



Resource Resource Library Guide: Mystery Books

The following high interest books were selected to support an exploration of Mystery books. Each book has a summary and additional information, such as book trailers and links to reviews, in a separate slide deck. Visit [this link](#) to access the books.

Suggestions for using the text sets and slide deck:

- ▶ Choose one of the following four topics from the quarter two slide deck to explore with your class: Gratitude, Mystery, Sports, and Physical Health.
- ▶ Books in the collection span different reading levels. Also included is a separate collection, “Engaging Books for Children and Families,” which offers a selection of books that can be used with children, families, and adults.
- ▶ Explore the slides for your topic in the provided link. Each book listed in the table below has a summary and additional information with links to websites that offer supplemental material. Consider selecting one book to read aloud to learners while they read their own text.
- ▶ Share the slide deck with learners and explore the books and websites. Allow learners individual time to explore the slide deck and choose a book or excerpts from several books to read.
- ▶ Decide how you will interact with these topics and texts. This information guide has suggestions for activities for the classroom, tools for teachers, and activities for families, which are starting points for larger units or creative activities to engage with topics and texts.
- ▶ The “Activities for Families” section may be copied into another document and sent home with families for engagement suggestions while reading the books.
- ▶ Use this tool to help develop and foster a reading life for your learners!

Book Title	Author	Lexile Reading Level
<i>The Hangman</i>	Louise Penny	HL 450
<i>And Then There Were None</i>	Agatha Christie	570

<i>The Body in the Woods: A Point Last Seen Mystery</i>	April Henry	HL 720
<i>The Case of the Missing Marquess: An Enola Holmes Mystery</i>	Nancy Springer	960
<i>Tunnels</i>	Roderick Gordon and Brian Williams	990
<i>The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time</i>	Mark Haddon	1090
Engaging books for adults and children		
<i>Nate the Great</i>	Marjorie Weinman Sharmat	340
<i>The Missing Monster Card</i>	Lori Mortensen and Remy Simard	440
<i>Pedro's Mystery Club</i>	Fran Manushkin	460
<i>Judy Moody: Girl Detective</i>	Megan McDonald	570
<i>The Fenway Foul-Up</i>	David Kelly	590
<i>The Detective Dog</i>	Julia Donaldson	590
<i>The Maze of Bones</i>	Rick Riordan	610
<i>The Buried Bones Mystery</i>	Sharon Draper	700

Activities for the Classroom

- ▶ At the start of this unit, ensure that learners understand the complexities of reading the mystery genre. You will want to make sure that your learners understand the meaning of the bolded words in the following example. Ask readers to think about the following as they read:
 - **Problem:** Identify the mystery to be solved
 - **Motives:** What are the reason(s) the incident occurred? What are the motives of the characters throughout the story?
 - **Setting:** How does the setting (time and place of the story) affect the story or how does the story connect with the setting? How does the setting add to the tone/mood of the story?
 - **Foreshadowing, dialogue, flashback:** Watch for techniques the author uses through flashback, foreshadowing, or dialogue throughout the story. How does the author leave hints as to what may happen later in the story? What objects have been found? When these events happen in the story, have learners ask themselves if these seem like possible clues or answer a “why” to something in the story.

- **Perspective:** Whose perspective or opinion is the story being told from? Does the story have multiple perspectives? How does, or could, this impact the story?
 - **Purpose:** What is the author's purpose or goal in the use of specific techniques or plot devices?
 - **Resolution:** Did the story end the way the learner thought? Why/why not? What would they have changed (if anything)? Did it seem realistic? If not, why not?
- ▶ After learners have become more familiar with the mystery genre, have them immerse themselves in mystery texts. As they do this, you may want to consider having them use a graphic organizer such as [this one](#) from [ReadWriteThink](#) to help them think critically about the different text demands of the mystery genre.
 - ▶ As a culminating activity, consider using the following ReadWriteThink "[Puzzle Piece Mystery Book Project](#)." Learners will enjoy putting together their final projects in "pieces" just like a good detective puts together a mystery! Encourage learners to have fun and be creative in their work.

Helpful Links for Teachers

Mystery Writers of America:

This organization has an entire section dedicated to educators of all grade levels and ages. Their mission is to help educators with mystery based reading and writing activities. "All original material below has been created by educators who are also MWA members and is available for use and/or sharing with no restrictions." You can access their website [here](#).

Breakout or Escape Rooms:

Once learners have developed a deeper understanding of the mystery genre and the demands of the texts a mystery reader encounters, consider creating a digital breakout or escape room as outlined in [this site](#). Breakout and escape rooms are a great way to help students apply their analytical thinking and deductive reasoning skills in a fun and creative way! For further information on how breakout and escape rooms benefit students, click [Educational Escape Rooms](#) and [Rise of Educational Escape Rooms](#).

Achieve the Core:

This website is full of, "free, ready-to-use classroom resources that support excellent, standards-aligned instruction, for all students." Teachers can access a plethora of lessons, units, and activities, around the genre of mystery by searching the term, "mystery" on the [website's main page](#), or by clicking, [here](#).

Super Summary:

"This guide is packed with more than 40 resources for lovers of the crime and mystery genres. In addition to general genre resources, you'll find resources for writers, teachers, and kids, and links to relevant podcasts and blogs." If you are looking for a variety of organizations and resources to go for mystery genres, look no further. Click [here](#) to access the full mystery guide!

Activities for Families

- ▶ Choose a book to explore from the “Engaging Books for Adults and Children” section in the table above.
- ▶ Look at the front cover with your child. Ask your child what they noticed about the front cover. Explore the pictures and text. Have your child guess at what the story may be about using the picture on the front cover. This is called “making a prediction.”
- ▶ Read and discuss the book. Make connections to what you are learning from your mystery book readings. Explore words that your child does not understand.
- ▶ Explain that a mystery is “something difficult or impossible to understand” or a “novel, play or movie dealing with a puzzling crime.” With that in mind, explore these questions with your child:
 - What was the mystery in this story?
 - What did the character do to solve the mystery? What clues helped solve the mystery?
 - Sometimes if you are looking for a lost item, it is just like solving a mystery! When have we had to solve a mystery to find a lost item?
 - Would you like to read other mystery books? Would you like to read a mystery story?

Expert Reviewers

Gail Lemlay Burnett
English Instructor
Portland Adult Education
Portland, Maine

Sheryl Grant
Data Specialist
North Texas Adult Education & Literacy
Denton, Texas

Delia Watley, M.Ed.
Director of Adult Education
Irving Independent School District
Irving, Texas