THE VILLAGE THAT LOST AN HOUR

CASE FILE 01 | GRADES 4–5 | TEACHER EDITION

Teacher Guide

Suggested time: 2–3 lessons of 35–45 minutes. | Subject: English Language Arts / Critical Thinking

Overview

In this fictional mountain-village mystery, two young visitors investigate clocks frozen at eleven and a bell that rang twelve times an hour early. Students gather clues from a continuous story, a repair log, witness statements, and a timeline before writing their own evidence-based solution. The reading intentionally ends without announcing the answer.

Learning Objectives

- Identify explicit details and make supported inferences.
- Distinguish direct observations, interpretations, and written records.
- Sequence events and calculate elapsed time using a reliable reference clock.
- Compare explanations, identify cause and effect, and write a claim supported by two distinct clues.

Suggested Teaching Sequence

Lesson 1 — Read & Notice: Read the story (pages 2–3), then complete Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary. Ask students to underline facts and circle statements that are only guesses.

Lesson 2 — Investigate: Complete Text Evidence and Case Documents A–B. Reconstruct the timeline, classify witness statements, and discuss how an accurate observation can lead to a mistaken explanation.

Lesson 3 — Solve & Explain: Complete Cause and Effect, Compare the Theories, and the Final Case Report. Discuss multiple pieces of evidence before revealing the answer key.

Materials & Assessment

Use these printable pages and a pencil; no outside research is needed. Students may work independently, in pairs, or in guided groups. Assess the Final Case Report using the six-point rubric in the Answer Key. Accept equivalent responses when supported by the included evidence.

Teacher preparation: Print student pages 2–13. Keep pages 14–16 (Answer Key) separate. Times in the case documents are based on the station clock, which is checked against radio time daily.

The Village That Lost an Hour | Reading Passage

Mara first noticed the silence when she and her cousin Eli entered Bellwick Square. The mountain village was famous for its old clock tower. Every noon, the bell rang twelve times. Today, however, the square seemed unusually still.

Three clocks above the shops showed 11:00. The bakery clock also showed 11:00. None of their hands moved.

“It is noon,” said Mrs. Vale, the baker, carrying out warm rolls. “The delivery bus arrived and drove away at 11:40. I watched it leave exactly twenty minutes ago.”

“Then why do the clocks say eleven?” Eli asked.

“I heard twelve bell strokes at eleven,” Mrs. Vale said. “Perhaps our village really has lost an hour.”

Mara walked to the bus station across the bridge. Its clock read 12:00. A small sign below it said: STATION CLOCK CHECKED AGAINST RADIO TIME EVERY MORNING.

By now, villagers had gathered near the tower. Some believed the bell had rung early. Others thought the bus was late. One child whispered that the tower had turned time backward.

“Before we decide,” Mara said, opening her notebook, “we need to know which clocks worked and how the bell rang.”

Mr. Rowan, the caretaker, unlocked the tower door. Dusty gears lined the walls. A rope hung beside a wooden lever.

“The tower clock stopped yesterday during repairs,” he explained. “The three square clocks and the bakery clock receive their time from the tower. During the repair, I set all their hands to eleven and left the clocks stopped.”

“But the bell rang,” Eli said.

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Reading Passage | Continued

“That is a separate mechanism,” Mr. Rowan replied. “Usually the clock rings the bell automatically. During repairs, I can pull this lever to ring it myself.”

He opened his repair log. Tuesday, 10:55 a.m.: Stopped tower clock. Tuesday, 11:00 a.m.: Set all linked clock hands to eleven for inspection. Wednesday, 11:00 a.m.: Tested twelve bell strokes manually. Wednesday, 12:10 p.m.: Planned restart after final inspection.

“I posted a notice about the repair and the test,” Mr. Rowan added, “but the wind tore it from the gate.”

At 12:02 p.m., according to the station clock, Mrs. Vale joined them at the tower. “I truly heard twelve strokes at eleven,” she insisted. Mara wrote down her words without arguing.

“An observation can be correct even when someone’s explanation is not,” Mara said. “We should compare the records before reaching a conclusion.”

The cousins returned to the square. Mara drew three headings in her notebook: Observation, Evidence, and Conclusion. She listed the frozen clock faces, the twelve bell strokes, the bus arrival, and the station clock.

“We have enough clues to test the theories,” Eli said. “But which clue tells us what really happened?”

Mara closed her notebook. “That is the mystery we have to solve.”

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Name :.....Date:.....

Reading Comprehension

Circle the best answer for Questions 1–8. Then answer Questions 9–10.

1. Why did the square clocks show 11:00?
   A. They were set to eleven and left stopped during repairs.
   B. The bus driver changed their settings.
   C. Their batteries were replaced at eleven.
   D. A festival required the same display.
2. What did Mrs. Vale hear at eleven?
   A. A warning horn near the bridge.
   B. Twelve strokes from the tower bell.
   C. A station whistle before the bus.
   D. One strike from the bakery clock.
3. Why was the station clock useful evidence?
   A. It stood near the village bridge.
   B. It had the largest clock face.
   C. It was checked against radio time daily.
   D. It belonged to the tower caretaker.
4. What did the caretaker record at 11:00 on Wednesday?
   A. The delivery bus reached the village.
   B. The tower clock began working again.
   C. The repair notice was posted again.
   D. He tested twelve bell strokes by hand.
5. What does Mara do before reaching a conclusion?
   A. She asks the villagers to vote.
   B. She compares observations and records.
   C. She trusts the bell without question.
   D. She ignores the caretaker's repair log.
6. What happened to the repair notice?
   A. The baker carried it indoors.
   B. The bus driver took it away.
   C. The rain washed off its words.
   D. The wind tore it from the gate.

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Name :.....Date:.....

Reading Comprehension | Continued

7. What can be true about a witness's observation?

A. It may be accurate but interpreted incorrectly.
B. It is always false when others disagree.
C. It is less useful than every guess.
D. It proves that only one explanation exists.

8. Which evidence most directly shows that the bell did not need the clock to work?

A. The station clock was checked daily.
B. The bus arrived at 11:40 a.m.
C. The caretaker could ring the bell manually.
D. The bakery clock displayed eleven.

9. Identify TWO different clues that support the claim that the actual time was noon when Mara checked the station clock.

10. Explain why hearing twelve bell strokes did not prove that it was noon.

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Name :.....Date:.....

Vocabulary in Context

Choose the meaning that fits how each word is used in the reading.

V1. What does “mechanism” mean in the passage?

A. A notice displayed at the tower
B. A person responsible for repairs
C. A set of parts that makes something work
D. A route that leads into the village

V2. What does “inspection” mean in the repair log?

A. A careful examination
B. An unexpected journey
C. A hidden message
D. A complete replacement

V3. What does “conclusion” mean when Mara speaks?

A. A change in the weather
B. A list of village shops
C. A note about a bus route
D. A judgment reached from evidence

V4. What does “observation” mean in Mara’s notebook?

A. An invented explanation
B. Something noticed or recorded
C. A plan for future repairs
D. A guess without any evidence

V5. Mara says an observation can be correct even if an explanation is not. Give one example from the story and explain the difference.

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Name :.....Date:.....

Find the Text Evidence

Copy or closely paraphrase a detail from the reading for each prompt.

E1. Find a sentence showing that the square clocks depended on the tower.

E2. Find the repair-log entry proving the bell was tested at eleven on Wednesday.

E3. Find the evidence that the station clock was regularly checked.

E4. Find the detail explaining why villagers did not see the repair notice.

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Name :.....Date:.....

Case Document A | Timeline

The times below use the station clock as the reference.

Time	Event
Tuesday 10:55 a.m.	Tower clock stopped for repairs.
Tuesday 11:00 a.m.	Caretaker set linked clocks to 11:00.
Wednesday 11:00 a.m.	Twelve bell strokes tested manually.
Wednesday 11:40 a.m.	Delivery bus arrived and departed immediately.
Wednesday 12:00 p.m.	Mara checked the station clock.
Wednesday 12:02 p.m.	Mrs. Vale joined the cousins at the tower.
Wednesday 12:10 p.m.	Scheduled clock restart (not confirmed).

Activity 1 | Rebuild the Timeline

Order these Wednesday events and scheduled times from 1 (earliest) to 5 (latest).

_____ Mara checks the station clock.

_____ The bell test sounds.

_____ Mrs. Vale joins the cousins at the tower.

_____ The scheduled clock restart time arrives.

_____ The delivery bus arrives.

T1. How many minutes passed between the bell test and the bus arrival?

T2. Why does Tuesday's repair matter to Wednesday's mystery?

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Name :.....Date:.....

Case Document B | Compare the Evidence

Source	Observation or record	What to consider
Square clocks	Displayed 11:00	Stopped during repairs
Tower bell	Twelve strokes sounded	Could be rung by hand
Station clock	Displayed 12:00	Checked daily against radio time
Bus departure	11:40 a.m.	Does not explain the bell

Activity 2 | The Missing Hour Puzzle

P1. What was the difference between the station and bakery clock readings?

P2. Did an hour disappear? Explain using evidence from the story or case records.

P3. Name TWO different clues that support noon as the actual time.

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Name :.....Date:.....

Activity 3 | Witness Statements

Mark O for a direct observation, I for an interpretation, or R for a written record.

_____ “I heard twelve bell strokes.”

_____ “Our village lost an hour.”

_____ “Wednesday, 11:00 a.m. — tested twelve strokes manually.”

_____ “The bakery clock shows eleven.”

_____ “The bell proves it is noon.”

_____ “Wednesday, 11:40 a.m. — delivery bus arrived.”

W1. Choose one interpretation above. Explain what additional evidence would be needed to check it.

W2. Why should detectives distinguish an observation from an interpretation?

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Activity 4 | Cause and Effect

Complete the table using clues from the reading and case documents.

Cause	Immediate effect	Why people were confused
Tower clock stopped.		
Caretaker tested bell.		
Notice blew away.		

C1. Which cause explains why several clocks showed the same outdated time?

C2. What could the caretaker have done to prevent the confusion?

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Name :.....Date:.....

Activity 5 | Compare the Theories

For each theory, write a specific clue that supports or challenges it.

Theory	Evidence for or against
A. Time itself moved backward.	
B. The station clock was one hour fast.	
C. The tower clocks stopped and the bell was tested.	

C3. Which theory is best supported? Explain why the other theories are weaker.

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Name :.....Date:.....

Final Case Report | Solve the Mystery

Make a claim, use TWO different pieces of evidence, and explain how they support your answer.

CLAIM — What really happened in Bellwick?

EVIDENCE 1 — First detail or written record

EVIDENCE 2 — Second, different detail or record

REASONING — How do the clues support your claim?

REFLECTION — Why can a true observation lead to a wrong explanation?

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Answer Key | Reading & Vocabulary

TEACHER COPY — Do not distribute with the student investigation pages.

Reading Comprehension

1 A — The square clocks were set to eleven and left stopped during the tower repair.
2 B — Mrs. Vale heard twelve bell strokes.
3 C — The station clock was checked against radio time.
4 D — The caretaker tested twelve strokes manually.
5 B — Mara compared observations and records.
6 D — Wind tore away the notice.
7 A — A true observation may be interpreted incorrectly.
8 C — The caretaker could ring the bell manually.

9. Sample: The station clock displayed 12:00 and was checked against radio time each morning (clock record). Mrs. Vale said she saw the bus leave at 11:40, twenty minutes before noon (witness statement). Accept two distinct clues; note that the bus time is reported by a witness.

10. Sample: The caretaker could ring the bell by hand. His log shows he tested twelve strokes at 11:00, so the sound was not proof of noon.

Vocabulary in Context

V1 C — mechanism: a set of parts that makes something work.
V2 A — inspection: careful examination.
V3 D — conclusion: a judgment based on evidence.
V4 B — observation: something noticed or recorded.

V5. Sample: Mrs. Vale truly heard twelve strokes at eleven (observation), but she thought that meant it was noon or time had changed (interpretation).

Find the Text Evidence

E1. “The three square clocks and the bakery clock receive their time from the tower.”
E2. “Wednesday, 11:00 a.m.: Tested twelve bell strokes manually.”
E3. “STATION CLOCK CHECKED AGAINST RADIO TIME EVERY MORNING.”
E4. “I posted a notice about the repair and the test, but the wind tore it from the gate.”

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Answer Key | Timeline, Evidence & Witnesses

Activity 1 | Rebuild the Timeline

Event order as printed: 3, 1, 4, 5, 2.
T1. 40 minutes (11:00 to 11:40).
T2. The caretaker stopped the tower on Tuesday and set the linked clocks to eleven; they still showed that outdated time on Wednesday.

Activity 2 | The Missing Hour Puzzle

P1. One hour (12:00 at the station versus 11:00 at the bakery).
P2. No. The bakery and square clocks were stopped, while the checked station clock showed the current time.
P3. The station clock displayed noon and was checked daily against radio time. Separately, Mrs. Vale reported seeing the bus leave at 11:40, twenty minutes earlier. The first is a checked clock reading; the second is a witness account.

Activity 3 | Witness Statements

Statements as printed: O, I, R, O, I, R.

W1. Sample: “The bell proves it is noon” is an interpretation. Check whether the bell could ring manually and compare the caretaker’s log with the station clock.

W2. Sample: An observation tells what was seen or heard; an interpretation explains why it happened. People may observe accurately but infer the wrong cause.

Scoring Notes

Accept answers with equivalent wording when the supporting evidence is accurate. Do not require students to copy exact quotations if the instruction allows paraphrasing.

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Answer Key | Reasoning & Final Report

Activity 4 | Cause and Effect

Tower repair → linked clocks set to eleven and left stopped → villagers saw outdated readings.
Bell tested manually → twelve strokes sounded at 11:00 → listeners associated the sound with noon.
Notice blew away → repair/test explanation was not visible → rumors and guesses spread.

C1. The caretaker set the linked clocks to eleven during the repair and left them stopped.
C2. Replace the notice, tell villagers about the test, or cover the stopped clock faces.

Activity 5 | Compare the Theories

A. No evidence shows time moved backward; stopped clocks and a manual bell offer ordinary explanations.
B. The station clock was checked daily, and Mrs. Vale's bus-departure account agrees with noon.
C. Supported by the repair log, the caretaker's explanation of linked clocks, and the manual bell mechanism.

C3. Theory C is strongest because it accounts for both the frozen clock faces and the twelve strokes. The other theories do not explain all the records.

Sample Final Case Report

Claim: Bellwick did not lose an hour. The square clocks were set to eleven and left stopped, while the bell sounded during a manual test.

Evidence 1: The caretaker said the square clocks depended on the tower and were set to eleven during repairs.

Evidence 2: His log shows a manual twelve-stroke test at 11:00; the checked station clock showed 12:00 when Mara looked.

Reasoning: A stopped clock can show an old reading. A manually operated bell can sound twelve strokes before noon. Together, those events explain the confusion without changing time.

Reflection: A person may correctly report what they noticed but misunderstand its cause. Comparing independent records helps test explanations.

Rubric (6 points): Clear claim (1); two distinct accurate evidence details (2); reasoning that links evidence to claim (2); clear communication (1).

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