

READING SPIES!

Grades 4–6



Dear Educator,

Spark excitement for reading with activities inspired by award-winning author James Ponti's City Spies book series.

With this educational program from Simon & Schuster and the curriculum specialists at Young Minds Inspired, students will embark on their own sleuthing and spy-writing fun.

We hope that you will enjoy this program and share it with other teachers. And please visit ymiclassroom.com/feedback-cityspies to let us know your thoughts on these materials. We look forward to receiving your comments.

Sincerely,
Dr. Dominic Kinsley
Editor in Chief
Young Minds Inspired

Questions? Contact YMI toll-free at 1-800-859-8005 or by email at feedback@ymiclassroom.com.

Target Audience

Grades 4-6

Program Components

Available at ymiclassroom.com/cityspies:

- This teacher's guide
- Two reproducible student activities
- A curriculum standards chart
- An online feedback form

Concepts and Skills

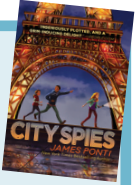
- Exploration of adventure books
- Reading, critical thinking, research, and writing skills

About City Spies by James Ponti

The City Spies books take readers across the globe on top secret missions that could mean life or death — and everything depends on the actions of a handful of kid spies. The series starts as Sara Martinez, better known by her code name “Brooklyn,” gets pulled into a secret organization because of her hacking skills.



This organization — the City Spies — is a secret division of MI6 that is made up of spies ranging in age from 8 to 15. Almost immediately, Brooklyn and her four fellow City Spies are roped into a dangerous mission to save the world...and finish their homework. City Spies is jam-packed with action and intrigue, humor and heart, and all set against a backdrop of exotic locations and iconic landmarks! Learn more about the City Spies series at simonandschuster.com/p/cityspiesseries.



How to Use This Program

Make photocopies of the activity sheets to use in the classroom. Share the City Spies series synopsis above with students. Use the activities after students read the books as part of classroom or independent reading, or as supplemental language arts activities.

Activity 1: Crack the Code!

Explain to students that they're about to embark on a puzzle-solving mission. Divide students into teams of two or three, pass out the activity sheet, and review the instructions. Set a timer to see how quickly a team can solve the puzzle in Part 1. In Part 2, students create their own spy names and skills.

Answer: Part 1. The alphabet key code is multiples of 3. Motherism: You cannot achieve, what you cannot believe.

Ask students what they think the phrase means. Ask: *How does this apply to spy kids? How does this saying apply to people in general?*

Extension Activity: Have the teams use the key to create their own encrypted spy codes to share with each other.

Activity 2: Secret Mission: Real-Life Spies

Working in their teams, have students brainstorm qualities a good spy would need to be successful. For example, the ability to blend into a crowd, walk quietly, observe, and react quickly, etc. Discuss the responses.

Next, explain to students that just like the kids in City Spies, they have “spy” homework — they will be digging into the lives of real-life spies. Have students work with their team or individually. Provide a list of spies (examples include Nathan Hale, Virginia Hall, Alan Turing, and Belle Boyd), or invite students to identify a spy they'd like to research on their own. Review the selections for appropriateness before students begin their research.

Direct students to use the activity sheet to collect information on their spy and create a dossier. Students might also create Google slideshows to present their dossiers.

Extension Activity: Have the groups write and illustrate their own spy stories. Offer a story starter such as:

- *One day, I got to school and there was a phone in my locker with a note: Call 555-5555 and wait for instructions...*
- *I woke up one morning and there was a helicopter waiting for me in my yard. A man dressed in a black suit greeted me and asked if I was ready to save the world...*

Have students select a major city as their story setting and research information about it to integrate into their writing.

Resources

City Spies site: cityspiesbooks.com
Educator dossier: cityspiesbooks.com/digitaldossier
YMI program: ymiclassroom.com/cityspies



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CITY SPIES

SIMON & SCHUSTER
Children's Publishing



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CRACK THE CODE!

The City Spies are a group of kid spies who travel around the globe on missions to save the world — in between going to school and doing homework! The spies are experts at using their resources to figure out solutions to problems and mysteries. The adult who guides the team is a male spy called Mother. Mother invents sayings to help his team remember key spy principles or advice. These sayings are called *motherisms*, and as the kid spies learn, they apply to spying and life in general.

Part 1: Below is a motherism that has been encrypted. To figure it out, you must first solve the cypher or alphabet key used to encrypt the message. Then apply the code to decode the message.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
3		9			18				30			
N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
				54								

75 45 63 9 3 42 42 45 60

3 9 24 27 15 66 15 69 24 3 60

75 45 63 9 3 42 42 45 60

6 15 36 27 15 66 15

What does this motherism mean?

Part 2: Each of the kid spies has a spy name (an alias) and a special skill. Sara Martinez is known as Brooklyn, which is where she is from. She is good at hacking. What would your spy name be? And your skill? Choose the name of the city or town where you were born, the name of a city or town you like, or one that you would like to visit.

My spy name: _____

My skill: _____



Families: What skills do you think a kid spy would need? Learn about the secret division of MI6 made up of spies ranging in age from 8 to 15 in the City Spies series by James Ponti. This series is jam-packed with action and set in exotic locations and iconic landmarks.



SECRET MISSION: REAL-LIFE SPIES

The City Spies use their talents and skills to solve problems and help others. There have been *actual* spies throughout history who have done the same thing. In fact, some real-life spies like Virginia Hall helped citizens and played key roles in our country's safety.

Research It! To get to know a famous spy who helped his or her fellow citizens, research them. Use this sheet as a guide to collect information on your real-life spy and create a dossier on them. A *dossier* is a file or record of someone or something.



Dossier on: _____

(spy name)

Nickname(s): _____

Real name: _____

Birthplace: _____

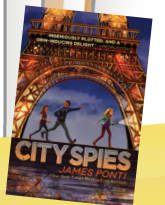
Back story: _____

Special skills: _____

Best known for: _____

How discovered: _____

Other interesting facts: _____



Families:

What spies throughout history do you find intriguing? Many real-life spies were the inspiration for the secret division of MI6 in the City Spies series by James Ponti.



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