

AGES
6-8

CLASSROOM GUIDE



Hilde Cracks the Case

Guide to Growing Young Reporters

Use this guide to teach your students more about journalism and to engage further with the Branches series Hilde Cracks the Case!

Featuring:

- How to research and write a news article
 - Tips for interviewing sources
 - Fact vs. opinion exercises
 - Journalism key words
- AND MORE!



Meets Common Core and Other Standards—SEE INSIDE

Reporter's Notepad

A mysterious break-in on Orange Street fuels the story of Hilde Cracks the Case #1: *Hero Dog!* While author and real-life reporter Hilde Lysiak enjoys reporting on crimes in her town, she writes all different types of stories that appear in her newspaper, the *Orange Street News*.

Visit www.orangestreetnews.com with your young reporters to get more ideas. Ask students to keep a notebook with “seed” ideas for stories.



Here are some prompts you can give to help your young reporters:

- What do you wonder about? Are there questions you have that teachers or parents can't answer easily? Write down questions and ideas you have related to those topics.
- Keep a list of things that are scary, funny, surprising, or interesting. How can you write about those things in a way that is scary, funny, surprising, or interesting to others?
- Collect pictures and articles that interest or inspire you (cut them from newspapers or print them from the Internet). Note why these items caught your attention and come up with a quick, one-sentence description for each item that will get others interested as well.
- Think about people in your school or community who you could interview. What do they do that others might want to read about?
- Visit places in your school or community that are important or enjoyable. What should others know about each place?
- Observe what is going on around you. What catches your eye and why? Do you need to do research to learn more about your observation? Would people want to read about what you have observed?

When your young reporters have come up with ideas for a news story, introduce the following pre-writing strategies:

- Create a wheel. Put the main idea in the center as the hub and then write the connected ideas coming from the center, as if they're the spokes of the wheel.
- Make a timeline. Plot what happened first, next, and last on a timeline. Do you want to start writing at the beginning, middle, or end? What part of the timeline tells the best story?
- Talk it out. Sometimes it's helpful to talk about an idea with someone else to see if it really is a good story or if there's a more interesting way to write about it.
- Keep your notepad nearby. That way you can take notes about new ideas at any place and any time. You never know when inspiration will strike!

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.1.2; 2.2; 3.2: Write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section.

Interviewing Tips

Hilde knows that it is important to interview people in the neighborhood to discover if they have information about breaking news. Being prepared and knowing interview techniques will help your young reporters get information.

How to prepare for an interview:

- Do your research. Find out as much about the topic or person as possible *before* the interview so that you can generate good questions.
- Schedule your interview. Plan when and where to meet for the interview. Be sure that it is a quiet space with no distractions.
- Have your materials ready. Remember your reporter's notepad, a writing utensil, a recording device, and a camera. (Always ask first if it's okay to record the interview or take a photo.)
- Write and listen. Listen closely as you write down the interviewee's answers. In their answers, they may reveal information that will lead you to ask other questions.

How to conduct a successful interview:

- Explain why you are conducting the interview. Be polite and respectful.
- Avoid asking questions that can be answered “yes” or “no.”
- Ask open-ended questions such as “Tell me about . . .” or “What do you think about . . . ?”
- Pose specific questions by asking, “When did this happen?” “How often . . . ?” “When did you start thinking about . . . ?”
- If needed, request clarification or elaboration. “Can you tell me more about . . . ?” “Is there anything else you would like to add?”
- Show you're listening and engaged by looking up from time to time or nodding so that your interviewee knows you are interested.
- Immediately after the interview, while it's still fresh in your mind, jot down any additional ideas, reflections, or observations that you may not have written down during the interview.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.1.1; 2.1; 3.1: Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade level topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

News Article Writing Sandwich

News articles have many parts, including the headline, lede, nut, quote, support, and kicker, as shown in the article at the end of each Hilde Cracks the Case book. Use the graphic below to assist your young reporters in writing a story for a newspaper (a class or library newspaper, an individual newspaper, or a community newspaper) or in summarizing a news article that they read. Follow the pattern of the writing sandwich using the reproducible below.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.1.2; 2.2; 3.2: Write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section.

- Headline** The title over an article that gives the reader an idea of what the article is about.
- Lede** Opening sentence that entices the reader to read the article.
- Nut** Always comes after the lede; the “nutshell” sentence or paragraph that lays out the main argument, important points, or central message in a concise way.
- Quote** Something that someone else has said (usually in an interview); should support your nut statement.
- Support** Writing in the reporter’s own words about the news story, including the reporter’s findings and facts; can be paired with quotes or stand on its own.
- Kicker** A short catchy phrase to close the article; sometimes a surprising or poignant revelation.

HEADLINE:

LEDE:

NUT:

QUOTE:

SUPPORT:

KICKER:

Reporter's Toolkit

Hilde writes down important words in her Reporter's Toolkit to assist readers in understanding the journalism terms used in each book. Expand your young reporters' vocabulary by giving them words to define and use. Here are some reporter vocabulary words to get started.

- **Active Scene:** a place where emergency workers are still doing their jobs.
- **Confession:** when someone finally admits what he or she did.
- **Confirm:** to make sure information is correct.
- **Deadline:** time or date a story is due.
- **Exclusive:** a story only one reporter is covering.
- **Fact:** a piece of information that is proven to be true.
- **Hook:** something interesting that draws the reader into a story.
- **Inspect:** to look at closely.
- **Investigate:** to dig deeper into a story.
- **Notepad:** where a reporter keeps clues, quotes, and important notes.
- **Press Pass:** a photo ID worn by reporters.
- **Source:** a person who gives information to a reporter.
- **Theory:** an idea that hasn't been proven yet.
- **Tip:** a new bit of information about a story.
- **Witness:** a person who sees something happen.

Write each word on a separate index card or on the reproducible below that young reporters can paste in their reporter's notepads later. Make sure you have enough cards/pages for each young reporter to have his/her own. Young reporters should select a card/page and fill in the following blanks on it, using a dictionary if necessary:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.1.4a; L.2.4a: Use sentence level context as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

Word: _____

My word means: _____

My word in a sentence: _____

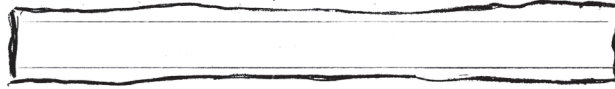
Map Makers Project

Hilde loves her Orange Street neighborhood in Selinsgrove! Each book includes a map that shows the important locations she visits as part of her investigative reporting in that story.

Ask students to think about a story—either real or imagined—and where it takes place. Then, ask them to draw a map that shows that place—it can be of somewhere they know, related places that are meaningful to them, or an imagined location. The map does not need to be accurate, geographically, but students should provide a header and a key to explain the different components of the map, as in *Hilde Cracks the Case #1: Hero Dog!* Use the reproducible below and have your young reporters create their own map. They can use one of these prompts or come up with a map idea of their own!

- a place that's special because it holds an important memory
- a location where you like to go with your friends or family for fun
- a route to school, to a friend's or relative's house, or to another place you go frequently
- a path where you walk your dog
- a residence where your best friend lives
- an interesting site in nature
- a spot where you play sports
- a setting or place where you and your family go on trips

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.9a: With prompting and support, students will make cultural connections to text and self.



Use this space to create a map of a real or imagined space! The size of the place or places represented is up to you. Don't forget to include a heading at the top and a key, like Hilde does in *Hilde Cracks the Case*.

Whodunit Puzzle

In each Hilde Cracks the Case book, Hilde uncovers clues throughout the story that help her solve the mystery. As Hilde says in her Introduction, each story is like a puzzle—and the pieces are the answers to the six key questions of journalism: who, what, where, when, why, how. Choose one of the Hilde Cracks the Case books—or let your young reporters choose one—to use for this activity. Have young reporters answer the following questions, then record their answers on the corresponding puzzle pieces:

Piece #1: Who is involved? Who are the suspects?

Piece #2: What happened? What are three clues Hilde finds?

Piece #3: Where did the crime happen? Where are the places involved in the mystery?

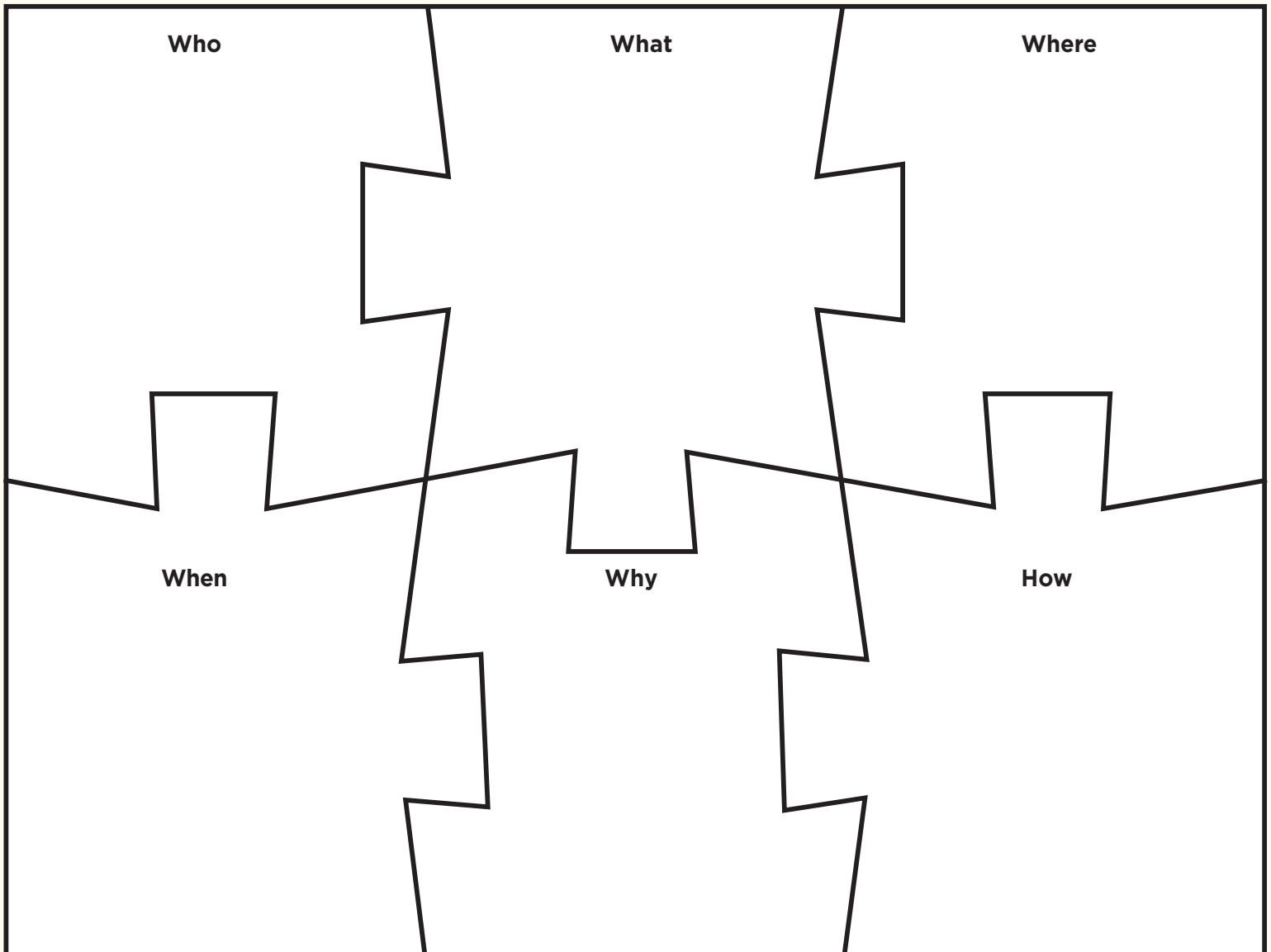
Piece #4: When did the crime happen? (Date and time?)

Piece #5: Why was the crime committed?

Piece #6: How is the mystery solved?

On the back of the handout, young reporters should write down the author and book title and also write about why they liked the story. This strategy can be adapted for mystery stories that students write as well.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.1; 2.1; 3.1: Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.



Fact or Opinion

A fact is a statement that *can* be proven to be true.

An opinion is a statement that *cannot* be proven to be true.

Either as a class or as an individual activity, have your young reporters read each sentence and write an F if it is a fact or an O if it is an opinion. If they believe the statement is a fact, they should provide evidence to prove that it is true using page numbers from Hilde Cracks the Case #1: *Hero Dog!*

- ___ Hilde lives in Selinsgrove.
- ___ Mrs. Taggart's pie won the Bake-Off Bonanza last year.
- ___ Everyone should own a dog.
- ___ Hilde's newspaper is called the *Orange Street News*.
- ___ Reading is fun!
- ___ The tickets to the Noise Pollution concert cost \$250.
- ___ All teenagers are Mean-agers.

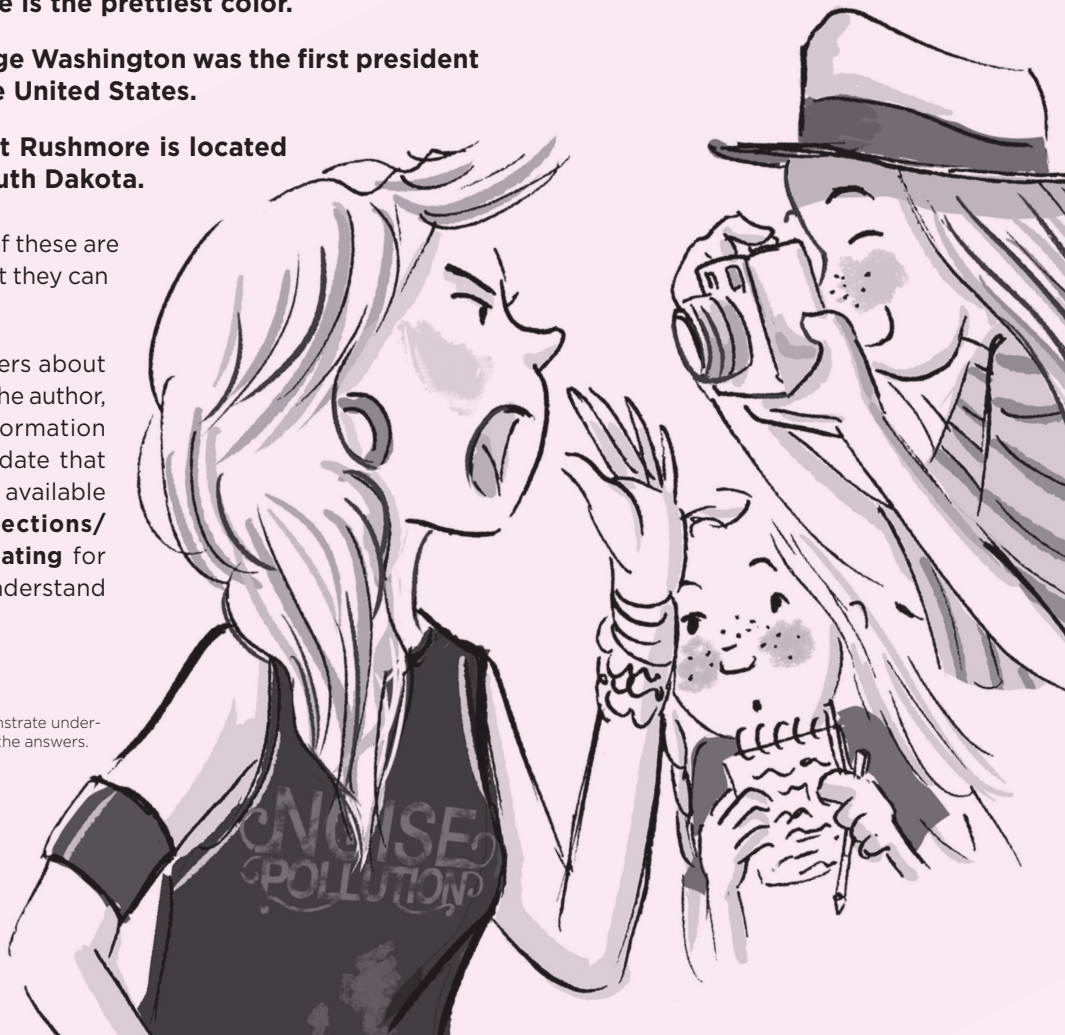
Here are some more statements for your young reporters to categorize as facts or opinions.

- ___ The date of Halloween is October 31.
- ___ The blue whale is the largest mammal.
- ___ Winter is the best season of the year.
- ___ Purple is the prettiest color.
- ___ George Washington was the first president of the United States.
- ___ Mount Rushmore is located in South Dakota.

If your young reporters aren't sure which of these are facts or opinions, brainstorm resources that they can use to research the answers.

Lead a discussion with your young reporters about what makes a source reliable by looking at the author, the organization that is housing this information (publishing company, website, etc.), the date that the information was provided, and other available information. Visit www.ala.org/rusa/sections/history/resources/primarysources/evaluating for more support in helping your students understand how to evaluate sources for reliability.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.1.1; 2.1; 3.1: Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.





Pick a book. Grow a reader!

Scholastic's early chapter book line, Branches, is aimed at newly independent readers. With easy-to-read text, high-interest content, fast-paced plots, and illustrations on every page, these books will boost reading confidence and stamina. Branches books help readers grow!

Hilde Cracks the Case is the first mystery series in the Branches line, and we are confident that young readers and budding reporters everywhere are going to love solving crimes with Hilde!

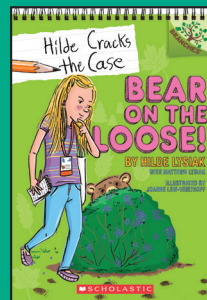
For more information on Branches and a guide to using all Branches series with students, visit www.scholastic.com/branches.

Nine-year-old crime reporter Hilde Lysiak is starring in her very own early chapter book series!

Hilde Cracks the Case is a fictional series, but each book is inspired by a news story Hilde has covered in real life. Young readers will learn about the process of reporting as they tag along with Hilde on her journalistic adventures. Each book even closes with a fictional news article.



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Reporter and author **Hilde Lysiak** is the ten-year-old publisher of Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania's monthly newspaper, the *Orange Street News*. The paper has 700+ paid subscribers and is read by hundreds of thousands more on her website. Hilde's journalism efforts have been profiled in the *New York Times*, *Columbia Journalism Review*, the *New York Daily News*, *NBC Today*, and hundreds of other newspapers and television stations around the world. Hilde is cowriting Hilde Cracks the Case with her dad, Matthew Lysiak.

Matthew Lysiak, coauthor of the Hilde Cracks the Case series, is a nationally recognized journalist and author. He has reported for the *New York Daily News*, *Newsweek*, the *New York Sun*, *AM New York*, and the *Guardian*. He coauthored the young adult memoir of teen scientist Jack Andraka, *Breakthrough: How One Teen Innovator Is Changing the World*, and is also the author of *Newtown: An American Tragedy*.



Photo credit: Scholastic Inc.

Photo credit: Joanne Lew-Vriethoff



Joanne Lew-Vriethoff, illustrator of the Hilde Cracks the Case series, was born in Malaysia and grew up in Los Angeles. She received her BA in Illustration from Art Center College of Design in Pasadena. Today, Joanne lives in Amsterdam, where she spends much of her time illustrating children's books.

About the writer for this guide:

Cyndi Giorgis is an avid reader of books for children and young adults. She has served on the Newbery, Caldecott, Geisel Award committees, and Pura Belpré Committees. She is currently a professor of children's and young adult literature at the University of Texas at El Paso. She enjoys reading aloud in elementary classrooms and experiencing the joy of children's responses to books. Cyndi writes books, articles, and curriculum guides that highlight effective strategies for sharing literature with children. She also loves a good mystery!



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