

Chasing Vermeer  
By Blue Balliett  
Illus. by Brett Helquist

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254 pages  
770L  
ISBN: 9780439372978

# Scavenger Hunt and Descriptive Essay

**Summary:** When strange and seemingly unrelated events start to happen and a precious Vermeer painting disappears, eleven-year-olds Petra and Calder combine their talents to solve an international art scandal. First book in the series featuring art sleuth friend Calder and Petra.

**Subjects:** Johannes Vermeer fiction, art fiction, mystery and detective stories

**Audience:** elementary and junior high

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Teachers, librarians, & caregivers,

The following pages include a scavenger hunt, answer key, and descriptive essay to be used alongside Chasing Vermeer.

Some of you may have students complete weekly spelling and/or vocabulary assessments. Below you'll find 10 words directly from the text.

Spelling/Vocabulary List

broadcaster, rectangles, unsigned, resettle, cheeriness, casement, disliking, trespassed, decoding, warping

Most importantly, have fun and enjoy this adventurous tale from Blue Balliett and Brett Helquist.

Your librarian,

Katelyn Martens-Rodriguez

# CHASING VERMEER SCAVENGER HUNT

All of the answers can be found within the book. Include the page number(s) you used to find the information.

Name:

Date:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ was one of Petra's favorite places: it was peaceful, and you never knew what you might find. page:

4. "\_\_\_\_\_ said that art is a lie, but a lie that tells the truth." page:

6. On which page did Petra begin to "get a grip on what Fort was saying: Depending on how you looked at things, your world could change completely. His thought was that most people bent over backward to fit everything that happened to them into something they could understand. In other words, people sometimes twisted what was actually in front of them to fit what they thoughts should be there, never even realizing they were doing it. People liked to see what they were supposed to see, and find what they were supposed to find. It was quite an idea."

page:

2. Who noticed "that colors sometimes left their shapes when things flashed by so fast"?

page:

5. What work of art made Petra "feel as if she could leave everything predictable behind"? (name the artist and title)

page:

3. What was ironic between Calder and Petra within Chapter Three?

page:

7. \_\_\_\_\_ are parallelograms with four equal sides and sometimes with no right angles.

page:

8. \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_ was the painting in Mrs. Sharpe's house and on the top of Calder's box from his grandma.

page:

9. What painting by Vermeer was Petra dressed up as for Halloween?  
page:

10. Who said "Do you suppose that ideas overlap like this all the time, and people just don't realize it?"

page:

14. "Holding the painting carefully, he took two steps, then two more. What if there was some monster living in this basement?" Write the question that comes next.

page:

BONUS: For question #5, what year was this work of art finished?

11. On \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ Calder and Petra learned "A Lady Waiting" had been stolen.

page:

12. Petra describes Charles Fort as a "\_\_\_\_\_ thinker" to Mrs. Sharpe.

page:

13. \_\_\_\_\_ was Louise Sharpe's widow and a Vermeer expert. page:

15. "Why didn't the so-called 'early' and 'late' Vermeers have that luminous,

\_\_\_\_\_ touch?"

page:

16. What two things did Mrs. Sharpe tell Calder and Petra were "two very different things"?

page:

17. What coincidence is found between Calder and Petra in Chapter 22?

page:

18. What was the "most startling" connection found in Chapter 24?

page:

## Chasing Vermeer Scavenger Hunt: Answer Key

1. Powell's, page 14
2. Petra, page 18
3. Petra wishes she had parents who were more interested in her and Calder wishes he had a bigger family so his parents wouldn't ask so many questions, pages 18-34
4. Picasso, page 336
5. Calliebotte's Rainy Day, pages 40-41
6. page 45
7. Rhombi, page 54
8. The Geographer by Johannes aka Jan Vermeer, page 67
9. A Lady Writing, page 80
10. Petra, page 89
11. November 5, page 99
12. fearless, page 118
13. Leland Sharpe, page 147
14. Someone who had snuck in when the janitor wasn't looking, page 160
15. haunting, page 173
16. looking and seeing, page 207
17. They share the same birthday of 12/12 and they are both turning 12, pages 214-215
18. The first letter of the first name of each person on Calder's list was a pentamino, page 250

Bonus: 1877

Name:

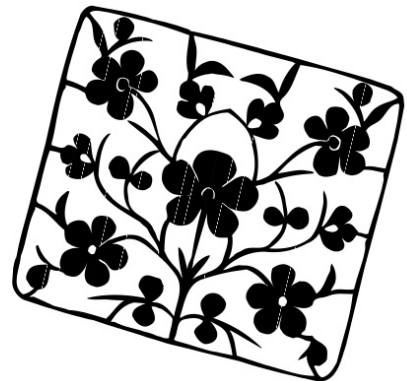
Due Date:



# What makes an object a piece of art?

Similar to Ms. Hussy's assignment on page 36, you have the opportunity to determine why something is a work of art. Use your own thinking to choose something from your home or our community that you feel is a piece of art. Then, answer at least five of the following questions on a separate sheet of lined paper.

1. What media was used to create this work of art?
2. What makes this object special?
3. Why is it pleasing to you?
4. Why does this object deserve special recognition?
5. What truth does this work of art show?
6. What lie is revealed through this work of art?
7. Is anything about the work puzzling? If so, what?



After you have answered the questions above, write a descriptive essay about your work of art. Remember to:

- A. Include each of the five senses in your description. These include sight, sound, taste, smell, and touch.
- B. Use the dictionary to aid you in spelling correctly. Correct spelling helps the reader focus on the content of the essay.
- C. Edit your essay with a peer. Have your editor sign his/her name on your first draft when edited (they should use a colored writing utensil different than the one you used to write the essay).
- D. Re-write the essay, taking into account the thoughts of your editor. When you're satisfied, turn in this sheet, your rough draft, and your final essay.
- E. Enjoy the journey !

