

"7 Riddles to Nowhere": Advanced Analysis

In *7 Riddles to Nowhere* by A.J. Cattapan, the protagonist Kameron must navigate both a physical treasure hunt and his own internal psychological barriers. To solve these riddles, one must look beyond the surface level of the plot and analyze how the setting, characters, and conflicts intertwine. Use your critical thinking skills to complete the analysis below.



Thinking Deeper

Rather than identifying characters, analyze the **essential function** each element plays in the narrative system of the book.

Narrative Element	Analysis of Significance
St. Jude's School	Explain why this specific setting is the only place where Kameron's journey could take place. How does the school's physical history mirror Kam's internal struggle?
Vinny and Lexi	Analyze how these two characters act as 'foils' for Kam. What specific traits do they possess that Kam lacks, and why is this balance necessary for the mission?
Selective Mutism	Instead of a medical definition, explain how this disorder functions as a 'riddle' within the story itself. How does Kam's silence change the way he observes clues?

Critiquing the System

1. The founder created a complex riddle-based system to save the school. Evaluate this choice. Why would a founder rely on a group of children to solve puzzles rather than leaving a traditional financial endowment? What does this reveal about the founder's values regarding community and history?

2. Kam often uses a notebook to communicate. Analyze a moment where this method **fails** or is insufficient. How does the limitation of written communication increase the stakes of the scene, and what does it force Kam to do differently?

Make Your Own

3. Architecture is central to the puzzles in the book. If you were to design a **hypothetical 8th riddle** for St. Jude's, what specific architectural or historical detail from the school would you focus on? Explain how solving this riddle would require a specific character's unique perspective.

Prove It

4. Throughout the narrative, the concept of 'voice' is both literal and metaphorical. Select a pivotal moment where Kam demonstrates growth. Does this growth come from 'finding' his voice, or from learning to be brave despite the silence? Use **textual evidence** to argue whether Kam's character arc is about 'fixing' his disorder or mastering his environment.
