

Materials Needed:

- An age-appropriate short mystery story (like a chapter from 'Nate the Great', 'Cam Jansen', or a printable story)
- Paper or a notebook (for a 'Detective Notebook')
- Pencil or crayons
- Optional: A magnifying glass prop for extra fun!

Become a Mystery Detective!

Welcome, Detective! Today, we're diving into the exciting world of mysteries. Mysteries are like puzzles waiting to be solved. Good readers are like detectives – they look carefully for clues to figure things out!

What Makes a Mystery?

Mysteries usually have a few key ingredients:

- **A Problem or Puzzle:** Something strange has happened! Maybe something is missing, or there's a secret to uncover.
- **Clues:** Hints left behind that help solve the puzzle.
- **Suspects:** People (or characters) who might have been involved.
- **A Detective:** Someone trying to solve the mystery (that's you!).
- **A Solution:** Finding out what really happened!

Activity 1: Read the Mystery

Let's read our mystery story together. As we read, pay close attention! Be on the lookout for anything suspicious or any important details. Think like a detective – what seems out of place? What information might be a clue?

Activity 2: Detective Discussion & Notebook

Wow, that was exciting! Let's talk about it:

- What was the main mystery or problem in the story?
- What clues did we find?
- Who were the suspects? Why did we suspect them?
- Did you make any predictions while reading? Did they change?
- How was the mystery solved in the end?

Now, let's make our own 'Detective Notebook'! Take your paper or notebook. On the first page, write the title of the story we just read. Then, list the main mystery, the clues you found, the suspects, and how it was solved. You can even draw pictures of the clues!

Activity 3: Solve a Mini-Mystery!

Okay, Detective, here's a quick case for you:

The Case of the Cookie Crumb Trail: Mom baked cookies this morning and left them cooling on the kitchen counter. When she came back, one giant cookie was missing! She found a trail of cookie crumbs leading from the counter, under the kitchen table, and stopping right next to the dog's empty water bowl. The dog, Sparky, is sleeping nearby, looking very full. Who took the cookie? What clues helped you decide?

Talk about your answer and the clues you used!

Wrap-up: Super Sleuth!

Great job today, Detective! You learned how to spot the key parts of a mystery and use clues to figure things out, just like a real detective reading a case file. Reading mysteries is a fun way to practice paying close attention to details!

Optional Extension: Try writing your own very short mini-mystery story, like 'The Case of the Missing Pencil'!