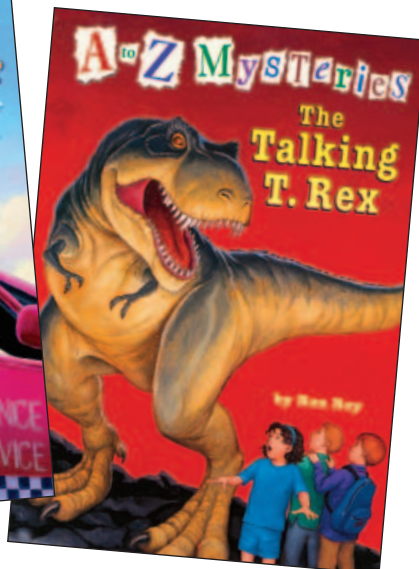
Dink



Ruth Rose



Josh



Ages 6–9

- Mystery
- Suspense
- Characterization
- Literary Techniques
- Graphing
- Mapping Skills



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# A to Z Mysteries®

## Pre-Reading Activities

### It's No Mystery

Discuss what makes a story a mystery. Brainstorm the characteristics of a mystery on the board and discuss. You may want to have a collection of mystery titles available to show as examples. As a class, examine various mystery series from your library (e.g., Nate the Great and others). Judging by the covers, brainstorm elements that the class predicts will hold true in mysteries.

### Red-Flag Words

In the class, begin a list of red-flag words (ones that would most definitely be a part of a mystery book) such as *case*, *missing*, *mystery*, *clue*, *caper*, *detective*, *sleuth*, etc. This list cannot be completed in one discussion, but can be added to as the class is exposed to more titles.

### Word Wall

Research shows that readers make writers. Have poster board or index cards available for children to post words that they discover as they are reading mysteries.

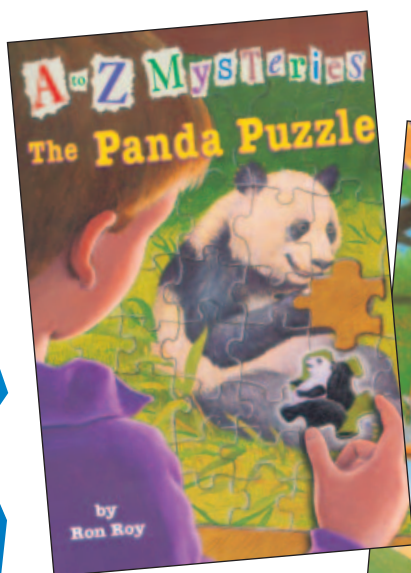
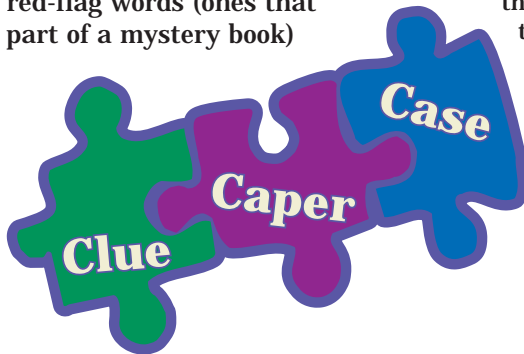
### What Are the Clues?

Review story elements, and discuss how mysteries have specific indicators in the plot—who, what, when, where, and why—as all stories do. But with mysteries, one or more of these elements are unknown to readers. It is the author's responsibility to gradually reveal the unknown elements so that the clues lead to solving the mystery.

**Detective or Sleuth**—What is the main character called?

**The Problem**—Sometimes the problem is revealed in the title, but more often the story has to be read to identify it. For example, *The Absent Author* is obviously a story about an author who is not where he/she is supposed to be. The plot of the story revolves around locating the author—where the author was and why the author was not where he/she was supposed to be.

**The Solution**—How is the problem solved?





# A to Z Mysteries®

## Language Arts

### Character Analysis

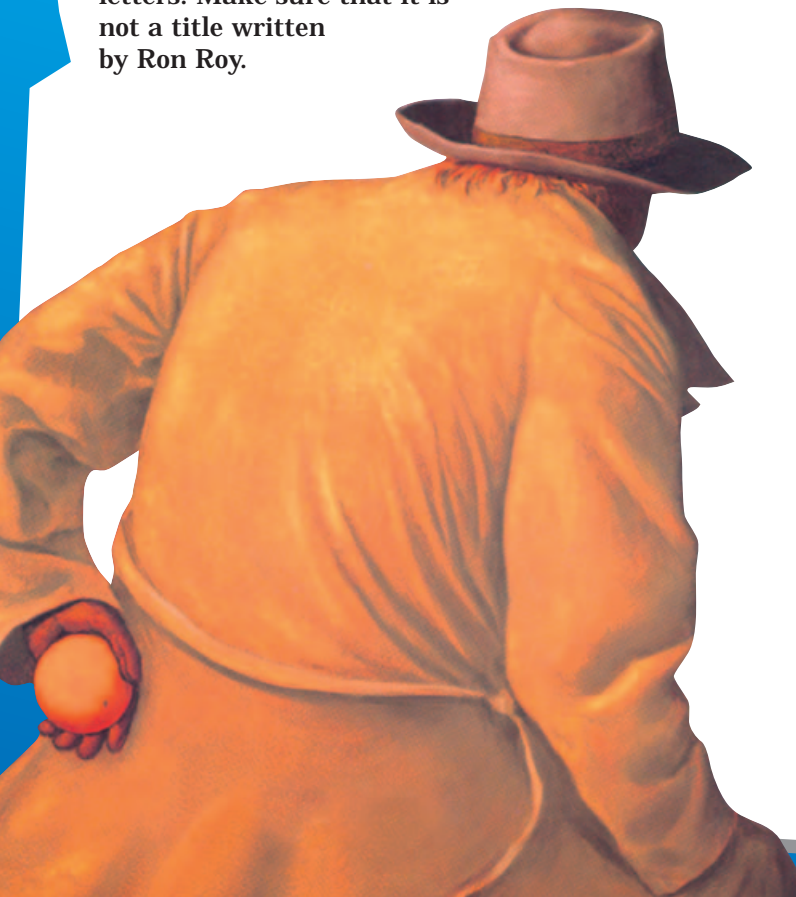
The development of characters in a mystery is paramount. Using a Venn diagram, students should record things they discover about the main characters as they read the series. In most beginning reader series, the author does a wonderful job of making the characters familiar in each book, and A to Z is no exception.

**Venn Diagram:** Using the Venn diagram provided, have students fill out the diagram listing all the common characteristics of Ruth Rose, Dink, and Josh, as well as the ones that are different. For example, all three kids are in third grade, Dink and Ruth Rose live on the same street, and all three are best friends.

### Alliteration

Each one of the A to Z Mysteries has an alliterative title: *The Absent Author*, *The Bald Bandit*, *The Canary Caper*, etc. The author even has an alliterative name—Ron Roy!

Discuss the titles with the class. Have the letters of the alphabet printed on paper squares. Have each child pick a letter. Using the dictionary, have the students come up with a title using their assigned letters. Make sure that it is not a title written by Ron Roy.



### Whodunit? Trivia Question Cards

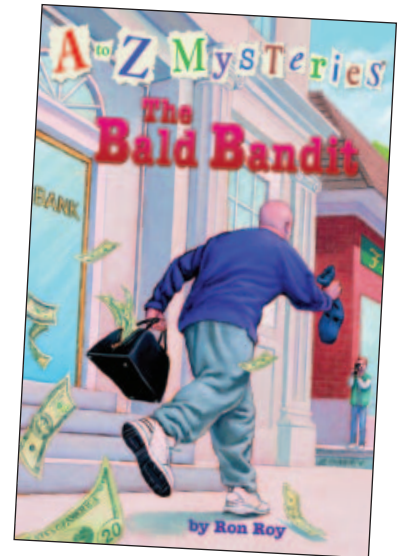
As the books are read, the students can make question cards to be used by the class as a review game. Have a child, or pairs of children, record questions about specifics in the story. The junior detectives must prove their answers to the teacher before being allowed to do the questions aloud with the class. A question and answer type of game could become a part of the sharing time.

### Literature Circles

Divide your class up into groups and have each group read a different A to Z Mystery. Have each group discuss their book, and then have them put together a presentation to tell the class about it so that the whole class learns about all the A to Z Mysteries books. Then students can read their favorites on their own.

#### Variations:

- Have students read books with a partner and then do a book report to present to the class.
- Use a Venn Diagram to have students compare and contrast two different A to Z titles.



## Dramatics

### Character Caper

Children really get to know characters in this series. Have a contest that encourages students to dress as their favorite character. Allow the class to brainstorm the categories on which they will be judged. Awards can be optional and can be presented for originality rather than who looks the most like a character.

For more information on The A to Z Mysteries series, visit us online at [www.randomhouse.com/teachers](http://www.randomhouse.com/teachers)

# A to Z Mysteries®

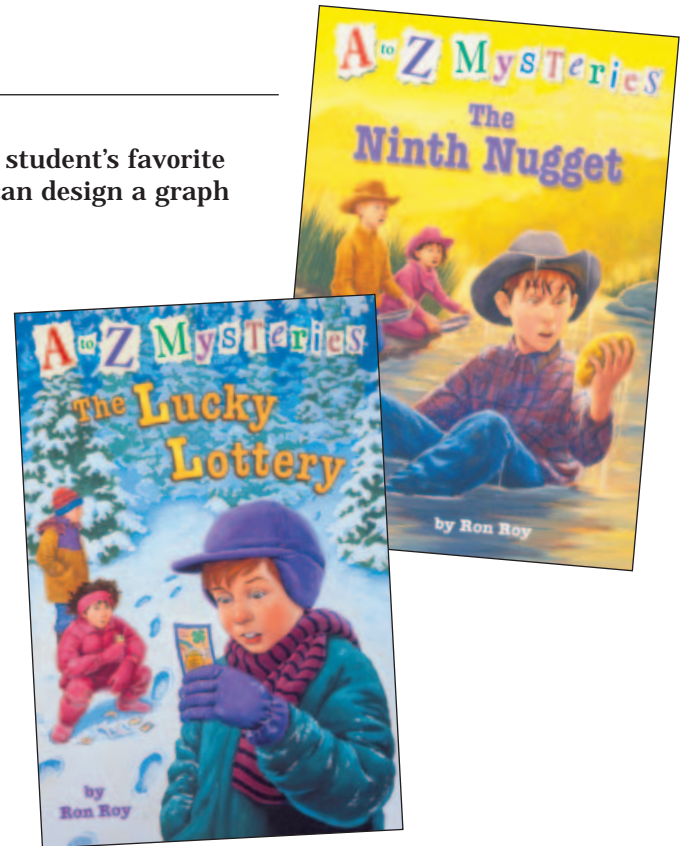
## Math

### Which Is Your Favorite?

Design a chart that lists the titles and has space to tally the student's favorite A to Z Mysteries. After completing the survey, the students can design a graph recording the data.

**Example:**

Title	Number of People Interviewed
Absent Author	IIII IIII
Bald Bandit	III
Canary Caper	IIII III



## Social Studies/Map Skills

### Where Did It Happen?

A map of the setting is one of the standard elements in each A to Z Mystery and it offers a perfect link to social studies. Using an overhead projector, place an enlarged transparency copy of the map from the front of an A to Z book under a grid transparency to reinforce map skills, as well as provide a story map of the mystery. Have the students locate different areas in the story by using the grid.

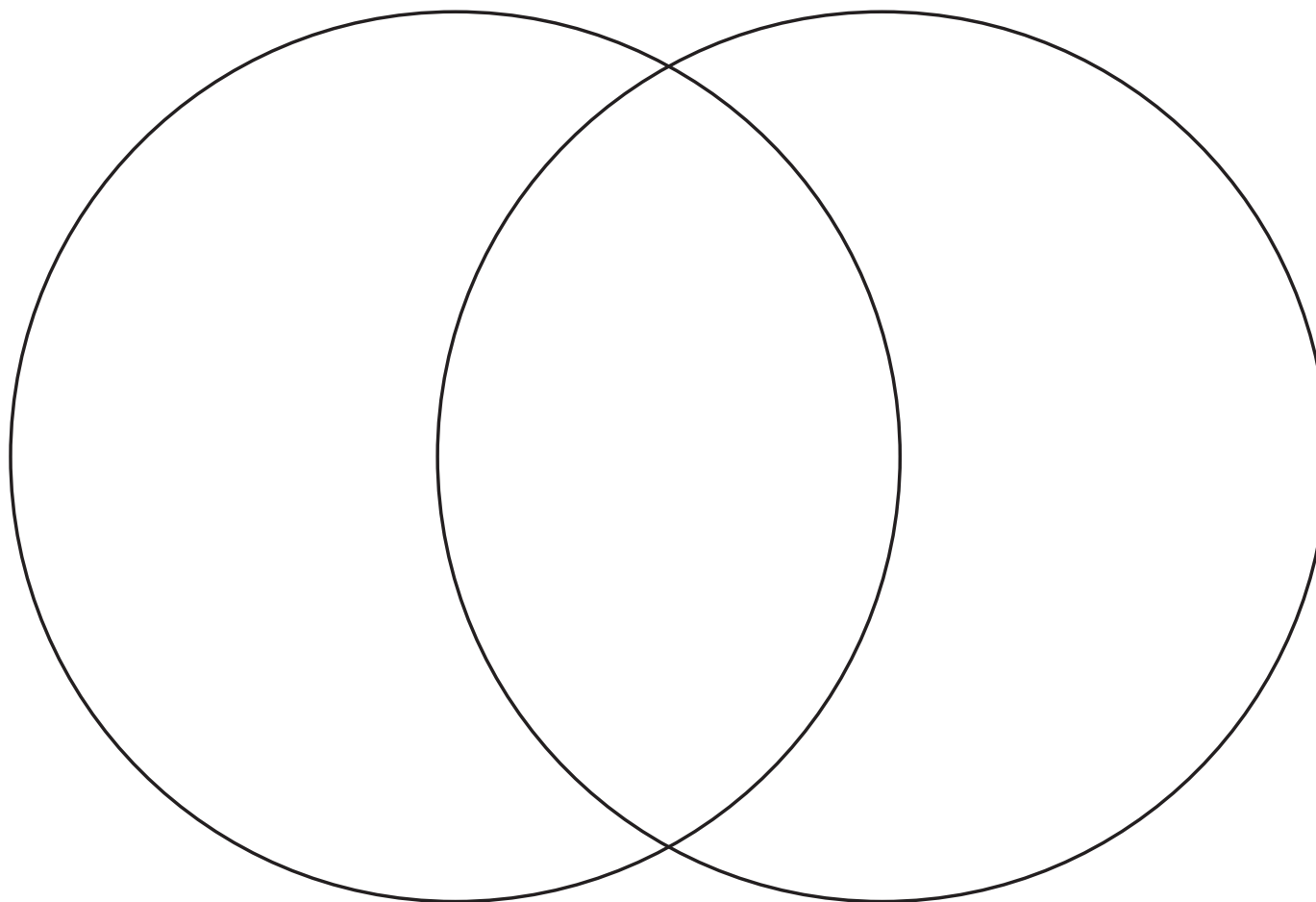
	1	2	3	4	5
A					
B					
C					
D					
E					

*Teaching ideas provided by Jamay Johnson, second-grade teacher, and Melinda Murphy, media specialist, Reed Elementary School, Cypress Fairbanks Independent School District, Houston, Texas.*

# A to Z Mysteries®

by Ron Roy

Name \_\_\_\_\_



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To read all the A to Z Mysteries, visit your local library or bookstore.



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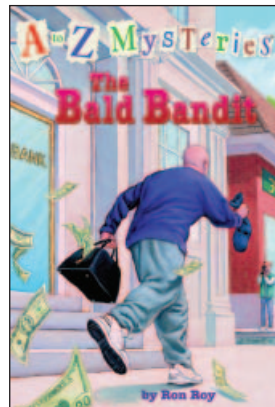


# Have You Read All the **A to Z Mysteries** Titles?



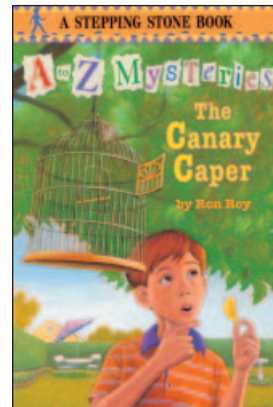
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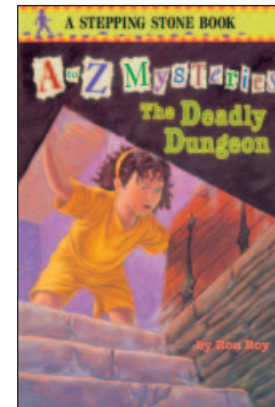
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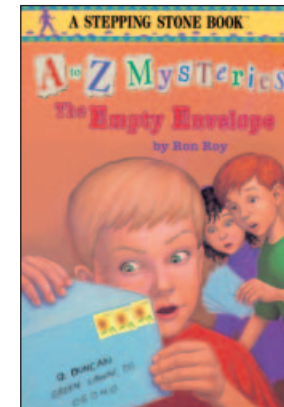
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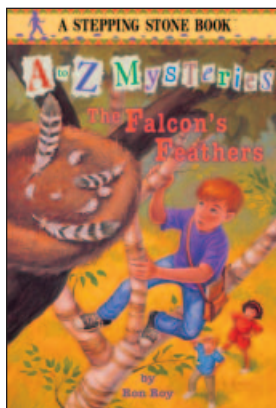
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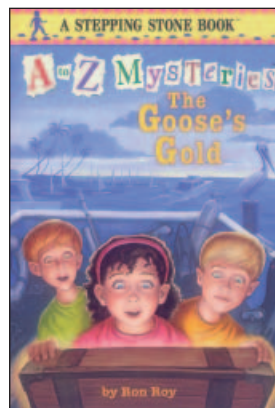
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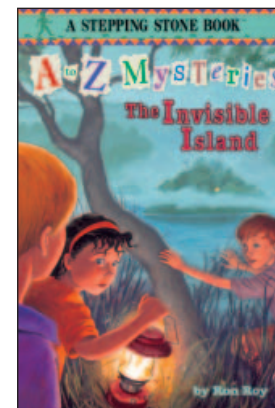
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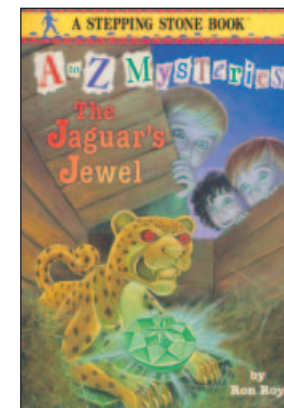
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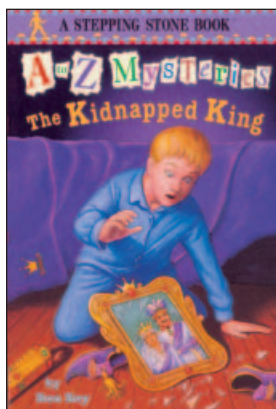
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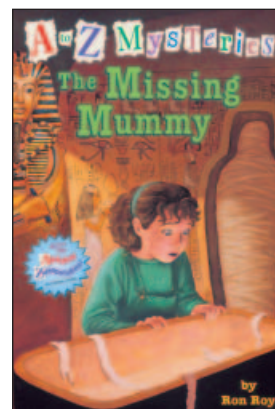
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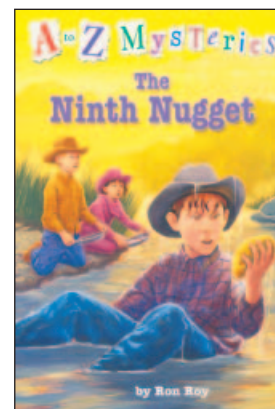
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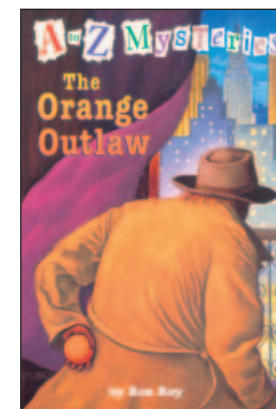
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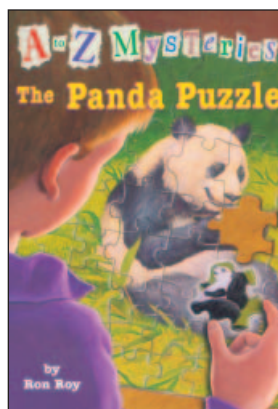
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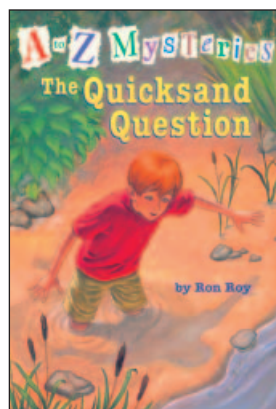
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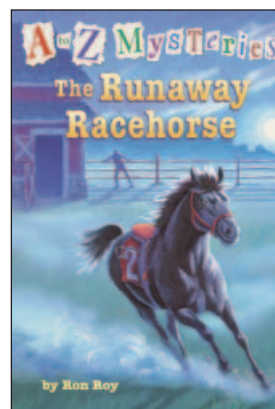
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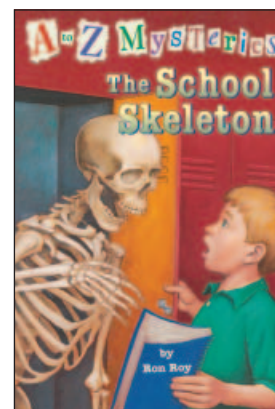
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