

Name:

Date:

Section:

Score:

Detective Challenge: The Case of the Cracked Laptop



Instructions: Your mission is to **analyze** the clues, make **inferences**, and support your answers with **textual evidence**. A real detective doesn't assume—they prove.



Case File: The Case of the Cracked Laptop



On Monday morning, Mr. Chan entered Room 108 to prepare for the school newspaper meeting. Everything looked normal—until he noticed his laptop had a long crack across the screen. He had left it safely on the table Friday afternoon.

Mr. Chan spoke with the janitor, who said he had seen three students in the room over the weekend. Leila had come in to finish a layout for the front page. Noah said he stopped by to return a camera, and Maya admitted she had forgotten her notebook and came back to grab it. The janitor remembered hearing something fall while Maya was in the room, but she left quickly and didn't say anything. On the desk near the cracked laptop, Mr. Chan found a broken pencil and a smudge of bright orange ink.

Only one student had been using a bright orange pen during Friday's meeting—Maya.

Your Task: Use Textual Evidence to Crack the Case

1. Which student admitted to being in the room when something may have fallen?

Use a sentence from the case file to support your answer.

2. What two clues were found on or near the laptop?

Quote the sentence that names both clues.

3. Which student is most likely responsible for the cracked laptop? Why?

Write 2–3 sentences using evidence from the passage to support your theory.

Answer Key:

1. Which student admitted to being in the room when something may have fallen?

“The janitor remembered hearing something fall while Maya was in the room, but she left quickly and didn’t say anything.”

This shows Maya was present when the suspicious noise occurred and chose not to report it.

2. What two clues were found on or near the laptop?

“On the desk near the cracked laptop, Mr. Chan found a broken pencil and a smudge of bright orange ink.”

These are the physical clues that may connect to the person responsible.

3. Which student is most likely responsible for the cracked laptop? Why?

Maya is the most likely person responsible for the damage. The case file says she was in the room when the janitor heard something fall, and she left quickly without telling anyone. Also, the ink on the desk was bright orange, and Maya was the only student using a bright orange pen during Friday’s meeting.

This answer includes multiple pieces of textual evidence to support the claim.