

# Book Crimes – Library Orientation

Saskatchewan School Library Association

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SASKATCHEWAN SCHOOL LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

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The care of books is usually taught to primary students, but older children should also be reminded to treat books properly.

Books in need of repair are labeled Exhibit A, Exhibit B, and so on. These books are then displayed on tables throughout the school library or classroom.

The students are told they are going to play a detective game and are divided into groups that rotate from table to table. A “crime” has been committed against each of the displayed books, and the children must discover what that crime is. Has someone written or coloured in the book? Are the book’s pages torn? Is the book soiled or stained? The students must also decide whether or not the book can be repaired. If not, the book’s “case” is closed.

Each child is given a small note pad on which to record pertinent information. After all, a detective is never without his or her note pad! The students are also reminded that a good sleuth does not reveal his or her findings until all the evidence has been examined and a logical conclusion has been reached.

A class discussion of each book’s condition follows, and the students are asked to draw up a set of “laws” about the care of books to be posted in the school library. The students might also be encouraged to repair some of the books they have examined.

The following “Library Laws” were drawn up by a Grade 4 class after completing the Book Crimes activity.

1. Carry your books in a plastic bag or backpack to protect them from mud and water.
2. Don’t scribble in books with a crayon or pencil.
3. Don’t turn down the corner of a page to mark your place. Use a bookmark.
4. Don’t read a book if your hands are dirty.
5. Keep books away from pets and small children.
6. Turn pages carefully so they won’t rip.
7. Carry books properly. If you drop a book, you may break its spine.
8. Don’t read books while eating.
9. Don’t cut a book’s pages.

Books are your friends. Please take care of them!

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