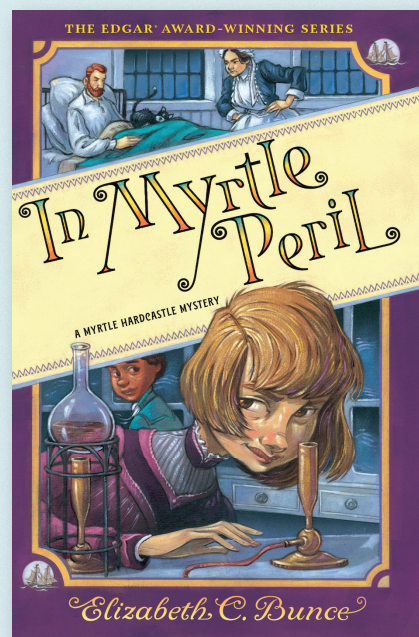
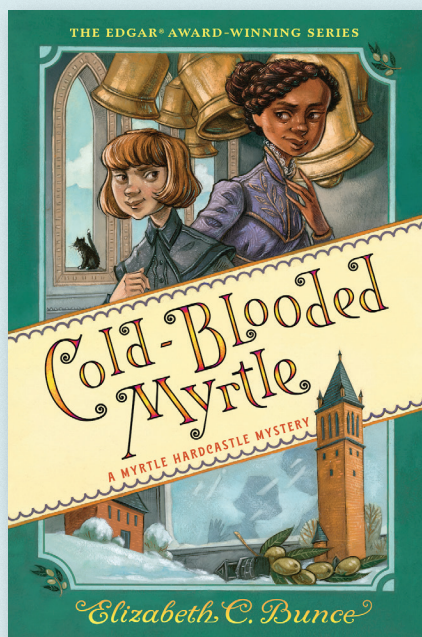
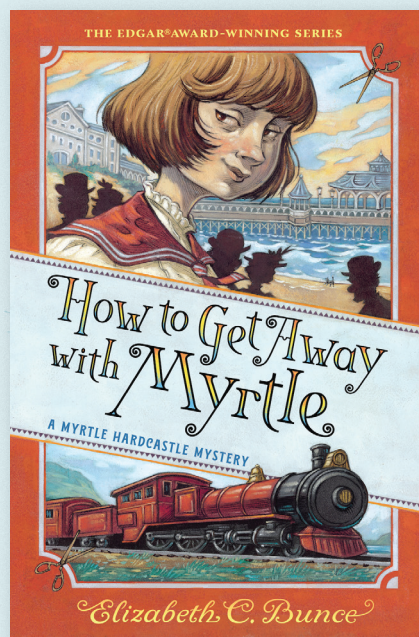
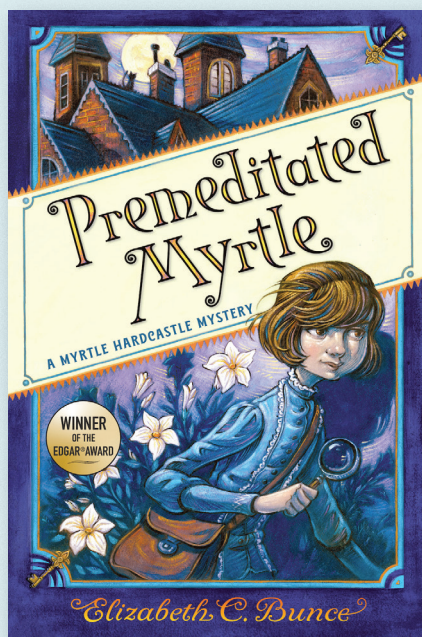
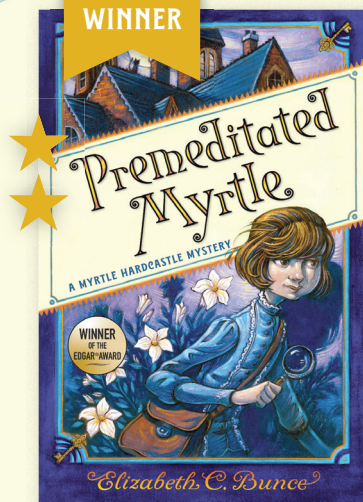


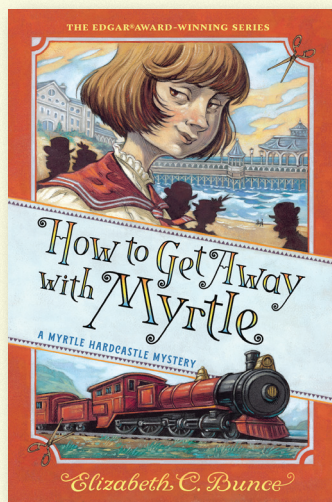
MYRTLE HARDCASTLE MYSTERIES SERIES GUIDE



A 2021
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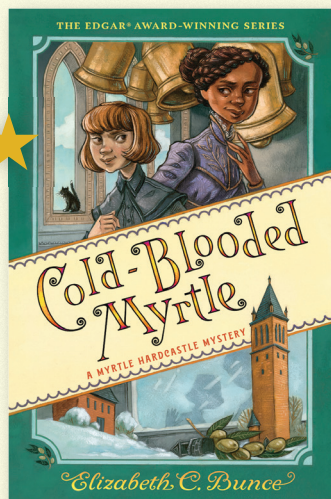
ABOUT THE SERIES

Myrtle Hardcastle is a precocious twelve-year-old and a budding detective with a passion for criminal justice. Yet, as a young woman growing up in the Victorian era, Myrtle is often told that “Young Ladies of Quality” do not ask too many questions, sneak into people’s gardens to measure muddy footprints, or talk about *murder*!

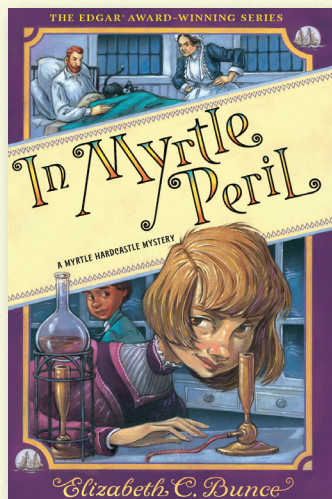
Despite these rules and expectations, Myrtle often finds herself right in the middle of murders and other complicated mysteries, with her governess, Miss Judson, at her side. With only her powers of Observation and her investigative toolkit, will Myrtle be able to solve the crime and save the day?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

ELIZABETH C. BUNCE grew up on a steady diet of Sherlock Holmes, Trixie Belden, and Quincy, M.E., and always played the lead prosecutor in mock trial. She has never had a governess, and no one has ever accused her of being irrepressible, but a teacher did once call her “argumentative”—which was entirely untrue, and she can prove it. She lives in Kansas City with her husband and their cats. You can find her online at elizabethcbunce.com.



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PRAISE FOR THE MYRTLE HARDCASTLE MYSTERY SERIES

★ “A joyful thing to behold. Set in Victorian England, this mystery gleefully overturns sexist norms and celebrates independent women of intellect, with Myrtle Hardcastle leading the charge.” —BOOKLIST, starred review (*Premeditated Myrtle*)

★ “*Premeditated Myrtle* is a book young readers will love and adults may well sneak out of backpacks and off of nightstands for their own enjoyment.” —BOOKPAGE, starred review (*Premeditated Myrtle*)

★ “Comical footnotes pepper the text, adding wit to prose which is already dryly funny. Clues abound, giving astute readers the chance to solve the mystery along with Myrtle. Another excellent whodunit with a charming, snarky sleuth.”

—KIRKUS REVIEWS, starred review (*Cold-Blooded Myrtle*)

CREATOR OF THIS GUIDE

ELIZABETH TACKE is Assistant Professor of English at Eastern Illinois University, where she works with Secondary English Language Arts pre-service teachers. Previously she taught seventh- and eighth-grade English in Oakland, California. She enjoys staying up to date on the latest in Young Adult and Middle Grade books and developing curricular guides to support students and teachers.

FOR TEACHERS

1 INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALS

Using their very own Investigative Journals, students will mirror Myrtle's techniques of Observation to collect indirect characterization clues and textual evidence to create claims and predictions as they read. In the For Students section, you will find two separate templates and an annotation bookmark to support a variety of active reading skills.

ANNOTATION BOOKMARK. Copies can be made of the included Annotation Bookmark to support students' practice with reading strategies including: asking critical questions, making inferences, making predictions, clarifying confusing passages, and using context clues to define new vocabulary. It is recommended that teachers model and practice using the reading strategies in early chapters.

INVESTIGATIVE JOURNAL PART 1—CURIOUS AND CONNECTED CHARACTERS. Using the M.E.T.A.L. method of assessing indirect characterization, students will be able to keep track of both returning characters and new characters central to the murder mystery in each book. It is recommended that the teacher collaboratively model how to use the M.E.T.A.L. method with some central characters first (e.g., Myrtle or Miss Judson).

INVESTIGATIVE JOURNAL PART 2—NOTES TO CRACK THE CASE. In addition to keeping notes on all of the central characters, students will mirror Myrtle's habitual journaling to keep track of important facts, events, and other information relevant to the case at hand. Drawing on the reading strategies outlined on their Annotation Bookmarks, students will be expected to engage in active reading practices, supported by Myrtle's narration of her own Observations and critical thinking.

In addition, students will be able to use the ongoing notes in their Investigative Journals to support Socratic seminars held at the teacher's discretion.

2 SOCRATIC SEMINARS

The goal of a good Socratic seminar is for the teacher to be a "guide on the side," facilitating dialogue among students in order to help them build on each other's ideas and use their own evidence and notes to ask and answer critical questions. Students are encouraged to draw on their ongoing annotations in their Investigative Journals to support their conversations. However, more scaffolding is recommended to support facilitation of effective conversations, in which students present claims, ask critical questions, and build on one another's ideas. Some variation of the provided template may be useful to support student success. (See handout—The Socratic Method—in the For Students portion of this guide).

For teachers new to building skills of academic discourse, *Academic Conversations: Classroom Talk That Fosters Critical Thinking and Understanding*, by Jeff Zwiers and Marie Crawford (2011), offers useful activities that support specific speaking and listening skills and can help scaffold student learning and practice to support effective whole-class Socratic seminars.



ACTIVITIES

3

PICK YOUR POISON CREATIVE PROJECTS

1. Develop the front page of a newspaper using incidents from a book in the series. Your newspaper must include: a title and dateline, headlines, pictures or sketches with captions, as well as stories. You may choose to use a design tool on the computer, or a large piece of paper or poster board. Consider what a newspaper might look like from the late 1800s and get creative! Don't forget, all good newspaper stories start with the action and include the answers to Who? What? When? Where? Why? and How?
2. Create a social media page for one of the main characters from the series. Consider what type of social media platform best suits this character. How would they portray themselves? What would they post about? Make sure your social media page has some form of an About Me section, at least two images, and at least five posts. Tag the book publisher @alongquinyr and the author @elizabethcbunce so they can see your work!
3. Create a soundtrack to one of the books from the series. You will need to create an album cover and a set of at least nine songs. For each song, write three to five sentences explaining your choice. These explanations may relate to how a song represents a character, theme, or even a tense moment in the novel.
4. Write your own Myrtle Hardcastle fan fiction. Develop a short story that contains many of the series' main characters and give them a new mystery to solve. Bonus points if you can replicate Myrtle's voice and the style of the author, Elizabeth C. Bunce. For example, think about how to use footnotes to offer little explanations or sidenotes from Myrtle.

4

IRREPRESSIBLE WOMEN WHO MADE HISTORY

Irrepressible. Incurrigible. Uncontrollable. These are words used to describe Myrtle and other female characters in the series who aren't held back by the ideas about gender in their time. Look anywhere in history and you'll be able to find other irrepressible women who pushed back against what society thought of them to achieve great discoveries. Pick an academic subject or job that you're interested in and explore how women helped to shape that field. (You might be surprised to find how many women discovered important things that were then credited to men.) Create a short research presentation that showcases your findings.



WORDS HAVE POWER: USING CONTEXT CLUES TO SUPPORT VOCABULARY ACQUISITION

The *best* way to broaden vocabulary is to read! The Myrtle Hardcastle Mystery series is full of new vocabulary to help support students in expanding their lexicon. And, just like Myrtle has taught us, students can use their skills of observation and deduction to find clues about a word's meaning in the surrounding text.

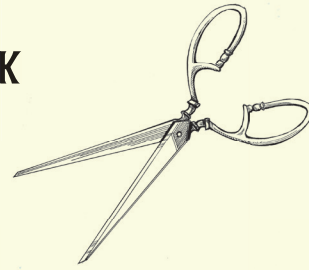
To support new vocabulary acquisition, students can keep a record of a set number of words per week, per reading, or per chapter. Students can create vocabulary journals or packets. Teachers are encouraged to model this practice with students. A suggested entry might include the following components:

VOCABULARY TRACKER

Word and Part of Speech	Sentence or Passage from the Book (with page number)	Context Clues	Synonyms & Antonyms	In My Own Words
incongruous (adjective)	"Amid a ring formed by the model people stood two small objects that seemed incongruous: a stone wishing well, painted entirely black, tipped on its side; and a life-size sprig of grapes—no, olives—still on the stem" (<i>Cold-Blooded Myrtle</i> , p. 17).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">the prefix <i>in</i> means "not"the word is describing the two objectsthe objects are odd and don't seem to fit into the holiday scene	Synonyms: <i>out of place, inappropriate</i> Antonyms: <i>appropriate, fitting</i>	The diamond chandelier was incongruous in the shabby yet comfortable living room.

FOR STUDENTS

ANNOTATION BOOKMARK



OBSERVANT READER:

ASK CRITICAL QUESTIONS

Good detectives ask tough questions—both to their suspects and to themselves!

“Last night someone dropped his cigar cutter into Miss Wodehouse’s lily garden. What does that tell us?”
(Premeditated Myrtle, p. 26).

MAKE INFERENCES

Identify useful facts and other “aha” moments that are key to solving the mystery. Practice making claims supported by evidence.

Because lilies are poisonous to cats, I can infer that Peony must have gotten sick from coming into contact with lilies, and that there must be lilies somewhere on the estate.
(Premeditated Myrtle).

MAKE PREDICTIONS

A good detective knows they need to back up their claims with evidence! Add a piece of text evidence to your Investigative Journal to support your predictions.

I predict that Aunt Helena is innocent because she didn’t have the strength or ability to murder Mrs. Bloom. Myrtle says, “It would take a great deal of strength to jam a pair of scissors into somebody’s back . . . Strength and luck—or exceptional skill”
(How to Get Away with Myrtle, p. 109).

SUMMARIZE AND CLARIFY CONFUSING PASSAGES OR INFORMATION

It can be hard to keep all of the facts of a case straight. To help wrap your head around complex sentences or complex scenarios, rewrite the main facts or “gist” into your own words.

IDENTIFY AND DEFINE NEW VOCABULARY

When you come across vocabulary you don’t know, keep track of those words in your Vocabulary Tracker. Use context clues and other tools to help you find the definition.

INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALS PART 1

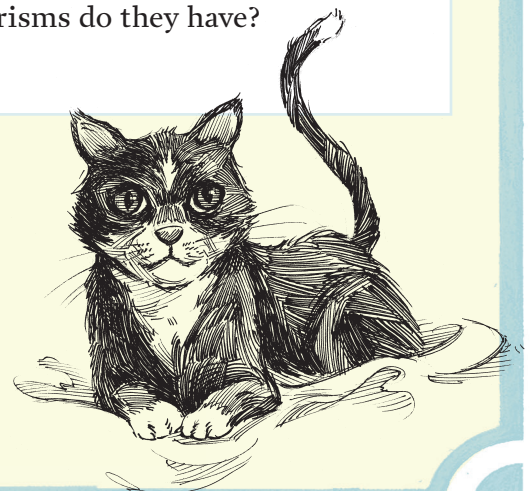
CURIOUS AND CONNECTED CHARACTERS: IDENTIFYING AND USING INDIRECT CHARACTERIZATION TO MAKE CLAIMS

A good detective needs to carefully Observe and keep tabs on all characters, whether they're immediately suspicious or not. Using your skills of Observation and our M.E.T.A.L. Indirect Characterization Guide, keep track of key characters as you read. And if we've learned anything from Myrtle, it's that it's important to take lots of notes! Don't forget to include page numbers to track your evidence.

Let's start with Myrtle, Miss Judson, and Father for practice, and then move on to other curious and connected characters.

M.E.T.A.L. INDIRECT CHARACTERIZATION GUIDE

- Motivations:** What motivates this character in their day-to-day life?
How do those motivations show up in specific contexts?
Does this character have a motive for *murder*?
- Effects on Others:** How do others respond or react to this character?
What can others' reactions tell us about this character?
- Talk:** How does this character talk? What do they say?
What does this reveal about their character?
- Actions:** What does this character do? How do they act?
- Looks:** What does this character look like? How do they dress?
What sorts of expressions or mannerisms do they have?



**CURIOUS AND CONNECTED CHARACTERS:
CHARACTERIZATION USING THE M.E.T.A.L. METHOD**

Character	Motivations	Effects on Others	Talk	Actions	Looks
Myrtle					
Ms Judson					
Father					

INVESTIGATIVE JOURNAL PART 2

NOTES TO CRACK THE CASE: USING EVIDENCE TO ASK QUESTIONS, AND TO MAKE INFERENCES AND PREDICTIONS

As Myrtle’s detective manual tells us, “An Investigator must piece together the facts of a crime, step by step and bit by bit, until the assembled evidence reveals the truth” (*Premeditated Myrtle*, p. 134). To help get to the truth, good detectives have their journals handy at all times to take notes when new evidence or information comes to light. Just as Myrtle always has her detective kit at hand to investigate evidence or take a closer look with her magnifying glass, you can keep your journal, pencil, and books and other primary tools in your own kit.

Good readers, like good detectives, make sure to practice strong skills of Observation. Practice annotation (also called “talking to the text”) to see if you can solve the case alongside (or even *before*) Myrtle. Use your Annotation Bookmark to remind you how to be a strong and Observant reader. Keep track of all annotations in your Notes to Crack the Case.

NOTES TO CRACK THE CASE

Entry Date:

New Discoveries, Facts, or Evidence
(include page numbers)

**Notes, Predictions, and
Critical Questions**

THE SOCRATIC METHOD

As Myrtle says about Miss Judson, “She let me figure things out on my own, asking challenging questions as I went” (*Premeditated Myrtle*, p. 26). Miss Judson uses the Socratic Method, which was named after Socrates, an ancient Greek philosopher who encouraged his students’ thinking by asking critical questions. They used dialogue to uncover deeper meanings and ideas. Just like Myrtle, you will collaborate with your peers using the Socratic Method to support your critical thinking. With your teacher’s support, use the guide below to come prepared. (Hint: Use your Investigative Journal to support your thinking.)

SOCRATIC SEMINAR PREPARATION GUIDE

Critical Questions I Want to Pose to Others

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Predictions and Other Claims

- I think _____ is the killer because...
-
-

Text Evidence

- (Insert text evidence). This piece of text evidence supports my prediction because...
-
-

Sentence Starters to Facilitate Strong Discussions

If you want to **agree** and **add information**

- “I think you make a really good point, and I want to add that...”
- “I agree! I think it’s also important to consider...”
- “Thanks for sharing that. I think _____ supports that idea because...”
- “This makes me think about the evidence Myrtle shares on page ____ when she says...”

If you want to **disagree**

- “I see where you’re coming from, but have you considered...”
- “I want to politely disagree with that idea because ...”

If you want to **build on** or bring in **related information**

- “I think that’s an important point. I also think it connects to...”
- “We’ve spent a lot of time talking about _____. I think it’s important to also consider...”
- “That’s a really important connection to what X student just said about...”

STANDARDS ALIGNMENT



INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.2;
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.3; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.5;
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.6; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.1;
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.6.5

SOCRATIC SEMINARS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.2;
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.4; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.1;
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.5; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.1

PICK YOUR POISON CREATIVE PROJECTS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.2; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.5;
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.2; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.3;
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.4; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.6.3.B

IRREPRESSIBLE WOMEN WHO MADE HISTORY

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.7;
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.1; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.7;
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.8; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.9

WORDS HAVE POWER: USING CONTEXT CLUES TO SUPPORT VOCABULARY ACQUISITION

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.6.4; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.6.5;
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.6.6; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.1