



賽馬會「知優致優」計劃

Jockey Club “Giftedness Into Flourishing Talents” Project

# Be a Detective !

**English Language Primary 5**

Level 2: School-based Pull-out Programme



香港賽馬會慈善信託基金

The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust

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## **Background and Notes**

The design of the learning and teaching plan reflects the actual circumstances of the particular school at the time of implementation. As it is developed and tailor-made to meet the specific cognitive and affective needs of students, all learning and teaching resources are for reference only.

When adapting the materials, curriculum, instructional and assessment modifications can be made in accordance with the diverse needs and abilities, learning styles and aspirations of students, professional competence of teachers, and gifted education development of the schools.

Teachers are strongly recommended to read the introduction, theoretical background and summary of the resource package to have a better understanding of the principles of Gifted Education and strategies for implementation.

**This unit includes 1 foreword and 1 lesson plan.**



With reference to our resources, educators can design suitable learning activities and implement the elements of Gifted Education, based on students' needs and interests, and teaching experience, so as to unfold students' potentials to the fullest.

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# Be a Detective!

**Grade: Primary 5**

**No. of Lessons (Learning Time): 9 Lessons (540 minutes)**

<b>Prior Knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Vocabulary to describe the outlook of people</li> <li>- Some ideas about detective stories</li> </ul>
<b>Learning Objectives</b>	<p><b>Knowledge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students can identify the structure, the characteristics and the elements of a detective story</li> </ul> <p><b>Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students can write a detective story with different kinds of clues</li> <li>- Students can solve different cases or detective stories through collecting information from clues or questioning</li> <li>- Students develop their creativity and critical thinking skills through reading, solving problems, and writing detective stories</li> </ul> <p><b>Values and Attitudes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students can find writing detective story interesting</li> <li>- Students are keen on participating in the learning tasks throughout the programme</li> </ul>
<b>Learning &amp; Teaching Strategies</b>	Differentiated Questions, Group Discussion, Peer Evaluation
<b>Operation Mode of Gifted Education</b>	Level 2: School-based Pull-out Programme
<b>Core Elements of Gifted Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Higher-order Thinking Skills</li> <li> Creativity</li> <li> Personal-social Competence</li> </ul>

## Foreword / Background

The school involved in the following discussion had been developing school-based gifted education (SBGE) before joining Project Gift in 2017. Many of the teachers had some experiences in SBGE. To implement SBGE in whole class teaching, teachers catered for the diverse learning needs through differentiated learning tasks with flexible grouping strategies. As a result, talents and strengths of some students were unfolded and discovered. To further cater for the learning needs

of students and to provide more room for students to enhance their talents and strengths, pull-out programmes of various kinds were also developed.

The target group of students involved in the following discussion was a group of grade 5 students. During teachers' daily observation, it was found that this specific group of students possessed similar characteristics and abilities. They had higher ability in spoken English and in logical reasoning. In level 1 whole class learning, they learned with other students with different characteristics and abilities. Yet, despite having these observed characteristics and assessed abilities, they were found rather passive and unable to demonstrate their potential. Moreover, through the pieces of writing produced by this group of students, teachers realized that they were unable to display their creativity since the content of their writing in response to the questions was similar to that of other students.

## Objectives of Collaboration

To cater for the learning needs of this target group of students, a pull-out programme with a more appropriate environment which allowed students to exhibit their potential and extend their learning experiences needed to be developed. Teachers reviewed the causes of the situation and discussed how students could learn more effectively in the pull-out programme. With the Professional Development and School Support (PDSS) Team of Project GIFT, teachers were first guided to analyze the behaviour, characteristics, and learning needs of this group of students from their daily observation. Besides possessing high ability in spoken English and in logical reasoning, they were found to be interested in exploring different information or observations of their surroundings.

Given students' similar characteristics and abilities, teachers explored some strategies to raise the engagement of all students in the programme, in addition to fostering their creativity and developing their critical thinking skills. Teachers of the school designed nine consecutive sessions of a pull-out programme through collaborative lesson planning and discussion. Lesson observations and post-lesson discussions were also conducted to evaluate the learning process and outcomes. It was expected students would show engagement, enjoyment, and enthusiasm in the learning process.

## Theoretical Framework

According to Horak and Galluzzo (2017), an advanced level of learning content and resources, which involves an advanced level of reading and vocabulary items, with open-ended activities that provide investigating opportunities and multidisciplinary tasks for gifted students to produce, is a suitable language curriculum for gifted individuals.

Cramond (1993) also stated that the way for children to get the information that they needed was through interviewing. Students who were involved in conducting interviews needed to refine their questioning and listening skills and learned that all valuable information was not in written form. Basic interviewing skills such as setting questions, interviewing etiquette, and the way of recording the responses could be introduced.

With reference to the advice from VanTassel-Baska and Stambaugh (2006), a gifted programme is to offer deep content learning. It should emphasize the development of skills such as problem solving and critical thinking. The features of the programme, namely acceleration, complexity, depth, challenge, creativity, and abstractness, should be different from those in the regular classroom:

### **Acceleration**

The pacing and the depth of the learning could be increased according to the abilities of the group of students. Students should be allowed to master advanced content throughout the programme.

### **Complexity**

Additional variables, multiple resources or more difficult questions could be implemented in the learning process. Students should be given room to practise higher-order thinking skills.

### **Depth**

Students could apply concepts in different ways and they should be able to generate knowledge by themselves.

### **Challenge**

The content discussed should be more sophisticated and require a larger amount of reasoning.

### **Creativity**

Students should be given opportunities to complete alternative learning tasks or products with their own choices.

### **Abstractness**

Students could formulate their own generalizations based on the concepts.

In other words, the content of the pull-out programme should be student-centered, which provides more room for students to explore different knowledge or information from a range of learning resources, and the learning tasks designed should be challenging and more complicated so that the students would have to think in flexible ways. Besides, they would have to apply their critical thinking skills and creativity when solving problems during the learning process.

## **Learning and Teaching Strategies**

The programme targeted a group of primary 5 students with outstanding performances in verbal English. They could speak English fluently with rich contents. The group of students was selected based on teachers' recommendation and their own preferences. 15 students, including 11 girls with 4 boys, were selected to join the pull-out programme. Based on their interests and characteristics, students were expected to go through a learning experience involving reading, solving problems, and writing detective stories. In each session, some elements of detective stories would be introduced to the students.

At the end of the programme, students were expected to write a detective story with different kinds of clues. They were also expected to solve different cases or detective stories through collecting information from clues or questioning. They would develop their creativity and critical thinking skills through reading, solving problems, and writing detective stories. They would find writing a detective story an enjoyment.

There were 9 sessions in total:

Sessions	Content
1 - 5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Elements and structure of a detective story</li> <li>2. Different types and settings of detective stories</li> <li>3. Qualities of a good detective: Questioning skills and observational skills</li> <li>4. Creating clues</li> <li>5. Witness statement</li> </ol>
6 - 7	<b>Preparation for the presentation</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Write their own detective stories</li> <li>2. Prepare the interviewing questions</li> <li>3. Design the props for a scene of their detective stories</li> </ol>
8 - 9	<b>Presentation</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Present their own detective stories.</li> <li>2. Solve the detective stories written by other groups</li> </ol>

The learning and teaching of the pull-out programme was designed based on the theoretical framework of the curriculum for gifted students. The strategies adopted in the pull-out programme are summarised as follows:

### 1. Acceleration

Students in a normal classroom usually read texts printed in the textbooks or worksheets given by the teachers. To provide more opportunities for them to explore different types of detective stories or mysteries, throughout the pull-out programme, for example, some news articles about different real cases which had not been solved around the world, some mysteries found in famous detective stories (e.g. Sherlock Holmes), or some videos about murder cases with clues given by witnesses ,were given to the students.

## 2. Complexity and Depth

The learning tasks required students to apply critical thinking skills and creativity, for example, to solve hidden messages embedded in illustrations, to write clues with different messages like mirroring, or to analyse the credibility of the information given by the witnesses.

## 3. Challenge

In most parts of the programme, students learned the skills or information through problem-solving. To solve a case, they had to gather information through questioning, observation, analysis, and drawing conclusions with logical reasoning. To create a detective story, they also needed to make use of all these skills and the information with a logical sequence and express their ideas through setting up a scene.

## 4. Creativity

Throughout the programme, students had to apply the skills they had learned. They were given the opportunities to create their own hidden messages with written work or illustrations. They also worked together to create detective stories after learning all the elements of a detective story.

## Discussion

### 1. Evidence of Learning

With the student-centered approach, students were engaged in different activities, for example, role-playing. Attention could be maintained with appropriate switching to different learning activities. From students' body language and facial expression, it was observed that students were keen on participating in the learning tasks throughout the programme. They could identify elements of the detective stories, show their initiatives in seeking different information after reading different clues. They also acquired critical thinking skills through solving different cases, and writing detective stories using the elements they had learned. Students also demonstrated their creativity in writing original detective stories. The settings of the scenes and the storylines were complicated and various. They also showed their creativity when developing the clues, for example, a group even involved a DNA report in their story as a clue. In an apparent non-regular classroom, students automatically tuned in to the setting and ambience for detective training, turning learning context-bound, and they learned naturally through accomplishing the tasks. Students were committed to seeking various ways to solve the problems presented. For example, they predicted the storyline using the information and evidence collected from the scene set by the other group and through interviewing the "witnesses". They also developed stories with originality and uniqueness instead of having a story which was very similar to their classmates' in terms of the content.

### 2. Roles of Teachers

Since it was the first time implementing the pull-out programme, some ongoing modifications are suggested as a result of continuous evaluation and professional planning. To further facilitate students' learning, physical environment and setting is important. Students should be given a proper physical environment to work in and to look forward to regarding their own participation

and teachers' input or facilitation. The setting of the classroom could be different from a normal classroom in which students sit in rows. During the pull-out programme, students could sit in groups with different working stations. More time, including waiting time for students' responses, should be given to students, so that they could reflect on the learnt skills and knowledge, and to exercise them with ignition of ideas for their creation of detective stories. Furthermore, the learning tasks could be strengthened through building liaisons and coherence between activities for optimal learning and through linking and relating them to the ultimate creation of the detective story. Graphic organizers could be useful to consolidate skills/knowledge and story elements, and enable students to plan their stories. As a long-term target, vocabulary building should be gradual, enabling students to acquire vocabulary through real life experiences, with the aim to explore, use and develop their lexicon in life.