

# spy school

## Dear Educator,

Meet Ben Ripley, a brilliant — although not-so-coordinated — twelve-year-old who is recruited as a junior secret operative for the CIA!

Like Ben, your students can go on their own sleuthing adventure with these exciting classroom materials inspired by Stuart Gibbs' middle-grade series *Spy School*, which includes the newly released adaptation *Spy School: The Graphic Novel*. Students will explore what it takes to be a secret agent with fun "missions" that will challenge them to use language, problem-solving, and deductive reasoning skills to solve clues and puzzles.

The *Spy School* series provides engaging action and adventure storytelling that many young readers enjoy, but your students do not have to complete the books to use these activities.

Feel free to share this program with other teachers in your school or send it home for summer fun. Please let us know your thoughts on the program by returning the enclosed reply card or by commenting at [ymiclassroom.com/feedback-spyschool](http://ymiclassroom.com/feedback-spyschool). We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Dr. Dominic Kinsley  
Editor in Chief  
Young Minds Inspired



SIMON & SCHUSTER  
Books for Young Readers

© 2022 YMI, Inc. • Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers

For questions, contact YMI toll-free at 1-800-859-8005 or by email at [feedback@ymiclassroom.com](mailto:feedback@ymiclassroom.com).

### Target Audience

Students in grades 4 to 6

### Program Components

Included in this poster guide:

- A classroom wall poster
- This teacher's guide
- Three reproducible activity sheets
- A reply card for your comments

These components are also available at [ymiclassroom.com/spyschool](http://ymiclassroom.com/spyschool), along with a list of books in the series, a standards alignment chart, and an online feedback form.

### Program Objectives

- Support language arts and literacy skills
- Inspire students to strengthen their analytical, social studies, mathematical, vocabulary, and creative writing skills
- Encourage independent reading

### How to Use the Poster

Before hanging up the wall poster, photocopy the teaching guide and three activity sheets for students to use in class or at home over the summer.

### Mission 1: A Puzzling Situation

Prepare students for their first mission. Distribute the activity sheet, and have students use their deductive reasoning skills to figure out details of a meeting and mystery object Ben needs to bring. (**Answers:** Erica sent the message to meet at the dining hall; Code: 11:00 a.m.; Photo: binoculars). Afterwards, students can use the answers to the puzzles to craft their own spy scene: *What did the message say? Why that location? What mission is Ben going on? What will he need the mystery gadget for?*

### Mission 2: It's All in the Words

Ask students: *Are you ready to train to be a spy?* Distribute the activity sheet and assign students their second mission: testing their

knowledge of spy-related vocabulary and phrases. Afterwards, students can create a top-secret file for new recruits by illustrating each of the definitions. To conclude, invite students to share their secret messages. **Answers:** 1. F; 2. E; 3. A; 4. I; 5. H; 6. J; 7. C; 8. D; 9. G; 10. B. Code: 1. B; 2. C.

### Mission 3: Location, Location, Location

Aspiring secret agents like Ben know that undercover work takes spies around the globe. Distribute the activity sheet and tell students that for their final mission, they will solve clues about famous places and landmarks. When done, review the answers. Then have students choose one of the locations as a setting for one of the writing prompts provided. Before they write, students can research their location, find it on a map, and even create their own map for their story. **Answers:** 1. New York City; 2. Washington Monument; 3. Egypt; 4. Amazon Rain Forest; 5. Great Barrier Reef; 6. Paris; 7. Mount Everest; 8. Leaning Tower of Pisa.

**Extension:** Like Stuart Gibbs' *Spy School: The Graphic Novel*, have students turn their adventure into an illustrated story using paper folded into four to six boxes or multiple sheets. Students can use elements from the missions to spark their imaginations. Also prompt them by asking: *Do you have a secret spy profile? Does your spy coat hold special gadgets? Is a double agent trying to trick you? Are you being duped by a double agent or trailing someone?*

### Online Resources

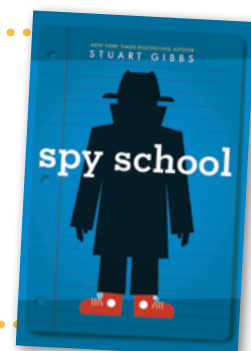
- [ymiclassroom.com/spyschool](http://ymiclassroom.com/spyschool)
- [simonandschusterpublishing.com/stuartgibbs/index.html](http://simonandschusterpublishing.com/stuartgibbs/index.html)

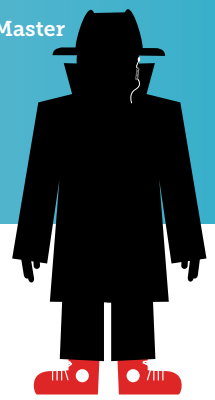
### About the Author

Stuart Gibbs is the author of the *New York Times* bestselling Charlie Thorne, FunJungle, Moon Base Alpha, and *Spy School* series, and *Once Upon a Tim*. He has also written screenplays for movies, worked on animated films, developed TV shows, and researched capybaras (the world's largest rodents). You can learn more about what he's up to at [stuartgibbs.com](http://stuartgibbs.com).

### About the Spy School Series

In this *New York Times* bestselling series, twelve-year-old spy-in-training Ben Ripley finds himself at the center of the action as he learns the ins and outs of life as a secret agent. Based on the first book in the series, *Spy School: The Graphic Novel* is now available. For the complete list of books in the *Stu-niverse*, visit [ymiclassroom.com/spyschool](http://ymiclassroom.com/spyschool).





# Mission One: A Puzzling Situation



Spies are often presented with puzzling information — like the mysterious text message Ben receives on his phone. He is trying to figure out who sent the message and where he is supposed to meet this person to learn about his next mission. Can you help him? Read the names and places on the chart. Then read the clues below. Place an X in the box if you can rule out a person, place, or both. Fill in the row with Xs when ruling out a place. Fill in the column with Xs to rule out a person. Hint: Start by reading all the clues.

	ERICA	CHIP	ALEXANDER HALE	PROFESSOR CRANDALL	ZOE
Dorm Room					
Principal's Office					
Library					
Dining Hall					
Bushnell Hall					

## Clues

1. CIA officers have been standing guard outside Ben's dorm room so no one can enter.
2. Zoe was sitting next to Ben in class and borrowed his pen to take notes in her notebook.
3. The library has been closed due to a power outage.
4. When Chip snuck off campus, he dropped his phone on the sidewalk and Ben picked it up. He still has to return it to Chip.
5. Yesterday, Erica and Ben went to the airport with Alexander Hale, who boarded a plane for a flight to Canada.
6. Professor Crandall was speaking to a few students at the start of his day full of classes in Bushnell Hall when Ben received the text.
7. Ben has been banned from the principal's office.

## Crack the Code

The text message contained a secret code about the time to meet during the day. Ben might be a math whiz, but he needs your help to decode the time.

= 8    
 = 5    
 = 4    
 = 3

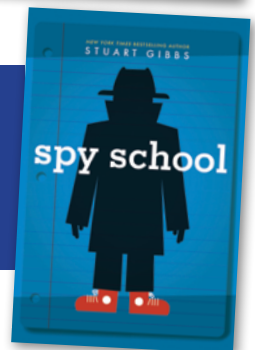
x + - = \_\_\_\_\_

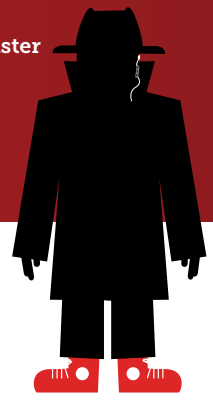


## Mystery Photo

The text message also contained a mystery photo with this clue: "We might be meeting up close, but you'll need this to see from afar." Which gadget will Ben need to bring for this next mission?

**GROWN-UPS:**  
With over 10 books,  
the Spy School  
series offers tons of  
adventures!





# Mission Two: It's All in the Words

Think you're ready to join Ben at Spy School? Test your knowledge of these spy-related words. Match the words to their definitions below.

- |                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| 1. bugs _____          | A. the practice of spying                            |
| 2. cryptography _____  | B. secretly using a fake identity to get information |
| 3. espionage _____     | C. a new member of a spy group                       |
| 4. interrogation _____ | D. a spy   |
| 5. mole _____          | E. the science of writing codes                      |
| 6. mission _____       | F. hidden microphones to listen to conversations     |
| 7. recruit _____       | G. closely watching over someone or something        |
| 8. secret agent _____  | H. an enemy pretending to be a spy for your group    |
| 9. surveillance _____  | I. questioning a suspect thoroughly                  |
| 10. undercover _____   | J. an important assignment                           |



## Create a Code

Secret agents often have their own special language. In the book, *Spy School*, author Stuart Gibbs sometimes uses phrases that say one thing, but mean something else. They're called idioms. For example, while trying to escape danger, Ben says, "I hit the deck." That means he dropped to the ground to stay safe. Test your skills and uncover the meaning of these other phrases from *Spy School*.

1. What does "show you the ropes" mean?

- ☐ A. Get you a long string.    ☐ B. Teach you how to do a job.    ☐ C. Help you tie a knot.

2. What does "the coast was clear" mean?

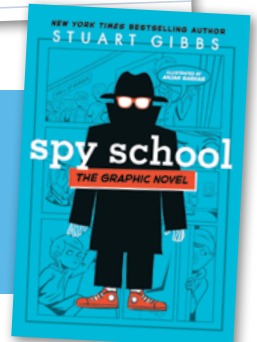
- ☐ A. The tide is low.    ☐ B. There were no people on the beach.    ☐ C. You can safely do something without being noticed.

## Your Turn

Now, imagine you're a spy that wants to make sure your plans don't fall into the wrong hands. Make up your own phrases to use as secret messages or codes. You can also work in some of the spy words from the vocabulary list.



GROWN-UPS:  
Check out the  
latest Spy School  
Graphic Novel!



SIMON & SCHUSTER  
Books for Young Readers

# Mission Three: Location, Location, Location



Pack your bag! As Ben learns at the Academy of Espionage, spy work involves top-secret missions around the globe. Help Ben solve the mystery of some of these famous places. Read the clues and write the answers on the lines.

1. Nicknamed for a fruit, this location features towering sky-high wonders and is watched over by a welcoming lady who carries a torch.  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. While on the run, Ben finds himself inside this massive 555-foot-tall stone structure in the United States capital, built to commemorate the first president.  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. The world's longest river — the Nile — runs through this African country.  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Don't forget your umbrella! Covering 1.4 billion acres, this place in South America gets a lot of rain and is home to jaguars, sloths, poison dart frogs, and huge rodents called capybaras.  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. One of the world's largest natural structures is made out of coral!  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. This location is known as the "City of Lights" and its star is a famous tower that was the tallest structure in the world until 1930.  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. You'll need your winter gear. Adventure-seekers climbing the world's tallest mountain face dangers like bitter cold and avalanches.  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Millions of visitors come each year to get a glimpse of this world-famous bell tower that tilts sideways.  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Word Bank

MOUNT EVEREST

AMAZON RAIN FOREST

LEANING TOWER OF PISA

PARIS

NEW YORK CITY

WASHINGTON MONUMENT

GREAT BARRIER REEF

EGYPT

## Your Assignment

Alexander Hale from the Academy of Espionage is ready to recruit you for spy work — just like he did Ben. Where will you go? Choose from one of the top-secret locations above. On a separate sheet of paper, write why your undercover mission is taking you there.

- What happens on your adventure?
- Do you have a secret disguise or cover story to hide your identity?
- What dangers will you encounter?
- Is there a mystery you need to solve or an enemy you must face?



**GROWN-UPS:**  
Top secret missions  
await in the bestselling  
Spy School series  
by Stuart Gibbs!

