

Clue by Clue Mysteries: Critical Thinking Activities

What are Clue by Clues

Clue by Clues are fun mystery games I came up with to share my love of solving mysteries with my classes. They also are perfect critical thinking activities! Clue by Clues make great warm-up activities, fillers, or time killers for those last minutes of class and early finishers.

Students work in small groups to solve a puzzle or mystery. The catch is that they are given each clue one at a time. This slows down the mystery solving process, meaning students spend more time discussing each clue and revising their theories. And that means more time using critical thinking skills. It also means more talk time as students discuss the importance of each clue and reevaluate their previous ideas. And of course, try to persuade others of their point of view.

Each Clue by Clue Activity is available to download and print. Inside you'll find an introduction to the mystery for students to read, clue cards to distribute to students, hints to help them along, a full solution, and some follow-up discussion questions to extend the lesson. Each activity comes with complete teacher notes on how to use it.

Why Clue by Clues?

Research shows that a good critical thinking activity is one where students evaluate a range of facts and opinions (Moore and Parker, 1986), combine ideas in various ways (Smith, Ward and Finke, 1995),

use complex thinking patterns (Feldman, 1997), and express or defend their opinions with evidence (Lipman, 1988).

Solving a mystery helps students practice all those critical thinking skills by noticing clues, evaluating evidence, synthesizing information from different clues, applying logic, and then explaining their solution. And to do that they have to use their close reading skills, as well.

Furthermore, students are solving the mysteries they are also developing their spoken language skills, such as:

- Modal verbs of speculation: *She must have forgotten her keys, It could have been the butler*
- Opinion language: *I think..., I'm positive..., I'm not sure...*
- Hedging: *It's possible, probably, maybe, it's not impossible.*
- Conclusions: *That means that...*
- Emphasis: *There's no way that...*
- Hypotheticals: *What if he didn't do it, If he was at the movies, he couldn't have done it.*

And of course, students love mysteries! Reading and solving them are a lot of fun!

So check out the collection. Each one is low-prep and ready to use in class today. Click on the pictures below for more information and a preview before you download and buy them.

My Clue by Clue Mystery Critical Thinking Activities

Murder of a Millionaire

A Clue by Clue Mystery



An ESL / ELA Activity to
practice critical thinking and
close reading

Imprisoned!

A Clue by Clue Mystery



An ESL / ELA Activity to
practice critical thinking
and close reading

The Perfect Crime

A Clue by Clue Mystery



An ESL / ELA Activity to practice critical thinking and close reading

The Odd Elevator

A Clue by Clue Mystery



An ESL / ELA Activity to practice critical thinking and close reading

An Unrelated Murder

A Clue by Clue Mystery



An ESL /
ELA
Activity to
practice
critical
thinking
and close
reading

The Break-In

A Clue by Clue Mystery



An ESL / ELA Activity to
practice critical thinking and
close reading

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CLUE BY CLUE BUNDLE

6 MYSTERY ACTIVITIES

+ MYSTERY-SOLVING WORKSHEET

