

Word Detectives Grade 8

Sequential weekly case lessons

23 word-part cases, each with a complete five-day routine, student pages, a short mystery, a check and an answer key. Grade 8 also includes a research capstone. Use with the 36-week calendar in the Teaching Guide.



By Violetta Vrettos, Ms. V

Sequential teaching edition • September 2026

GRADE 8 / FIXED ORDER WITH FLEXIBLE INSTRUCTIONAL PACE

Case index

Case	Wk	Investigation	Part families	Page
01	3	The quiet observatory	ast/astr / qui/quies	3
02	4	The empathy survey	path / psych	8
03	5	The two systems exhibit	neur / cardi	13
04	6	The skin and alignment files	derm / ortho	18
05	7	The encrypted physics note	phys / crypt	23
06	8	The two body terms	hem/hemo / gastr	28
07	10	The conductor's command	mand/mend / duc/duct	33
08	11	The regulated domain	reg/rect / dom	38
09	12	The urban map	polis/polit / urb	43
10	13	The convincing judgment	jud / vinc/vict	48
11	14	The fortified model	potent / fort	53
12	15	The conserved freedom	liber / serv	58
13	19	The ambiguous contradiction	ambi- / contra-/counter-	63
14	20	The extraordinary retrospect	retro- / extra-	68
15	21	The adjacent histories	ante- / juxta-	73
16	22	The new pen name	pseudo- / neo-	78
17	23	The century quadrilateral	quad-/quart- / cent	83
18	24	The equal sided goal	sur- / equi-	88
19	28	The solitary beginning	-esis/-osis / -tude	93
20	29	The ambitious ecology report	-ous/-ious / -ology/-onomy	98
21	30	The glowing picturesque scene	-escent / -esque	103
22	31	The tenacious accuracy check	-acious / -acy	108
23	32	The mobile cellular model	-ular / -ile	113
24	33	The final word investigation	Research capstone	118

Each case contains three learner pages between its teacher page and key. Use the Teaching Guide for the full 36-week calendar.

The quiet observatory

Goal: Use ast/astr and qui/quies as clues, then check a whole word in context. Plan five 20-minute sessions; timing is a pilot estimate.

Prepare: Print learner pages 2–4 of this case, provide the two cards below, a pencil, scrap paper and a dictionary. Keep page 5 as the key. No previous purchase is required.

Evidence card A	Evidence card B
ast/astr root star Greek astronomy, asteroid	qui/quies root quiet, rest Latin quiescent, quiet

Entry bridge and review

Say: “A prefix goes before a base, a suffix after it. A base or root carries central meaning and may be free or bound. Spot a useful part, read the word, think about meaning, then check the sentence.” Review un-, not or reversal, and re-, again. Teach these now if this is a single-case purchase.

Monday: Say: “In astronomy, ast/astr gives the clue star. Here the whole word means the scientific study of celestial objects and space.” Model Spot, Read, Think, Check. Teach the second card and complete practice 1–2 together.

Tuesday: Retrieve both cards without looking. Reread the examples. Complete practice 3, then play the game below. Ask for reasons before revealing the cards.

Wednesday: Retrieve the two review parts above. Complete practice 4–5. Compare a partner’s explanation, revise it, and add both new parts to a notebook.

Thursday: Read the case passage aloud together if needed. Box target affixes or underline roots. Answer the evidence question, then complete the illustrated case report.

Friday: Play one brief retrieval round, then give the independent five-item check without the cards. Accept oral, typed or scribed responses. Score with page 5 and record the next step.

Clue cover

One player chooses a focus word without saying it. Give its part meaning, then a context clue. The partner guesses and explains. Swap roles for four rounds. Earn one evidence mark for an accurate explanation, not for speed. Solo: hide the word, read your clues, then reveal it.

Daily time guide: 3 minutes retrieve, 5 model or reread, 9 practice and play, 3 explain. Add connected reading for a longer class period.

Word evidence practice

Name _____ Date _____

Use the two evidence cards. Explain aloud, write, or ask someone to scribe. A correct meaning matters more than fast writing.

1 Recover the clues

Word part	Meaning clue	Type
ast/astr	_____	_____
qui/quies	_____	_____

2 Mark the evidence

astronomy **quiescent**

Box a target prefix or suffix. Underline a target root. Explain what each clue contributes. You do not have to divide every letter.

3 Build a meaning

Explain astronomy to someone who has never heard it. Use the part clue and the full word meaning. Then explain quiescent.

4 Give the words a job

Write one clear sentence for each focus word. Make the meaning visible through the situation. A partner should be able to explain it.

5 Challenge Pilfer

Pilfer says, "A word part always tells the complete meaning." Explain why readers also need the sentence or a reference. Use one focus word.

The case report

The quiet observatory

The **astronomy** club studies a simulated observatory log. One instrument is described as **quiescent** during a scheduled pause. Pilfer reports that the instrument must be broken because it is not active at that moment. Dana checks the operating schedule and sees that the pause is expected. A quiet or inactive state does not by itself explain its cause. The group distinguishes a description from an explanation, then records what evidence would be needed to identify a fault. Pilfer adds a scheduled snack pause to his own log, where it surprises nobody.

Read the word clues

Box target affixes or underline target roots in the bold words. Read each whole word. Which sentence detail helps you understand it?

Solve the evidence question

Why does inactivity not prove a fault?

Draw the evidence

Sketch the useful clue, model or comparison. Add both focus words as labels. Stick figures and simple diagrams are welcome.



State the finding

My evidence supports _____

It does not prove _____

Detective reminder: A confident voice is not a substitute for evidence.