

Mystery Elements and Structure

Introduction and Central Conflict		
Element	Description	Ideas for Your Mystery
Setting	Time and place of the story	
Characters Detective Victim	Someone who investigates a crime; an investigator looking for and gathering clues The person who has been wronged; may also be the person reporting the crime	
Crime	An action that breaks the law	
Motive	A reason that a person does something—can include anger, hatred, love, or greed	
Rising Action		
Characters Suspect Witness	A person who appears to have a motive to commit the crime A person who has knowledge about a crime	
Clue	A fact or object that appears to give information toward solving the crime	
Hunch	A guess or feeling that a detective has that is not based on facts; includes a suspect with a motive and words such as <i>maybe</i> , <i>possibly</i> , <i>what if</i> , and <i>probably</i>	

Alibi	An excuse that a suspect uses to show that he or she was not at the scene of the crime	
Red Herring	A false lead or clue that throws the investigator off track	
Distraction	Clues, suspects, witnesses, or anything that leads an investigator astray in solving the crime	
Climax, Falling Action, and Resolution		
Evidence	Something (for example, an item or a statement) that helps to prove who committed the crime	
Breakthrough	A discovery that helps solve the crime	
Deduction	Collecting the facts and drawing a possible conclusion; solving the mystery	

Source: Adapted from—

MysteryNet.com. (n.d.). Mystery vocabulary worksheet. Accessed at www.mysterynet.com/learn/lessonplans/vocab-worksheet on May 11, 2017.

ReadWriteThink. (n.d.). Lesson plan: What's in a mystery? Exploring and identifying mystery elements. Accessed at www.read-writethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/what-mystery-exploring-identifying-865.html on September 12, 2017.