

Name _____



The Missing Key

Directions: Read the mystery story carefully. Some clues use *multiple-meaning words*. To solve the mystery, you'll need to think about which meanings fit in each part of the story. After reading, answer the questions at the end to reveal what really happened.

Detective Mira Locke stared at the old **key** sitting on the desk. "Strange," she muttered, "this isn't the key we're looking for." Her partner, Leo, frowned. "But it fits the description-silver, small, and shaped like a heart."

"True," Mira said, "but this key doesn't open *anything*. It's a **key**-as in a legend on a map. See the tiny letters?" Leo leaned closer. Sure enough, the word "Key to Symbols" was etched on its surface. They scanned the rest of the office. A **note** sat under a glass of water. It read: "*The answer lies beneath the staff.*" Leo thought aloud. "Staff... like a group of employees?"

"Or maybe," Mira replied, "a *staff* in music-lines and notes." They hurried to the piano in the corner, lifting its cover. There, inside, was a small metal box. On top was a sticker shaped like a **seal**. Leo whispered, "A sea animal?"

Mira grinned. "No-a *seal*, as in something that keeps a box closed." She broke the seal carefully and opened it. Inside was the real **key**-this one clearly made for a lock. "Case closed," Mira said, smiling. "Sometimes words hide more than one truth."

Comprehension Questions

1. What was the *first* meaning of "key" in the story?
2. What was the *second* meaning of "key"?
3. What two meanings of "staff" did Mira and Leo discuss?
4. What two meanings of "seal" appeared in the story?
5. How did understanding multiple meanings help solve the mystery?