Teacher Answer Key

Case Study

1. Warning signs present: relationship escalated fast and became deeply intimate; the person is unavailable for video calls with a consistent excuse; the career keeps them geographically remote; financial opportunity was introduced; the profile photo returns no reverse image matches (suggesting a synthetic AI-generated face).

2. David's daughter provides outside perspective that breaks the isolation and secrecy the scam relies on. The sunk cost fallacy makes it hard for David to hear her concerns — he has already invested three months of emotional energy and $2,000, making it psychologically painful to accept that the relationship is fraudulent.

Multiple Choice

1. D

2. A

3. A

Matching

1-E, 2-D, 3-A, 4-C, 5-B

Fill-in-the-Blank

1) billion, 2) isolation, 3) fallacy

Short Answer (Sample Responses)

Q1: Romance scams exploit universal human psychological mechanisms — the need for connection, trust built through emotional intimacy, and the sunk cost fallacy — that operate independently of intelligence. In fact, cognitively sophisticated people may be better at rationalizing continued investment when doubts arise, which can make them more vulnerable rather than less.

Q2: The name refers to fattening a pig before slaughter. The 'fattening' is the grooming phase — intensive emotional investment that makes the victim feel the relationship is real and valuable. The 'slaughter' is the financial extraction phase, and the 'butchering' is the abrupt exit once the victim is depleted. The victim invests deeply before the true cost is revealed.

Q3: Sample — I would gently point out that persistent inability to video call is one of the clearest warning signs of a romance scam, because AI personas and remote operators cannot easily sustain unscripted real-time video. I would suggest they

insist on a live unscripted video call before sending any money or sharing any financial information. I would also encourage them to run a reverse image search on the profile photos and research the person's stated employer independently.