

TO THE TEACHER

The short, high-interest reading passages in this book were written to capture the interest of readers who are not reading at grade level. The engaging “mini mystery” format encourages the reader to become a detective and solve the mystery they are reading along with the main character.

The Flesch-Kincaid Readability Scale was used to determine the approximate reading level for each story. Use your own judgment to determine if the story is at an appropriate reading level for your student. Since the story is high interest, there may be vocabulary that the student is not familiar with. On the **Words to Know** pages, we have featured these words along with their definitions and a sample sentence. In some cases, students may need extra help pronouncing the names of the people, places, or things in the story.

Start with the **Before You Read** page. Take some time to discuss the **Background Information** with the student. This will help to set the scene for each mystery. A map skills activity can be added as students find where the story takes place on a map. **What Do You Know** and **Make a Prediction** are extra activities to enhance the learning process.

Add a research element by asking students to use the Internet, an encyclopedia, atlas or other resource to find out more about the topic in the story or where the story takes place.

After You Read engages students in the comprehension process of reading. These research-based activities follow state standards and incorporate some of the **Best Practices in Reading**.

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Introducing Jenna and Ranger White

Jenna White is a 15-year-old girl who loves to solve mysteries! Her dad, Ranger White, is a national park ranger. Jenna, her dad, and her twin brother Jacob are spending the summer traveling to national parks across the U.S. and Canada.

As they are exploring each of the parks, mysterious events are occurring. A plane crashes, people are missing, animals are disappearing, a rainforest is being ruined, and who is dumping toxic waste?

Join Jenna as she follows the clues and solves each mystery!



Name: _____

Before You Read

To Start

1. Read about Jenna and Ranger White.
2. Read the title of the story.
3. Read the **Background Information**.
4. Get familiar with the **Words to Know** list.

Background Information

This story takes place at Badlands National Park in **South Dakota**. It contains the largest, protected mixed-grass prairie in the United States. It is also the site of the reintroduction of the black-footed ferret, which is the most endangered land mammal in North America.



What Do You Know?

Write something you already know about Badlands National Park or ferrets.

Make a Prediction

Using the information from the title, the Words to Know list, and the Background Information, write what you think might happen in this story. Then, read the story to find out if your prediction is correct.

Name: _____

Words To Know

- ferret** a small animal that has a long, narrow body, short legs, a long tail, pink eyes, and is covered with soft fur
*Example: Some people keep **ferrets** as pets.*
- endangered** at risk of disappearing from the earth and never being seen again
*Example: Animals become **endangered** when their food supply and safe places to live are taken away from them.*
- mammal** a warm-blooded animal, usually with hair or fur, whose babies are born live and are fed with milk produced by the mother
*Example: A ferret is a **mammal**.*
- prairie** a large area of flat or gently sloping land with tall grass and not many trees
*Example: The wind blew strongly across the **prairie**.*
- disappearing** passing out of sight, either little by little or suddenly
*Example: The moon is **disappearing** behind a cloud.*

Choose two words from above and use each in a new sentence.

1. _____

2. _____

The Mystery of the Missing Ferrets

Jenna was at the Badlands National Park with her dad, Ranger White, and her brother Jacob.

"These black-footed ferrets are cute," said Jenna.

"Yes, they are," her dad, said. "Did you know they are the most endangered land mammal in North America? We're trying to help them live. We put tags on their ears. Then, we set them free into the park. Lately, some of the ferrets are missing, though."



"I bet some people would pay a ton of money to own a black-footed ferret," Jenna's brother, Jacob, said. "I know I would."

"You are right," said Ranger White. "You could make a lot of money selling these ferrets."

Then, Ranger Smith drove up to the Ranger Station. He was driving a new red sports car. "I'm going to the prairie to go hiking," he said to Jenna's dad.

"OK, have a good time. Take this map with you. Look out for the black-footed ferrets, too. They have been disappearing," Jenna's dad said.

"Will do, boss," Ranger Smith said. Ranger Smith reached for the map. Jenna saw that he was wearing a new gold watch. He also had on a diamond ring.

Think about it...

Jenna knew who was taking the ferrets. Do you?

Name: _____

After You Read

Main Idea

1. What is the main idea of this story? _____

Drawing Conclusions

2. How did Jenna know who was taking the ferrets? _____

3. Why does Jacob think people would pay a lot of money for a black-footed ferret?
- a. they help get work done
 - b. they are cute and endangered
 - c. they can do tricks

Analogy

4. boss is to employee as teacher is to _____

Inference

5. Why do the Rangers put tags on the ferret's ears?
- a. The tags help them keep track of the animals.
 - b. The tags help them catch the person who is taking the ferrets.
 - c. The tags help them stop the ferrets from walking out of the park.

Name: _____

After You Read *(continued)*

Cause and Effect

6. Why is Ranger Smith most likely taking ferrets from the park?
- a. He wants them to be his pets.
 - b. He's trying to help them survive.
 - c. He wants to sell them to make money.

Vocabulary

7. If you let something out of a cage, you are letting it be _____.
- a. hungry
 - b. strong
 - c. free

Reading for Details

8. Describe Ranger Smith's car. _____

Fact or Opinion *(Write F for fact, O for opinion)*

9. _____ The black-footed ferret is endangered.

Predicting Outcomes

10. What might happen if the ferret thief were never caught?
- a. the Rangers would stop putting tags on the ferrets
 - b. all of the ferrets would disappear
 - c. Ranger White would go on vacation