ABOUT THE BOOK

Watch out, you diabolical masterminds! There’s a new detective on Pancake Court: Bean! She laughs at danger! She solves even the most mysterious mysteries! What? There aren’t any mysteries? Then Bean and her assistant, Ivy, will make some!

EVERYONE LOVES IVY + BEAN!

★ “Ivy and Bean are irresistible.”
—Kirkus Reviews, starred review

★ “Will make readers giggle.”
—Booklist, starred review

★ “Just right for kids moving on from beginning readers.”
—Publishers Weekly, starred review

“Defies expectations of what an early chapter book can be.”
—School Library Journal

[Image: Chronicle Books]
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Jumpstart your mystery-solving skills by using these discussion questions as a complement to Ivy and Bean Take the Case

1. What is a mystery? How is it similar to or different from a puzzle? Describe the mystery in Ivy and Bean Take the Case. Discuss the motive and evidence. Can you add the answer of what a mystery is and how it is different than a puzzle? Have student provide examples of a mystery and a puzzle (brainstorm).
   - Discuss each of the characters in Ivy and Bean Take the Case.
   - What are their defining character traits?
   - Whom do you like the most and whom do you like the least?
   - Which character are you most like?

2. Have a classroom discussion on what makes a good mystery. For example, are mysteries better if the plot is believable and real? Does having an unexpected “twist” at the end of a story make for a better mystery? What do you like about the best about Ivy and Bean Take the Case?

3. In Ivy and Bean Take the Case, the kids who live on Pancake Court are puzzled about where the mysterious rope is coming from and some even jump to conclusions to explain the appearance of it. What happens when people “jump to conclusions”? Have you ever jumped to a conclusion? What happened? How did it feel to know you had assumed something incorrectly?

4. Do you think you would make a good detective? Why or why not? What types of skills or characteristics might be important when solving mysteries?

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

- The Ivy and Bean books are wonderful read-alouds. Teachers may want to read the entire series to the class over the course of the year, or they may decide to specifically highlight Ivy and Bean Take the Case. Parents interested in reading to their children at home may want to follow the teacher’s lead and make sharing Ivy and Bean’s adventures a family activity.

- Literature circles are discussion groups in which children meet regularly to chat about books. Arrange for four to six students to meet as a literature circle to discuss Ivy and Bean Take the Case. By sharing their reactions, opinions, and feelings with their classmates, students will better be able to understand and appreciate the experiences of the duo, including the art of friendship, working together, and finding ways to have fun in any situation.
CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES (Continued)

- Using Ivy and Bean Take the Case as your inspiration, expand your imagination! In groups, create a “mystery” situation of your own. For example, think of an object and let other students ask you “yes” or “no” questions about it. See how long it takes them to solve your puzzle. Or stick an object in a covered shoe box and cut a hole in the box top large enough for a classmate’s hand to slide in. One at a time, group members should stick their hands into the hole, keeping their eyes closed or turned away so they can’t see inside, and try to determine what they are touching based on how it feels and any clues you may give them. But be careful—no sharp objects please!

- As Ivy and Bean learn, part of the success of a detective is paying attention to details. To sharpen those skills, play memory games with your classmates. You could:
  - Close your eyes and answer questions about the classroom (what’s displayed on the bulletin boards, what color shirt your teacher is wearing, etc.).
  - Create a matching game with pictures or images inspired by a scene from Ivy and Bean Take the Case
  - Put a few objects on the floor. Have students inspect the objects for a minute or two. Ask them to think about what is on the floor, what order are the objects in, etc. Have students close their eyes and mix up the objects or take some away. Students get inspect them again and tell you what is missing or different.
  - Play detective and have classmates interview each other using only yes or no responses to figure to their favorite activities, foods, TV shows, etc.

- Calling all artists! Use a separate sheet of paper to create your own mysterious picture. Be sure to include a mystery detail or instead, a picture of a mystery.

- Build an acrostic for one of the characters in the Ivy and Bean Take the Case. To build an acrostic, write the name of the character vertically on a piece of paper. Then write a word that begins with each of the letters in the character’s name. Each sentence or group of words should describe the character and his/her role in the story. Then read your acrostic out loud like a poem!

- Use the mystery vocabulary words on the Talk Like a Detective worksheet to create your own mystery word find. Use graph paper to arrange the placement of the words and then fill in the other squares with random letters. Don’t forget to include a word bank to help your classmates! Trade word finds with a partner and solve!

- Study the vocabulary words and then try your hand at cracking the code on the next page!
CRACK THE CODE!

Test your Super Sleuth skills! Use the Secret Code below and the clues in parenthesis next to each question to fill in the blank mystery terms. For example, if the letter in the clue is an “A,” fill in the blank with a “z.”

**Secret Code**

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A ____ ____ ____ ____ an object, observation, or piece of information that helps to solve a mystery or puzzle is the arrangement of events in a story (XOFV)

____ ____ ____ ____ ____ is another name for a detective (HOVFGS)

A ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ is something that is secret or unknown (NBHGVIB)

A ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ is someone who saw something related to the mystery (DRGMVHH)

____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ is a person who gathers information and investigates a mystery (WVGVXGREV)

**Answer Key:** 1. clue 2. sleuth 3. mystery 4. witness 5. detective
Now that your detective caps are on, try writing a story of your own. Be sure to review the major elements in a story with students before beginning. Use this writing worksheet to get started!

**BOOK TITLE:**

**CHARACTERS:**

**SETTING:**

**PLOT:**

**PROBLEM:**

**SOLUTION:**
TALK LIKE A DETECTIVE

Commonly used mystery vocabulary

In *Ivy and Bean Take the Case*, Bean uses some creative detective lingo as she investigates the mystery happening right in her neighborhood in Pancake Court. How many of the words below have you heard before? How many have you used in sentences? Be the best and most convincing super sleuth you can be by learning how to work these words into your investigations.

**CLUE:** An object, observation, or piece of information that helps to solve a mystery or puzzle

**DETECTIVE:** A person who gathers information and investigates crimes

**MYSTERY:** Something that is secret or unknown; a problem needing to be solved

**SLEUTH:** Another name for a detective

**WITNESS:** Someone who saw something related to the mystery

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

When she was a kid, ANNIE BARROWS never once went to camp. She never took any classes. She never played a sport. She wasn’t a Girl Scout. Whata weirdo. Now she lives in Northern California with her husband and two daughters. Visit her at anniebarrows.com.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

SOPHIE BLACKALL once spent a week inside a giant shrub with all the other kids on her block. The leaves draped like curtains so you were invisible when you crawled inside and you could climb the trunk and slide down the outside. It was brilliant. She lives in Brooklyn now, in a house. If, after discovering this about her, you still wish to learn more, visit her at sophieblackall.com.

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This guide was created by Dr. Rose Brock, a teacher and school librarian in Coppell, Texas. Dr. Brock holds a Ph.D. in Library Science, specializing in children’s and young adult literature.