



The Balloon Fiesta Mystery

Grade 3 math · Place value, Subtraction, Multiplication, Rounding, Division · Reading level grades 3-4

Detective: _____ Date: _____

Oh no! The golden trophy for the grand balloon race has gone missing right from the launch field! A dusty footprint leads toward the Sandia Mountains. It is up to you to crack the case and find the thief before the final flight!

1. Solve each math problem. The answer is a number, and the letter beside it is what that number stands for.
2. In the clue boxes, write that letter in every box showing the same number, then read the secret clue.
3. Use each clue to cross suspects off the list. The one suspect left at the end is the culprit!

My answer: the Fiesta Bandit is _____

Possible suspects

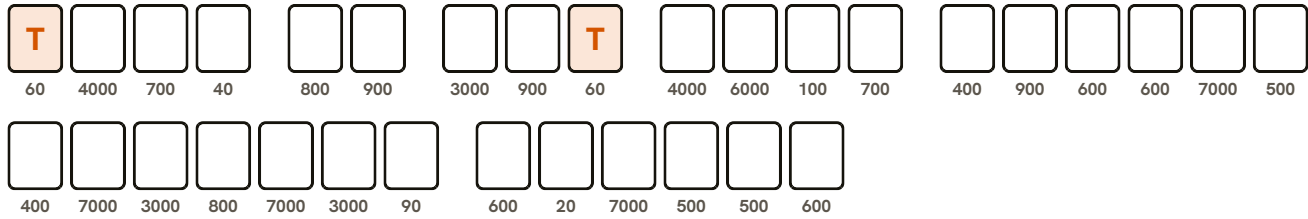
Cross off a row as each clue rules it out. The one left at the end is the culprit.

NAME	DESERT SPECIALTY	BONUS SKILL	SUN GEAR	DESERT HAIR	SECRET WEAKNESS
Sunny Sage	tram operating	flute playing	tinted visor	spiky black hair	sneezes at sagebrush
Rusty Trail	roadrunner tracking	star gazing	tinted visor	spiky black hair	sneezes at sagebrush
Sienna Soil	chile roasting	flute playing	tinted visor	dusty silver hair	sneezes at sagebrush
Billie Cactus	balloon piloting	flute playing	tinted visor	dusty silver hair	sneezes at sagebrush
Jade Arroyo	chile roasting	clay sculpting	sports sunglasses	braided brown hair	sneezes at sagebrush
Diego Canyon	roadrunner tracking	desert navigation	tinted visor	spiky black hair	sneezes at sagebrush
Rio Cooper	roadrunner tracking	desert navigation	tinted visor	dusty silver hair	avoids spicy food
Rosa Roadrunner	turquoise carving	flute playing	tinted visor	braided brown hair	sneezes at sagebrush
Clara Chile	turquoise carving	star gazing	tinted visor	dusty silver hair	sneezes at sagebrush
Cody Coyote	turquoise carving	fossil finding	tinted visor	dusty silver hair	sneezes at sagebrush
Sasha Sky	turquoise carving	flute playing	sports sunglasses	spiky black hair	avoids spicy food
Tomas Turquoise	balloon piloting	fossil finding	sports sunglasses	spiky black hair	avoids spicy food
Mateo Peak	tram operating	clay sculpting	tinted visor	dusty silver hair	sneezes at sagebrush
Zia Miller	turquoise carving	star gazing	sports sunglasses	spiky black hair	avoids spicy food
Maya Balloonist	balloon piloting	flute playing	sports sunglasses	dusty silver hair	sneezes at sagebrush
Pippa Pinon	tram operating	flute playing	sports sunglasses	braided brown hair	avoids spicy food
Sonia Sandia	balloon piloting	flute playing	tinted visor	braided brown hair	fear of heights
Toby Tramway	tram operating	desert navigation	sports sunglasses	braided brown hair	avoids spicy food
Dax Desert	roadrunner tracking	clay sculpting	sports sunglasses	braided brown hair	avoids spicy food
Gaby Gust	chile roasting	flute playing	tinted visor	braided brown hair	sneezes at sagebrush
Nina North	balloon piloting	star gazing	tinted visor	dusty silver hair	avoids spicy food

CLUE 1 Place value

Ranger Rita finds a mysterious code locked on the balloon launchpad console. The code uses place value blocks representing the altitude of the thief's escape. Let's count the hundreds, tens, and ones to unlock the first clue!

Solve each problem, then write its letter in every clue box that shows the same number.



What is the value of the 6 in 5,863? → **T**

What is the value of the 2 in 4,423? → **K**

What is the value of the 8 in 836? → **D**

What is the value of the 3 in 13,125? → **N**

What is the value of the 1 in 158? → **V**

What is the value of the 9 in 981? → **O**

What is the value of the 7 in 17,089? → **I**

What is the value of the 9 in 291? → **G**

What is the value of the 6 in 684? → **S**

What is the value of the 5 in 541? → **L**

What is the value of the 4 in 54,668? → **H**

What is the value of the 7 in 6,701? → **E**

What is the value of the 4 in 6,429? → **F**

What is the value of the 6 in 16,592? → **A**

What is the value of the 4 in 2,540? → **Y**

Scratch space:

CLUE 2 Subtraction

The Bandit dropped several items while escaping into the foothills. Ranger Rita subtracts the weights of the remaining gear from the total weight to see how much was left behind. Solve the problem to find a clue!

Solve each problem, then write its letter in every clue box that shows the same number.

T														
356	150	477	304	112	211	211	493	112	482	347	409	223	477	493

T			T									T				
356	112	482	356	477	880	304	112	762	409	223	409	821	356	762	112	880

$$362 - 6 = \square \rightarrow \boxed{\text{T}}$$

$$596 - 385 = \square \rightarrow \boxed{\text{L}}$$

$$736 - 327 = \square \rightarrow \boxed{\text{O}}$$

$$1152 - 331 = \square \rightarrow \boxed{\text{U}}$$

$$1128 - 366 = \square \rightarrow \boxed{\text{S}}$$

$$1037 - 157 = \square \rightarrow \boxed{\text{D}}$$

$$474 - 362 = \square \rightarrow \boxed{\text{I}}$$

$$843 - 366 = \square \rightarrow \boxed{\text{E}}$$

$$317 - 13 = \square \rightarrow \boxed{\text{V}}$$

$$692 - 210 = \square \rightarrow \boxed{\text{N}}$$

$$356 - 133 = \square \rightarrow \boxed{\text{R}}$$

$$671 - 324 = \square \rightarrow \boxed{\text{W}}$$

$$234 - 84 = \square \rightarrow \boxed{\text{H}}$$

$$679 - 186 = \square \rightarrow \boxed{\text{A}}$$

Scratch space:

Multiplication facts (1-12)

The grand balloon launch is organized in neat rows on the grassy field. Ranger Rita multiplies the number of rows by the balloons in each row to count the total fleet. Finding the total reveals a secret clue!

Solve each problem, then write its letter in every clue box that shows the same number.

Diagram illustrating a sequence of numbers arranged in two rows. The top row contains 18 boxes, with the first and ninth boxes highlighted in orange and labeled 'T'. The bottom row contains 12 boxes, with the last box highlighted in orange and labeled 'T'.

Top Row	Bottom Row
54	110
7	90
84	30
110	84
35	99
110	50
44	35
84	110
63	7
54	2
63	35
22	110
35	54
30	
7	
84	
2	
22	
96	

$6 \times 9 = \boxed{} \rightarrow \boxed{\text{T}}$

$2 \times 1 = \boxed{} \rightarrow \boxed{\mathbf{D}}$

$9 \times 10 = \square \rightarrow \boxed{\mathbf{A}}$

$$7 \times 12 = \boxed{} \rightarrow \boxed{\text{E}}$$

$1 \times 7 = \boxed{} \rightarrow \boxed{\text{H}}$

$7 \times 5 = \square \rightarrow \boxed{\text{U}}$

$$5 \times 10 = \boxed{} \rightarrow \boxed{\mathbf{R}}$$

$11 \times 10 = \boxed{} \rightarrow \boxed{\mathbf{S}}$

$12 \times 8 = \boxed{} \rightarrow \boxed{\text{N}}$

$$11 \times 2 = \boxed{} \rightarrow \boxed{0}$$

$11 \times 4 = \boxed{} \rightarrow \boxed{\text{P}}$

$10 \times 3 = \boxed{} \rightarrow \boxed{\mathbf{G}}$

$11 \times 9 = \boxed{} \rightarrow \boxed{\mathbf{B}}$

$9 \times 7 = \boxed{} \rightarrow \boxed{\text{C}}$

Scratch space:

CLUE 4 Rounding

The wind dials on the control tower are tricky to read. Ranger Rita has to round each wind speed to the nearest ten to make sure it is safe to fly. Solve the rounding puzzle to see what the Bandit left behind!

Solve each problem, then write its letter in every clue box that shows the same number.

A													A		
90	300	8000	50	70	20	50	6000	200	3000	600	400	60	90	6000	400
													A		
2000	200	8000	30	9000	70	700	70	60	600	7000	90	4000			

Round 89 to the nearest ten → **A**

Round 24 to the nearest ten → **Y**

Round 53 to the nearest ten → **S**

Round 3,497 to the nearest thousand → **V**

Round 4,116 to the nearest thousand → **P**

Round 67 to the nearest ten → **T**

Round 34 to the nearest ten → **N**

Round 7,322 to the nearest thousand → **M**

Round 2,422 to the nearest thousand → **C**

Round 6,118 to the nearest thousand → **I**

Round 7,716 to the nearest thousand → **U**

Round 363 to the nearest hundred → **R**

Round 702 to the nearest hundred → **O**

Round 613 to the nearest hundred → **E**

Round 8,955 to the nearest thousand → **G**

Round 225 to the nearest hundred → **L**

Round 274 to the nearest hundred → **D**

Round 57 to the nearest ten → **H**

Scratch space:

CLUE 5**Division facts (1-12) - the last clue**

The search team wants to split up the canyon map into equal sections so everyone has a spot to search. Help Ranger Rita divide the grid evenly to locate the final hideout!

First solve each problem. Then find each answer in the numbered list below and cross that sentence out. One sentence will be left - that is exactly what the villain did!

Step 1 - solve these:

$72 \div 8 = \boxed{}$

$50 \div 10 = \boxed{}$

$88 \div 8 = \boxed{}$

$16 \div 4 = \boxed{}$

$5 \div 5 = \boxed{}$

$4 \div 2 = \boxed{}$

$40 \div 5 = \boxed{}$

$84 \div 7 = \boxed{}$

$6 \div 2 = \boxed{}$

$70 \div 10 = \boxed{}$

$80 \div 8 = \boxed{}$

Step 2 - cross out the sentence with each answer:

1. The villain fires up the giant chile roasters, then digs up an ancient dinosaur bone.
2. The villain follows roadrunner tracks in the dust, then points out the brightest stars in the sky.
3. The villain follows roadrunner tracks in the dust, then shapes a quick clay pot to hide inside.
4. The villain fires up the giant chile roasters, then maps a secret path through the canyons.
5. The villain steers a colorful balloon over the river, then plays a lively tune on a wooden flute.
6. The villain speeds up the sandia tram car, then shapes a quick clay pot to hide inside.
7. The villain steers a colorful balloon over the river, then maps a secret path through the canyons.
8. The villain follows roadrunner tracks in the dust, then maps a secret path through the canyons.
9. The villain fires up the giant chile roasters, then plays a lively tune on a wooden flute.
10. The villain follows roadrunner tracks in the dust, then digs up an ancient dinosaur bone.
11. The villain polishes shiny blue turquoise stones, then points out the brightest stars in the sky.
12. The villain steers a colorful balloon over the river, then points out the brightest stars in the sky.

Answer Key

The Balloon Fiesta Mystery

Culprit: Mateo Peak

tram operating · clay sculpting · tinted visor · dusty silver hair · sneezes at sagebrush

Trail: Start 21 → Clue 1 19 → Clue 2 12 → Clue 3 9 → Clue 4 4 → Clue 5 1

Clue 1 (Place value): "THEY DO NOT HAVE FOSSIL FINDING SKILLS"

What is the value of the 6 in 5,863? = 60 (T) · What is the value of the 2 in 4,423? = 20 (K) · What is the value of the 8 in 836? = 800 (D) · What is the value of the 3 in 13,125? = 3000 (N) · What is the value of the 1 in 158? = 100 (V) · What is the value of the 9 in 981? = 900 (O) · What is the value of the 7 in 17,089? = 7000 (I) · What is the value of the 9 in 291? = 90 (G) · What is the value of the 6 in 684? = 600 (S) · What is the value of the 5 in 541? = 500 (L) · What is the value of the 4 in 54,668? = 4000 (H) · What is the value of the 7 in 6,701? = 700 (E) · What is the value of the 4 in 6,429? = 400 (F) · What is the value of the 6 in 16,592? = 6000 (A) · What is the value of the 4 in 2,540? = 40 (Y)

Clue 2 (Subtraction): "THE VILLAIN WORE A TINTED VISOR OUTSIDE"

$362 - 6 = 356$ (T) · $596 - 385 = 211$ (L) · $736 - 327 = 409$ (O) · $1152 - 331 = 821$ (U) · $1128 - 366 = 762$ (S) · $1037 - 157 = 880$ (D) · $474 - 362 = 112$ (I) · $843 - 366 = 477$ (E) · $317 - 13 = 304$ (V) · $692 - 210 = 482$ (N) · $356 - 133 = 223$ (R) · $671 - 324 = 347$ (W) · $234 - 84 = 150$ (H) · $679 - 186 = 493$ (A)

Clue 3 (Multiplication facts (1-12)): "THE SUSPECT COUGHED ON SAGEBRUSH DUST"

$6 \times 9 = 54$ (T) · $2 \times 1 = 2$ (D) · $9 \times 10 = 90$ (A) · $7 \times 12 = 84$ (E) · $1 \times 7 = 7$ (H) · $7 \times 5 = 35$ (U) · $5 \times 10 = 50$ (R) · $11 \times 10 = 110$ (S) · $12 \times 8 = 96$ (N) · $11 \times 2 = 22$ (O) · $11 \times 4 = 44$ (P) · $10 \times 3 = 30$ (G) · $11 \times 9 = 99$ (B) · $9 \times 7 = 63$ (C)

Clue 4 (Rounding): "A DUSTY SILVER HAIR CLUNG TO THE MAP"

Round 89 to the nearest ten = 90 (A) · Round 24 to the nearest ten = 20 (Y) · Round 53 to the nearest ten = 50 (S) · Round 3,497 to the nearest thousand = 3000 (V) · Round 4,116 to the nearest thousand = 4000 (P) · Round 67 to the nearest ten = 70 (T) · Round 34 to the nearest ten = 30 (N) · Round 7,322 to the nearest thousand = 7000 (M) · Round 2,422 to the nearest thousand = 2000 (C) · Round 6,118 to the nearest thousand = 6000 (I) · Round 7,716 to the nearest thousand = 8000 (U) · Round 363 to the nearest hundred = 400 (R) · Round 702 to the nearest hundred = 700 (O) · Round 613 to the nearest hundred = 600 (E) · Round 8,955 to the nearest thousand = 9000 (G) · Round 225 to the nearest hundred = 200 (L) · Round 274 to the nearest hundred = 300 (D) · Round 57 to the nearest ten = 60 (H)

Clue 5 (Division facts (1-12)): surviving statement is box 6 → Mateo Peak

$72 \div 8 = 9$ · $50 \div 10 = 5$ · $88 \div 8 = 11$ · $16 \div 4 = 4$ · $5 \div 5 = 1$ · $4 \div 2 = 2$ · $40 \div 5 = 8$ · $84 \div 7 = 12$ · $6 \div 2 = 3$ · $70 \div 10 = 7$ · $80 \div 8 = 10$