

Agent Zaiba INVESTIGATES

ANNABELLE SAMI
ILLUSTRATED BY DANIELA SOSA

AGENT ZAIBA INVESTIGATES SERIES RESOURCES

Introduction

Suitable for: Children aged six to nine years old in Years Two to Four

Based on: The super-sleuthing adventures of Zaiba and how she solves crimes

Ideal for: Emerging readers, especially reluctant readers

Includes: Four lessons that build towards children writing their own detective story

Themes: Adventure; Mystery; Diversity; Friendship; Family; School & Secrets

Determined to be the world's greatest detective, Zaiba is always on the lookout for a crime to solve. She knows everything there is to know about running an investigation – in theory...

This is a fun, fresh and exciting new detective series, for fans of Robin Stevens, Katherine Woodfine, *High-Rise Mystery* and *Nancy Drew*.





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About Agent Zaiba Investigates: The Missing Diamonds (Book One)

At her cousin's Mehndi party, Zaiba gets her first challenge: to discover the identity of the VIP staying at the same hotel. With the help of her best friend Poppy and brother Ali, Zaiba puts her sleuthing skills to the test. And when the celebrity's precious dog disappears, along with its priceless diamond collar, it's up to the trio to save the day!

About Agent Zaiba Investigates: The Poison Plot (Book Two)

Zaiba can't wait for the school summer fair where she's going to run a detective trail to help train other potential agents! But when the head teacher is poisoned during the highly competitive cake competition, Zaiba's own skills are put to the test. With a whole host of suspects and a busy crime scene, Zaiba needs to stay focused if she's going to get to the bottom of the cake catastrophe...

About Agent Zaiba Investigates: The Haunted House (Book Three)

When a new family moves to the village, Zaiba is intrigued to hear about the strange happenings in their home. Things go missing, objects are smashed and unfriendly messages are painted on the walls. There have always been rumours that the house is haunted, but is a ghost really causing all this trouble? Zaiba and her team are convinced that the culprit is very much alive – and won't stop until they get what they want...

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About the author - Annabelle Sami

Annabelle Sami is a writer and performer. She grew up next to the sea on the south coast of the UK and then moved to London, where she now lives. She studied English Literature and Drama and undertook an MA in English Literature at Queen Mary University. When she isn't writing she enjoys playing saxophone in a band with her friends, performing live art and swimming in the sea.



About the illustrator - Daniela Sosa

Daniela Sosa is originally from Romania, but now lives in Cambridge and is completing a master's degree in children's book illustrations at the Cambridge School of Art. She loves to travel, which is where she gets a lot of her inspiration from.





Agent Zaiya INVESTIGATES

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NATIONAL CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES

English:

Reading: Comprehension

Develop positive attitudes to reading, and an understanding of what they read, by discussing words and phrases that capture the reader's interest and imagination.

Understand both the books that they can already read accurately and fluently and those that they listen to by drawing on what they already know or on background information and vocabulary provided by the teacher.

Understand what they read, in books they can read independently, by

- identifying how language, structure, and presentation contribute to meaning
- drawing inferences such as inferring characters' feelings, thoughts and motives from their actions, and justifying inferences with evidence.

English:

Writing: Composition

Discuss writing similar to that which they are planning to write in order to understand and learn from its structure, vocabulary and grammar.

Develop positive attitudes towards and stamina for writing by writing narratives about personal experiences and those of others (real and fictional).

Consider what they are going to write before beginning by planning or saying out loud what they are going to write about.



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Geography

Begin to know about their own cultures and beliefs and those of other people.

Explore, observe and find out about places and objects that matter in different cultures and beliefs.

Religious Education

Understand that they can expect others to treat their needs, views, cultures and beliefs with respect.

Mathematics

Reason mathematically by following a line of enquiry, conjecturing relationships and generalizations, and developing an argument, justification or proof using mathematical language.

Solve problems by applying their mathematics to a variety of routine and non-routine problems with increasing sophistication, including breaking down problems into a series of simpler steps and persevering in seeking solutions.



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LESSON OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

Lesson One: Super Sleuths

Objectives:

- To learn about the history and the origins of the world of espionage
- To complete a secret mission

Outcomes: A class discussion about what secrets agents are and how disguise can be used; the creation of a secret agent handbook; and the completion of a secret mission.

Lesson Two: Mission Possible

Objectives:

- To understand that there are lots of different types of secret codes
- To solve problems by decomposing them into smaller parts

Outcomes: Three mission ideas based around mental agility, physical prowess and memory.

Lesson Three: Celebrating Cultures

Objectives:

- To know about their own cultures and beliefs and those of other people
- To identify traditional clothing from world cultures

Outcomes: An observation of the cultures known to children and the introduction of a custom called Mehndi; a completed set of instructions after researching traditional costumes; and the exploration of a style of dance.



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Lesson Four: Mini-Mysteries

Objectives:

- To recognize the features of a mystery story
- To write a detective story

Outcomes: A class discussion to learn more about the structural and language features of a mystery story; a completed draft of a detective story; and the writing of a detective story.



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LESSON ONE: SUPER SLEUTHS

Questions:

- What is a secret agent or detective?
- Have you ever spied upon anyone? Why?
- How would you feel about spying on someone?

Task One: To draw children into an educational world of espionage, have the class be interrupted by a mysterious stranger (this could be the teaching assistant or headteacher in spy costume) who bursts in breathlessly and delivers a package, before leaving just as abruptly. When the shock has disappeared, the package can be opened to reveal a memory stick and/or small piece of paper directing you to play a video-recorded message or read the instructions on the paper. On the paper, create details of the missions that children will have to complete in order to become fully fledged secret agents. These could be split into three different categories such as mental agility, physical prowess and stealth challenges (see Lesson Two for mission ideas). As the excitement builds, talk more about what a secret agent is and how they solve crimes. Discuss famous detectives that children may have seen on TV or read about in books and their appearances. Explain how a secret doesn't want to be recognized and goes undercover through changing their appearance and taking on a disguise. Talk about the kinds of disguises spies use in stories. If possible, you could dress up in different hats, jackets, glasses, moustaches to try this out. Highlight how these are all ways we think they dress but secret agents really need to blend into their surroundings. For example, if you're spying on someone at a sports game, you'd wear the sports team's shirt to look like a fan. Discuss the features that as secret agents we would be able to disguise like the way we talk, the way we walk and the appearance of ourselves and also the things we can't change that are unique like our fingerprints. Take pictures of children in different disguises using different backgrounds.



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Task Two: Like Zaiba does with Eden Lockett's Detective Handbook, the children could begin to record their learning in a special top-secret handbook. On the first page, ask children to complete a detective profile about themselves. Using the 'Detective Fact File' at the back of *Agent Zaiba Investigates: The Missing Diamonds*, children can include key information such as their detective name, picture, key skills, fears, favourite famous detective, favourite fact and favourite investigative accessory. Each mission they complete could be added with their tips for success. If they can use publishing software, they could create this online and continually add to it, including photos of themselves from the various activities.

Task 3: Agent Zaiba likes to sneak around places unnoticed to make her observations about the people around her when solving crimes. Usually, in mysteries sneaking around is seen as a bad thing and something that arouses suspicion. However, it could also be a means of doing good deeds. What if a team of agents secretly delivered small random acts of kindness during the school day? Set children a secret mission to be 'super sleuths' and bring happiness to members of the school community. With the assistance of another adult if necessary, could children leave a card or flower in each classroom during break time or lunchtime or maybe a chocolate bar or hand-made gift could be left in the cleaners' or caretaker's cupboard with a mysterious message explaining who it is from? The only condition of the mission is that children do not get caught seen completing their secret tasks. You could even film the missions for fun and play them back to the people.



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LESSON TWO: MISSION POSSIBLE

Questions:

- What is a mission?
- How good is your memory?
- What can you do when something seems impossible?

Mission One: Code Breaking

Using the 'Secret Codes' pages in the back of *Agent Zaiba Investigates: The Missing Diamonds* (book one) and the 'Train Your Brain' pages in the back of *Agent Zaiba Investigates: The Poison Plot* (book two) as inspiration, introduce the use of code to communicate. Begin to explore the many different codes in the world such as reverse writing, PigPen and Morse code. Explain to the children about the real-life story of the men and women like Alan Turing who helped to break the Enigma Cipher during WWII. Challenge the children to create some of their own codes. This lends itself most neatly to maths and describing and extending number sequences, but they could also use letter codes like the alphabet one explained in the book to write secret messages to one another. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of using each code and compare them using a table. Which methods are easier to use? Why?

Mission Two: Let's Get Physical

Prior to this activity, set up a number of identical obstacle courses, either outside or in the hall. Ensure that warm-up and cool-down activities take place before beginning and after ending the obstacle course. Split your class into small teams. Swap over until everyone has had the opportunity to complete the course. To add a new challenge, blindfold one person in each team. Those in the team who are not blindfolded are then responsible for directing the blindfolded player around the obstacles; until they get to the finishing point.



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Extension: You could challenge the children to create an obstacle course of their own and complete it, using stopwatches to record their times taken to complete the obstacle course and teach about recording information and measuring time using statistics and data.

Mission Three: Photographic Memory

Find a selection of interesting small objects from around the classroom and arrange them on a tray, which you should keep covered with a tea-towel until you are ready to play the game. Vary the number, colour and size of the objects according to the ages of the children in your class. Older children might be given some tiny objects such as a pin or a paper clip; younger children will remember better if they are given larger, brighter objects. Give each child a pencil and paper. Uncover the tray and place it where all children can see it. Give the children a certain amount of time to memorize the contents of the tray, then cover it up again. Ask the children to write down all of the objects that they can remember. You may want to talk more about how children can help to remember the objects, such as memorizing their position relative to each other, looking at their initial letters for making up a story associated with all the objects.

Extension: Take the tray away and remove one or two objects. Replace it and ask the children to write down the objects which are missing.



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LESSON THREE: CELEBRATING CULTURES

Questions:

- What is culture?
- How can we celebrate our cultures?
- Does a certain culture belong to one country?

Task One: Begin a class discussion to find out about some of the customs and traditions children in the class experience as part of their lives in their homes, with their families and through their religions. Relate this to the experiences of Zaiba, especially during Chapter One: Mehndi Madness in *Agent Zaiba Investigates: The Missing Diamonds* (book one). Learn more about Mehndi: what is it and how does it relate to ancient Indian traditions and history? Invite children to research how Mehndi designs vary from culture to culture. This can be done individually or in small groups. Ask children to create a hand to decorate with Mehndi designs by tracing their own hand with the fingers spread apart on a piece of paper and using scissors to cut out the hand shape. Whilst studying pictures of Mehndi designs, use a pencil to lightly sketch a design on the hand. Encourage children to make the design intricate and incorporate traditional shapes and patterns. Use a marker to trace over the design. Add interest to the project by using thick and thin marker lines. Make thick lines by drawing with the side of the marker and thin lines by drawing with the tip. Create different effects by drawing squiggly, jagged, wavy or bumpy lines with the side of the marker. Allow time in for children to share their original Mehndi designs with the class. Once presentations are complete, have students compose a summary paragraph of their learning to be posted with their Mehndi hand design on a classroom display.



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Task Two: In the illustrations throughout the series, we see many characters wearing saris and traditional costumes, especially with it playing an important part in the Hindu wedding in *Agent Zaiba Investigates: The Missing Diamonds* (book one). To begin to learn more about traditional clothing around the world, ask children to think about what their clothes say about them. How does wearing a uniform differ from the clothes they wear at the weekend? Discuss the type of clothes that people wear, listing on the board as many items of clothing as children can think of. If there are none from around the world, now is the time to introduce them. With the help of images, explain what a sari is and how it is worn. How many ways can you find to drape a sari? Ask children to use their internet research skills and find as many ways as they can to demonstrate to their classmates. From their research, children can write a set of instructions on how to wear a sari. Ensure they use imperative verbs, clear instructions and illustrations to help the reader.

Task Three: In *Agent Zaiba Investigates: The Missing Diamonds* (book one), Zaiba talks about her dad dancing. Use this as an opportunity to explore different cultural dances such as bhangra and Bollywood in the children's P.E. and Dance lessons. These dances are often community dances, which are great for learning simple steps with lots of repetition. Explore the individual motifs that make up the routines. Be creative with this style through adding storytelling and hand gestures.



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LESSON FOUR: MINI-MYSTERIES

Questions:

- What is a mystery story? Do you know any?
- How can we write a mystery story?
- What is a motive?

Task One: Introduce the first three features of writing a mystery or detective story: setting, victim and crime. Share with children the range of different settings that these stories often take place in. Think about how these places are usually very hard to get into and out of, and have people in them already who know each other very well like the hotel in the first book and the school in the second. Next, ask children to think about the crime and the victim, and emphasize that this is really the most important part of the story. What do they want to have happen in their mystery? Will it be a theft, a kidnapping, a disappearance or something else? In small groups, ask children to work together and consider the setting of their story, who the victim is and what the crime will be. After they have thought about this, encourage children to get into role by freeze-framing a scene showing this.

Task Two: Discuss with children the final three elements of a mystery or detective story: suspects, clues and resolution. Talk about how every mystery and detective story needs suspects. Explain that suspects are the people who may have committed the crime. Describe how that when children write their own stories, they will need to think of a couple of people who could have done it rather than just one person. Think about who might have been around the crime scene and, very importantly, the reasons why they might have committed the crime. Point out that this is called the 'motive'. Next, consider the clues. Identify how clues are



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the objects that can help the detective track down the criminal and ideally, they should be something that could belong personally to one of the suspects. Look around the classroom and choose an object – can children think about who it might belong to and how it might reveal more information about the suspect? Is it the appearance, colour, size, location or style of the object that leads to it being a clue? Finally, share how the final piece of the mystery story writing puzzle is the resolution. This comes at the very end of the story and answers all the readers' questions about the crime. For example in the books, when Agent Zaiba uncovers and works out who committed the crimes.

Task Three: Go back over the six key ingredients of writing a detective story: setting, victim, crime, suspects, clues and resolution. Highlight how a good mystery story will leave your readers guessing until the very end and be filled with twists and turns so the reader doesn't guess who committed the crime until the very end. Can they keep the suspense going? Ask children to begin drafting their story, remembering to include good description and dialogue. As the teacher, spend time showing them how to do this effectively. When they have finished drafting, children can work on editing their initial drafts and re-write them accordingly. When the stories are completed, ask children if they would like to share their stories with the class. Can the class work out who committed the crime from the suspects? Encourage children to share their reasoning aloud and comment how the clues in the story led them to believe who it was.



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FURTHER IDEAS AND ACTIVITIES

- Read more books that feature child secret agents and detectives such as *Anisha, Accidental Detective* by Serena Patel and Emma McCann and *Agent Asha: Mission Shark Bytes* by Sophie Deen and Anjan Sarkar, and for older children, *High-Rise Mystery* by Sharna Jackson and *Murder Most Unladylike* by Robin Stevens
- Write a letter explaining why you would be a good recruit for the Snow Leopard Detective Agency.
- Learn more about the secret world of fingerprints and forensic science. Examine your fingerprints and see what yours look like.
- Secrets agents and detectives often use gadgets. Which ones can you think of? E.g. night vision goggles, hidden camera. Can you create your own gadget to help you solve a mystery?
- Bake a cake like the characters do in *Agent Zaiba Investigates: The Poison Plot*. You could use the recipe at the back of the book. Follow the method carefully and think about the measurements and ingredients needed.