

**MISD ELA Post Assessment 7.1—Persistent Pursuits—Close and Critical Reading—Teacher
(test ID 10886)**

THEME: Solving problems/mysteries involves persistence and attention to all of the evidence.

The Westing Game by Ellen Raskin, Chapter 27

HIS AVIATOR'S HELMET again flapping over his ears. Otis Amber danced up to his soup-kitchen companion, flung his arms around the taut body, and squeezed her tightly. "Hey Crow old pal, old pal, old pal."

"They said I was innocent, Otis. They said I was innocent," she replied vaguely.

Angela, too, wanted to hug her in welcome, but closeness was not possible for either of them. Instead, Angela offered a crooked smile. Crow nodded and lowered her eyes, only to raise them to Madame Hoo, clutching a Mickey Mouse clock. "Things very good," Madame Hoo said, extending her free hand and shaking Crow's hand up and down.

"It was all a regrettable mistake," Ed Plum explained to the judge. "Can you imagine, that sheriff wanted to arrest me, not Crow – me, Edgar Jennings Plum – he wanted to arrest the attorney! Fortunately, the coroner determined Mr. McSouthers died of a heart attack, as did Samuel W. Westing."

"Then Turtle's right." Theo said. "There was no murder. The coroner was part of the plot."

Ed Plum had no idea what Theo was talking about. Masking his ignorance with arrogance, he continued. "I had my suspicions about this entire affair from the start. I came here for one reason only: to announce my resignation from all matters regarding the Westing estate, with sincere apologies to all concerned."

"Wasn't there a last document?" Judge Ford asked, knowing that Sam Westing had to make his last move.

"Yes, but as I no longer take a legal interest..."

"Please turn it over to the court."

Baffled by the word "court," the lawyer set the envelope on the desk and found his way out of Sunset Towers.

Without once clearing her throat. Judge Ford proceeded to read the final page of the will of Samuel W. Westing.

SEVENTEENTH * *Good-bye, my heirs. Thanks for the fun and games. I can rest in peace knowing I was loved as your jolly doorman.*

EIGHTEENTH * *I, Samuel W. Westing, otherwise known as Sandy McSouthers and others, do hereby give and bequeath all the property and possessions in my name as follows:
To all of you in equal shares, the deed to Sunset Towers:*

And to my former wife, Berthe Erica Crow the ten-thousand-dollar check forfeited by table one, and two ten-thousand-dollar checks endorsed by J. J. Ford and Alexander McSouthers.

NINETEENTH * *The sun has set on your Uncle Sam. Happy birthday, Crow. And to all of my heirs, a very happy Fourth of July.*

Judge Ford set the document down. "That's it."

That's it? What about the two hundred million dollars, the heirs wanted to know.

"We lost the game," the judge explained, staring at Turtle, her face a mask of sad, childlike innocence as she nestled once again in Flora Baumbach's arms. "I think."

Turtle rose and walked to the side window, seeking the Westing house, which stood invisible in the moon-clouded night. (Hurry up, Uncle Sam, I can't keep up this act much longer. The candle must have burned through the last stripe by now.)

Behind her the discontented heirs grumbled: He made fools of us all. He played us like puppets. He was a g-good m-man. He was a vengeful man, a hateful man. Windkloppel? He tricked us, the cheat. A madman, stark raving mad.

“Oh my, oh my, just listen to you,” Flora Baumbach said. “You each have ten thousand dollars more than you started with and an apartment building to boot. The man is dead, so why not think the best?”

BOOM!

BOOM!

BOOM!

“Happy Fourth of July,” Turtle shouted as the first rockets lit up the Westing house, lit up the sky.

BOOM-BOOM-BOOM-BOOM.

BOOM!!!

The heirs gathered around Turtle at the window.

BOOM! Stars of all colors bursting into the night, silver pin-wheels spinning, golden lances up-up-BOOM! Crimson flashes flashing blasting, scarlet showers BOOM! Emerald rain BOOM! BOOM! Orange flames, red flames leaping from the windows, sparking the turrets, firing the trees....

“BOOM!” cried Madame Hoo, clapping her hands with delight.

The great winter fireworks extravaganza, as it came to be called, lasted only fifteen minutes. Twenty minutes later the Westing house had burned to the ground.

“Happy birthday, Crow,” Otis Amber said, reaching for her hand.

The orange glow of the morning sun had just begun its climb up the glass front of Sunset Towers when Turtle set out to collect the prize. She pedaled north past the cliff, still smoldering with the charred remains of the Westing house. Reaching the crossroads, she turned into the narrow lane whose twisting curves mimicked the shoreline.

The heir who wins the windfall will be the one who finds the fourth. It was so simple once you knew what you were looking for. Sam Westing, Barney Northrup, Sandy McSouthers (west north, south). Now she was on her way to meet the fourth identity of Windy Windkloppel. She could probably have figured out the address too, instead of looking it up in the Westingtown phone book – there it was, number four Sunrise Lane.

A long driveway, its privacy guarded by tall spruce, led to the modern mansion of the newly elected chairman of the board of Westing Paper Products Corporation. Turtle climbed the stairs rang the bells, and waited. The door opened.

Turtle felt her first grip of panic as she confronted the crippled doctor. Could she have been wrong? “I’d like to Mr. Eastman please,” she said nervously. “Tell him Turtle Wexler is here.”

“Mr. Eastman is expecting you,” Doctor Sikes said. “Go straight down the hall.”

The hall had an inlaid marble floor (no Oriental rugs). Reaching its end, she entered a paneled library (this one filled with books). There he was, sitting at the desk.

Julian R. Eastman rose. He looked stern. And very proper. He wore a gray business suit with a vest, a striped tie. His shoes were shined. He limped as he walked toward her, not the crooked limp of Doctor Sikes, just a small limp, a painful limp. Again Turtle was gripped by panic. He seemed so different, so important. She shouldn’t have kicked him (the Barney Northrup him). He was coming closer. His watery-blue eyes stared at her over his rimless half-glasses. Hard eyes. His teeth were white, not quite even (no one would ever guess they were false). He was smiling. He wasn’t angry with her, he was smiling.

“Hi, Sandy,” Turtle said. “I won!”

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THEME: Solving problems/mysteries involves persistence and attention to all of the evidence.

***The Westing Game* by Ellen Raskin, Chapter 27**

What does the text say? (Briefly summarize the excerpt at the literal level.) The text starts with Otis Amber dancing with Crow, who has been declared innocent. Angela wants to hug Crow too, but she settles for giving her a smile. Ed Plum explains that Crow’s arrest was a “regrettable mistake.” The sheriff had wanted to arrest Ed Plum. However, the coroner had determined that Mr. McSouthers and Sam Westing had died of heart attacks. So, there was no murder. Ed Plum resigns from all matters concerning the Westing estate. The judge asks Ed Plum for the last document and reads the final page of Sam Westing’s will, which ends by wishing Crow a happy birthday and a happy July fourth. The heirs want to know who wins the two hundred million dollars. The judge explains that they lost the game. Turtle looks at the Westing house thinking the candle must have burned to the last stripe. Flora Baumbach scolds the heirs, reminding them what they have won. There are fireworks outside and Turtle tells everyone, “Happy Fourth of July.” Everyone watches the fireworks, and Otis wishes Crow “Happy Birthday.” As the sun rises, Turtle pedals to Sunrise Lane to visit Mr. Eastman. Doctor Sikes opens the door and tells Turtle that Mr. Eastman is expecting her. Turtle panics; she regrets kicking Barney Northrup. Mr. Eastman is smiling, and Turtle greets him as Sandy and tells him she won.

How does it say it? In other words, how does the author develop the text to convey his/her purpose? (What are the genre, format, organization, features, etc?) The text is a mystery novel. The excerpt is “Chapter 27.” The author uses all capitals to introduce the first three words of the chapter. She also uses dialogue to convey characters’ traits to develop characterization. For example, the reader can quickly assume that Madame Hoo is an immigrant due to her poor English: “Things very good.” Edgar’s arrogance is conveyed through “...me, Edgar Jennings Plum--he wanted to arrest the attorney!” Note the exclamation mark emphasizing his outrage. The author also weaves in another text within a text, the will of Sam Westing. Part of the will is shown. The reader recognizes it through the numbers that are in all capitals and bolded and followed by the italicized words: “**NINETEENTH** * *The sun has set on your Uncle Sam. Happy birthday, Crow. And to all of my heirs, a very happy Fourth of July.* The author also uses words to emphasize a mystery and chess motif—e.g., “last move,” “lost the game.” The author’s word choice and thought shots of the characters foreshadow events and allow the reader to know which character has solved the mystery. For example, “...the judge explained, staring at Turtle, her face of sad, childlike innocence as she nested once again in Flora Baumbach’s arms. ‘I think.’” The reader realizes the Judge suspects Turtle has solved the mystery. The author foreshadows the fireworks with Turtle’s thought shots and the last clue, number nineteen in the will. The author also uses similes, “He played us like puppets.” The author also uses onomatopoeia, “Boom.” Finally, the author uses vivid descriptions to paint pictures in the reader’s mind: “Stars of all colors bursting into the night, silver pin-wheels spinning, golden lances up-up-BOOM!” The author uses a break of a line to indicate a passage of time. Once more, it is the internal dialogue of the character that solves the mystery: “*The heir who wins the windfall will be the one who finds the fourth.* It was so simple once you knew what you were looking for. Sam Westing, Barney Northrup, Sandy McSouthers (west, north, south).” The author’s use of parentheses emphasizes the emphasis on the four directions and the significance of the last clue.

What does the text mean? (What message/theme/concept is the author trying to get across?)
Solving problems and/or mysteries involves persistence and attention to all of the evidence.

So what? (What does the message/theme/concept mean in your life and/or in the lives of others? Why is it worth sharing/telling? What significance does it have to your life and/or the lives of others?)

- One can feel alone in a crowd. Something can be so clear to a one person and invisible to the rest of the crowd. For example, this year for the homecoming assembly we had a number of skits. One skit employed the old Black Face humor. I was appalled. I looked around and no one else appeared upset or even conscious of the fact that this type of humor is politically incorrect. I spoke to my students the following Monday; I felt they deserved to know this was not acceptable. My students were unaware and felt that I was being over sensitive. They noted several contemporary movies that did similar skits. I believe one movie was *Tropic Thunder*, which I have not viewed. Anyway, I was alone in a crowd again.
- Once a mystery/puzzle is solved, the solution appears so apparent. For example, no one knew the source of AIDS when AIDS began to appear in America. However, through methodical attention to detail, the CDC was able to narrow it down to the one person who brought it to America. *And The Band Played On* beautifully describes the investigative process and the one man who was essential in making the connections. Don Francis was determined and persistent in his pursuit. Once Don Francis was able to follow the clues and draw conclusions, the cause becomes so apparent to the novice.

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NASHVILLE, Tenn., Sept. 28, 2009

**Lost Dog Gathers Clues to Find Its Family
A Hopelessly Lost Rottweiler and the Dedicated Animal Rescue Worker Who Found Her Family**

By Steve Hartman

Ella, a Rottweiler, was in a car crash and scavenged for food on the highway for weeks. Ella was reunited with her family but as Steve Hartman tells us, the story doesn't end there.



Ella, a lost Rottweiler, is reunited with her family. (CBS)

(CBS) Over the last 20 years, the Love Me Tender animal rescue in central Tennessee has rounded up more than 1,000 abandoned dogs. And although most are timid and untrusting, **CBS News correspondent Steve Hartman** reports, one Rottweiler named Ella was notably different.

"I could just tell right away she was somebody's baby. She just didn't act like a stray dog to me," said Kathy Wilkes-Myers, who found the dog a few months ago.

Ella was emaciated and drinking from a drainage ditch along an empty stretch of highway. Kathy says it's typical for people to dump unwanted pets in the middle of nowhere - but again, the dog's demeanor convinced her there was more to the story. So she did some detective work, and what she found is a heart-wrenching tale of unending loyalty.

"She was hoping her family could come back. But they couldn't. They couldn't come back. It just breaks your heart," said Kathy.

Kathy found the first clues to this mystery - broken glass and tail lights - right near where she found the dog.

And just down from there, she found a second set of even more intriguing clues: personal items gathered up. By the dog, she assumed.

"It was like she was sleeping with them - or waiting with them," Kathy said. She took a picture with her cell phone and then gathered the items. They were mostly random, personal

things - toothbrush, comb, razor, a candle that said Michelle, but nothing that would explain anything - although now, she did have a hunch.

Kathy remembered two weeks earlier she'd driven by an accident on the same stretch of highway. She remembered because it was such a horrible crash. A single car had flipped over and landed on the side of the road, at just about the same spot where she found the dog.

Based on what she saw that day, Kathy figured there was no way a person could have survived, but what about a dog? So she called the highway patrol.

"She gave me the mom's name and the dad's name and the mom's name was Michelle. And I thought, 'Oh my God, this is their dog,'" she said.

Thrown from the car, rescue crews never saw the dog. She spent 13 days scavenging for food along the highway - and 13 nights bedding down with whatever she could find that smelled like her lost family.

"That's the last spot she saw her family and she was going to stay there," Kathy said.

Kathy figured it all out. But fortunately, she got one thing very wrong. Someone did survive the crash. In fact, all five family members survived.

"I'm lucky to be sitting here with my family," said Joe Kelly, the family's father.

After two weeks believing that their dog, Ella, had died, the family of Joe and Michelle Kelly got the most wonderful, slobbery surprise of their lives.

For the first time since the accident, the Kelly's had a good reason to cry - all thanks to a dog who refused to forget her family - and the stranger who refused to take lost for answer.

Unfortunately, it was a bittersweet reunion because of the accident and the medical expenses; the Kelly family has had to temporarily relocate to a place that doesn't allow dogs.

The good news is, Kathy has promised to hold onto Ella for as long as the Kelleys need to get back on their feet.

http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2009/09/28/assignment_america/main5347232.shtml

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THEME: Solving problems/mysteries involves persistence and attention to all of the evidence.
Lost Dog Gathers Clues to Find Its Family by Steve Hartman

What does the text say? (Briefly summarize the article at the literal level.) The text states that a Rottweiler named Ella survived a car crash. Ella was rescued by a woman named Kathy Wiles-Myers, who noticed that Ella did not act like the typical stray dog. Kathy found her along a highway; Ella was very thin, but Kathy decided to do some detective work due to the dog's behavior. The first clues Kathy found were near the dog; they consisted of broken glass and tail lights. She then found the dog was sleeping with a cell phone and other personal items. One of the items was a candle with the word "Michelle" on it. Kathy remembered a horrific crash that happened around the place Ella was found. She called the highway patrol and learned that one of the victims of the crash was named Michelle. Then she learned that Michelle and all the victims of the crash had survived. So, after two weeks of believing their dog was dead, Kathy reunited the dog with her owners, the Kellys. The Kellys cried when they saw their dog. Kathy is watching the dog until the Kellys get back on their feet financially.

How does it say it? In other words, how does the author develop the text to convey his/her purpose? (What are the genre, format, organization, features, etc?) The text appears to be a CBS interview that has been transcribed into a web article. It appears the interview was published or occurred in Nashville, TN on September 28, 2009. The title of the article is "Lost Dog Gathers Clues to Find its Family," and Steve Hartman is the author (or byline). The author also supplies a summary at the start of the article: "Ella, a Rottweiler, was in a car crash and scavenged for food on the highway for weeks. Ella was reunited with her family but as Steve Hartman tells us, the story doesn't end there" and in the title, "Lost Dog Gathers Clues to Find Its Family." The author supplies a photograph of the owners and of Ella for the reader. The author uses dialogue to capture the story and the traits of the people involved: "I could just tell right away she was somebody's baby. She didn't act like a stray dog to me." The reader quickly assesses Kathy Wiles-Myers' loving nature and her astute observational skills. The author further emphasizes these skills with his word choice--e.g., "detective work." The author also promotes the Love Me Tender rescue, noting it has "rounded up more than 1,000 abandoned dogs" in the last 20 years. Note the author's effective use of numbers. For example, he uses repetition to emphasize the days the dog was alone: "She spent 13 days scavenging for food along the highway--and 13 nights bedding down with whatever she could find that smelled like her lost family." The author continues with a mystery theme noting the "first clues." Through the retelling of Kathy's story, the reader is allowed to discover and solve the mystery: "She gave me the mom's name and the dad's name and the mom's name was Michelle." The reader is able to experience the joy of the family reunion through the picture and the quotations. In addition, the author provides the reader with closure: "The good news is, Kathy has promised to hold onto Ella for as long as the Kellys need to get back on their feet."

What does the text mean? (What message/theme/concept is the author trying to get across?)
Solving problems and/or mysteries involves persistence and attention to all of the evidence.

So what? (What does the message/theme/concept mean in your life and/or in the lives of others?)
Why is it worth sharing/telling? What significance does it have to your life and/or the lives of others?)

This gives me insight as to why I might be the family member called upon to find lost items. Whenever someone loses something in our family, I am asked to find it. I think it is because when I look for something I do two things. First, I pay close attention to the details. Second, I ask pertinent questions. For example, if my mother has misplaced a book or a calendar, I ask her, "When was the last time you remember reading it?" Then I go to the place she notes and carefully look. Where she sees a room filled with things, I see a room full of separate individual items. I am usually successful in my quest.

MISD ELA Unit Assessment: Close and Critical Reading Rubric (R.CS.07.01, W.PR.07.01-05)

Questions	3 (meets assignment)	2 (partially meets)	1 (minimally meets)	Score
<p>What does the text say? (Briefly summarize the story.) <i>R.CM.07.02</i></p>	<p>Answer is accurate, significant, and relevant with many details and examples. Details support point. Word choice and conventions support meaning.</p>	<p>Answer is accurate, significant, and relevant but has few details to support or explain the answer. Attempts at organization are partially successful. Word choice and errors in conventions do not distract from meaning.</p>	<p>Answer is inaccurate or a misinterpretation with little or no relevance to text or question. Ideas and content are not developed with details or appear random. Word choice and errors in conventions may distract from meaning.</p>	<p>___/3</p>
<p>How does it say it? In other words, how does the author develop the text to convey his/her purpose? (What are the genre, format, organization, features, etc.?)<i>R.NT.07.02, R.NT.07.04, R.IT.07.01, R.IT.07.02, R.IT.07.03</i></p>	<p>Answer is relevant with many details and examples. Details support point. Word choice and conventions support meaning.</p>	<p>Answer is relevant but has few details to support or explain the answer. Attempts at organization are partially successful. Word choice and errors in conventions do not distract from meaning.</p>	<p>Answer contains misinterpretation and has little or no relevance to text, question, or genre. Ideas and content are developed with few or no details. Word choice and errors in conventions may distract from meaning.</p>	<p>___/3</p>
<p>What does the text mean? (What theme/concept is the author trying to get across?) <i>R.NT.07.04, R.IT.07.01, R.CM.07.03</i></p>	<p>Answer is relevant with many details and examples. Details support point. Word choice and conventions support meaning.</p>	<p>Answer is relevant but has few details to support or explain the answer. Attempts at organization are partially successful. Word choice and errors in conventions do not distract from meaning.</p>	<p>Answer contains misinterpretation and little or no relevance to text or question or is a retelling or summary. Ideas are not developed with details. Word choice and errors in conventions may distract from meaning.</p>	<p>___/3</p>
<p>So what? (What does the message/theme/concept mean in your life and/or in the lives of others? Why is it worth sharing/telling? What significance does it have to your life and/or to the lives of others?) <i>R.CM.07.01, R.CM.07.03</i></p>	<p>Answer is relevant and/or insightful with many details and examples. Details support point. Word choice and conventions support meaning.</p>	<p>Answer is relevant but has few details to support or explain the answer. Attempts at organization are partially successful. Word choice and errors in conventions do not distract from meaning.</p>	<p>Answer contains misinterpretation and has little or no relevance to text or question. Answer appears random or inappropriate. Ideas and content are not developed with details. Word choice and errors in conventions may distract from meaning.</p>	<p>___/3</p>
				<p>Total ___/12</p>

Adapted from MISD Thematic Literature Units, 2007