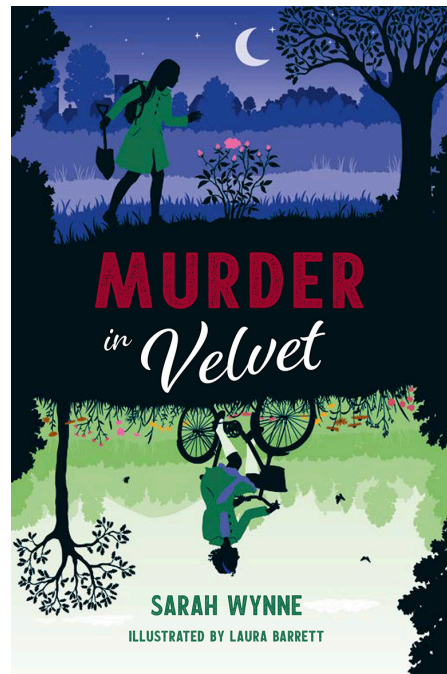# TEACHING NOTES:

MURDER in Velvet

Written by Sarah Wynne
Illustrated by Laura Barrett
Published by New Frontier Publishing
www.newfrontierpublishing.co.uk
www.newfrontier.com.au

SYNOPSIS

13-year-old Grace loves her new charity shop coat. In fact, it's perfect. Except for one tiny thing. When she wears it, she sees visions of the previous owner's life ... and their murder! Grace and her best friend, Suzy, decide to investigate but digging up the past reveals secrets some people want to keep hidden. Can Grace stay one step ahead and solve a fifty-year-old murder or will she become the killer's next victim? A gripping story of secrets and murder for fans of fast-paced thrillers.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sarah Wynne is from Chester in the northwest of England and lives with her husband, son and their little white ball of chaos, Daisy the dog. She spent over 10 years working as a primary teaching assistant but now writes full-time and provides editorial services to writers of children's fiction. When she's not writing she'll usually be found with her nose in a middle grade book (or researching which book to read next or talking about books!).

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Laura Barrett is an illustrator based in South London, specialising in intricate silhouette illustrations and decorative monochrome patterns. Her clients include the BBC, John Lewis, Marks & Spencer, Taschen and Penguin Random House. Laura creates artwork for design and publishing: illustrating packaging, children's picture books and book covers for all ages. Her illustrated books include The Snow Queen, The Little Mermaid, The Nativity and the Fairy Tale Revolution series.

EDUCATIONAL APPLICABILITY

Murder in Velvet is a fast-paced, gripping middle grade thriller that will have readers on the edge of their seat and wanting to read more. This story features a diverse cast of characters, including the two main protagonists, Grace and her best friend, Suzy. They are resourceful, strongminded girls who are determined to discover the truth, no matter what it takes. Key themes are friendship, resilience, self-belief and adventure. Important issues such as bullying and peer pressure are also woven into the story. With the murder taking place in the 1960s, there are specific references to 60s décor, film and fashion running through the story.

LITERACY

Activity One

Write a newspaper report about the arrest of Jonathan Bainbridge.

You might want to include:

·   A headline – this should be short and grab the reader's attention.

·   An orientation – a short one or two sentence summary of what happened (think who, what, where, when, why).

·   An article including the main events from the book.

·   Witness statements and interviews with key characters. These could be:

Mrs Peel

DS Gonzales

Grace

Suzy

Grace's mum

Suzy's dad

Or anyone else you can think of.

·   Pictures with captions

·   A reorientation

The Chesterford Chronicle

chesterfordchronicle.co.uk   since 1960

BREAKING NEWS!

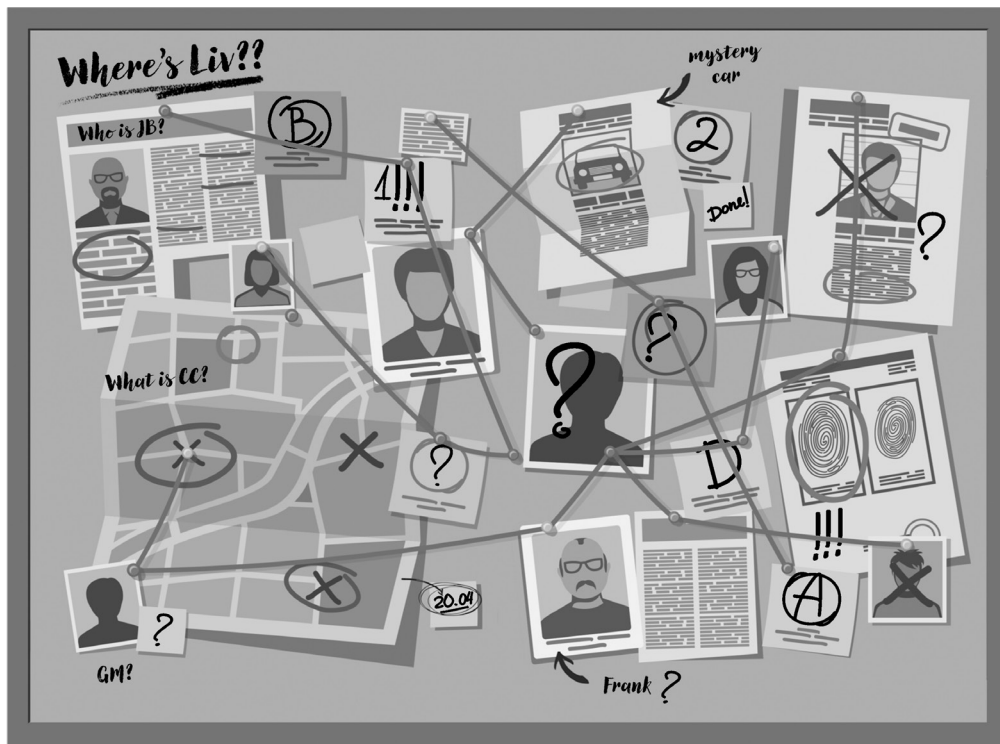**LOCAL GIRL CLOSE TO WRAPPING UP MYSTERY**

Activity Two

Lots of stories feature an object that can do something unusual. In this story, it is the coat that gives Grace her visions. In Harry Potter, there is a map that shows where people are. The Person Controller has a gaming controller that (you've guessed it!) controls people. The Caravan on the Edge of Doom features a toilet that takes people to the Land of the Dead! These are just a few examples. The key similarity between all of these stories is that the objects are normal, everyday items.

Your task is to plan a story involving an object that can do something unusual. It could be a toaster that toasts messages or fates on the bread, a pencil that makes the drawing become real, a pillow that sends your character somewhere when they sleep ... the possibilities are endless and you can be as creative as you want!

You will need to think about:

- Your character – who are they?
- Side characters – do they have a friend/sibling?
- What the object is and what it looks like.
- Where did your character get the object?
- What the object does.
- What happens – usually, things will be going well until (uh oh!) something happens that creates a problem for the character.
- How they overcome the problem.

Once you have created your plan, have a go at writing your story! You can even illustrate it if you want to, or design a front cover.

Can you find all the words in the *Murder in Velvet* wordseach?

Name: Class: Date:

word search

MURDER IN VELVET

```
S  T  G  F  V  P  Y  E  Y  I  T  R
E  E  Y  R  A  I  D  N  Z  G  I  A
T  V  L  O  A  H  S  E  U  H  C  L
L  L  I  A  M  S  I  I  S  S  L  N
O  E  V  T  Z  D  S  U  O  H  U  U
O  V  E  Y  C  N  B  L  H  N  E  N
H  A  R  P  T  E  O  R  A  L  S  E
C  I  E  C  S  I  T  G  E  N  R  E
S  B  D  O  N  R  R  E  C  E  D  R
E  I  R  A  T  F  M  A  D  D  B  G
N  K  U  T  I  Y  N  N  H  O  J  A
I  E  M  C  U  D  G  R  A  C  E  E
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ABEER	DIARY	MRSPEEL
BIKE	FRIENDSHIP	MURDER
CHARITY	GRACE	ROSEBUSH
CLUES	GRASSLAND	SCHOOL
COAT	GREEN	SUZY
DCGONZALES	JOHNNY	VELVET
DETECTIVE	LIV	VISIONS

MURDER IN VELVET

```
S  T  G  F  V  P  Y  E  Y  I  T  R
E  E  Y  R  A  I  D  N  Z  G  I  A
T  V  L  O  A  H  S  E  U  H  C  L
L  L  I  A  M  S  I  I  S  S  L  N
O  E  V  T  Z  D  S  U  O  H  U  U
O  V  E  Y  C  N  B  L  H  N  E  N
H  A  R  P  T  E  O  R  A  L  S  E
C  I  E  C  S  I  T  G  E  N  R  E
S  B  D  O  N  R  R  E  C  E  D  R
E  I  R  A  T  F  M  A  D  D  B  G
N  K  U  T  I  Y  N  N  H  O  J  A
I  E  M  C  U  D  G  R  A  C  E  E
```

ABEER	DIARY	MRSPEEL
BIKE	FRIENDSHIP	MURDER
CHARITY	GRACE	ROSEBUSH
CLUES	GRASSLAND	SCHOOL
COAT	GREEN	SUZY
DCGONZALES	JOHNNY	VELVET
DETECTIVE	LIV	VISIONS

HISTORY

Activity One - Reading comprehension

Many, many years ago, people used smoke signals or drums to communicate over long distances. However, these methods had their flaws. Smoke signals did not work without a direct line of sight and were affected by bad weather. Although communication by drum beat didn't suffer from the same issues, people could only communicate very limited messages as the drum beats weren't linked to particular letters or words, and so its use was limited.

The idea of the smoke signal was developed further in the 1790s with the invention of semaphore. This system involved placing structures with arms that moved and displayed letters and numbers on top of hills and other high places. People were stationed at these structures to send and receive messages. Telescopes were used to see stations a long distance away.

Then, in the early 1800s, two physicists developed ideas that would help take long-distance communication to the next level. The first was Alessandro Volta, who invented the battery in 1800. Then, in 1820, Hans Christian Oersted discovered a connection between electricity and magnetism. These discoveries sparked the imaginations of inventors across the globe who saw the potential to use them to aid communication.

The two sets of researchers credited with the invention of the telegraph were Sir William Cooke and Sir Charles Wheatstone in England and Alfred Vail, Samuel Morse and Leonard Gale in the USA.

In the 1830s, the British team developed a telegraph system whereby an electric current moved five magnetic needles on a panel. The needles then pointed to letters and numbers. This system was quickly used in railroad signals in Britain.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the Atlantic, Morse and his two American partners created a single-circuit telegraph. This involved an operator key being pushed down to complete the electrical circuit of the battery. This then sent the signal along a wire to a receiver on the other end. In order to use this method to transmit messages, Morse and Vail created a system of dots and dashes to represent numbers and letters. The combination given depended on how frequently a letter is used in the English language. For example, the letter 'e' was represented by a single dot, whereas the letter 'q' was represented by two dashes, a dot and a dash. This came to be known as Morse code.

In 1843 the US Congress provided Morse and Vail with funding to set up their telegraph system between Washington and Baltimore (a distance of 40 miles). In 1844, Morse sent Vial the first ever telegraph message: 'What hath God wrought!'. The success of this message led to the telegraph system spreading across America and the rest of the world. This was possible due to improvements in wire insulation (developed by Ezra Cornell) and the invention of the Quadruplex system by Thomas Edison which allowed four messages to be sent at the same time.

Eventually, even oceans became no barrier to communication, and in 1866 the first permanent telegraph cable was laid across the Atlantic Ocean, allowing messages to be sent overseas. By 1940, there were 40 telegraph cables across the Atlantic.

The ability to communicate great distances changed how wars were fought and how newspapers got their stories. It even helped everyday people communicate, and in the 1920s and 1930s, delivery boys often delivered to homes and businesses. Previously, the only way to communicate any distance was by long-distance calls, which were very expensive.

However, the development of new technologies, such as telephones, caused the telegraph to become obsolete and the American telegraph service, provided by Western Union, ended in 2006.

QUESTIONS

1. Name two early forms of long-distance communication.
2. How were semaphore messages seen from a long way away?
3. How might semaphore have had similar limitations to smoke signals?
4. How was the British telegraph used?
5. How are letters and numbers represented in Morse code?
6. Where was the first telegraph message sent?
7. How do you think the laying of telegraph wires across the Atlantic Ocean changed how newspapers got their stories?
8. Find the word 'obsolete' in the text. What do you think it might mean? Find out the actual definition. Were you right?

Activity Two

The development of the telegraph was a major breakthrough in communication, allowing people to communicate over great distances.

Your task is to research another invention that has helped people to communicate. You can present your research as a poster, a slideshow or however you choose.

You could research:
Louie Braille and Braille
Alexander Graham Bell and the telephone
Tim Berners-Lee and the internet
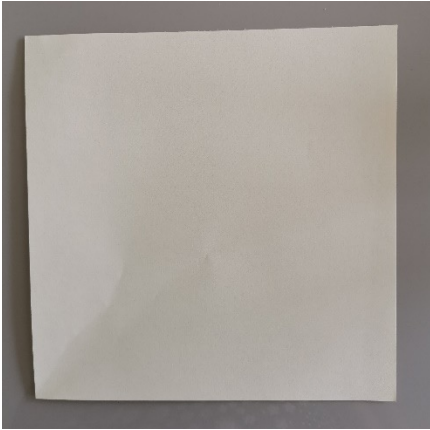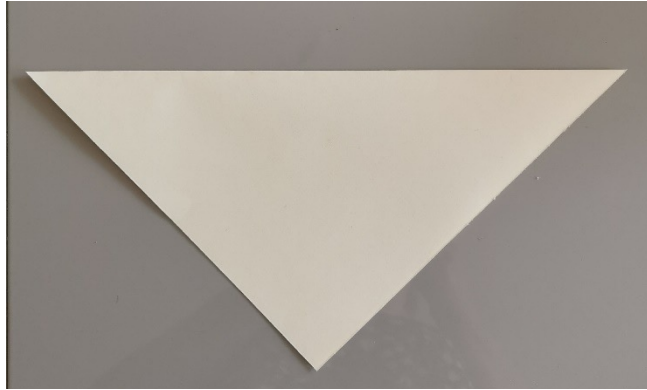Or any other invention you would like to find out more about.

STEM
Activity One

In the story, Grace and Suzy have to fold hundreds of leaflets during detention. Boring! How much more fun would it have been if they could have folded them into origami shapes?

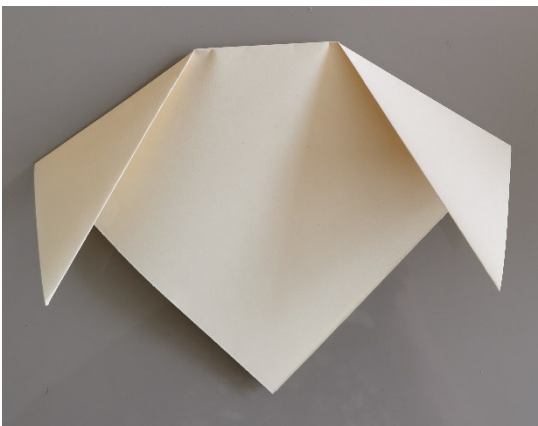Here's an origami Scruff (Mr Peeel's Dog) for you to try:
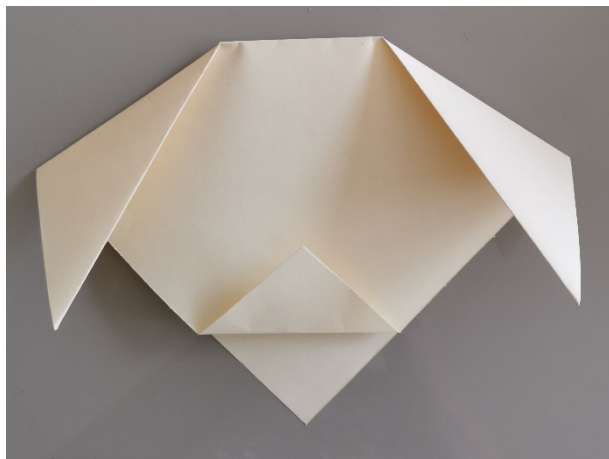
Step One: get a square piece of paper
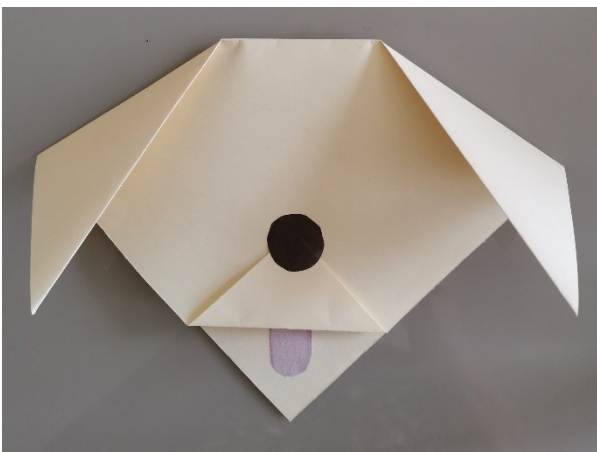

Step Two: Fold it in half

Step Three: Fold down the ears

Step Four: Fold up the nose

Step Five: Add a nose and tongue

Step Six: Decorate your dog!

Activity 2

In the story, one of Grace's lessons was to design the logo for a festival food truck. Hers was called Grace's Grub.

Create a menu for your food truck.

You will need to think about:
- What you will be selling. Food? Drink? Both? For example, if you have a pizza van, you will sell different types of pizza but might also sell soft drinks.
- How much it will cost you to make or buy the items.
- How much you will sell items for.

REMEMBER: you want to make a profit but don't want to scare people away with high prices!

You could carry out your research on the internet and then create a spreadsheet with all of the information on. You could even include formulae to add up the costs and work out profits automatically for you!

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY
Activity One

Make your own Morse code bracelet.

You will need:
·   String
·   Straws
·   Beads of two different colours
·   A needle (optional)

Instructions:
·   Cut a piece of string about 30cm in length and tie a knot in one end
          (you may need a longer piece if your name is long!).
·   Work out your name in Morse code and gather the beads and straws that you will need.
Straws = dashes
Bead colour 1 = dots
Bead colour 2 separates the letters in your name
·   Thread the beads and straws onto the string, making sure you thread them in the correct order.
·   Tie the two ends of the string together to make a loop.
·   Your bracelet is finished!

Activity Two

Your task is to create a logo for your own food truck.

You might want to think about:
·   What your food truck will be called
·   What food it will sell and how this might affect your design and choice of colour

Activity Three

Why don't you have a go at designing your own cover for the book? You could include elements from the book's cover or use your own ideas.