Be Convincing! Talk Like a Detective
Commonly Used Mystery Vocabulary

Every good detective has a mental word bank of mystery terminology and commonly used phrases. How many of the words below have you heard before? How many have you used in sentences? Be the best and most convincing super sleuth you can be by learning how to work these words into your investigations.

**alibi**—an excuse or piece of information given by an accused person to prove that he/she was somewhere else when a crime was committed

**breakthrough**—a necessary piece of information or insight that helps solve a mystery

**clue**—an object, observation, or piece of information that helps to solve a mystery or puzzle

**crime**—an act that violates the law

**deduce**—to use logical reasoning and thinking to infer information

**detective**—a person who gathers information and investigates crimes

**evidence**—a statement, fact, or object used to prove the solution of a mystery

**hunch**—a feeling or a guess about something

**interrogate**—to ask questions or seek information from people

**motive**—the reason a person does something or acts in a certain way

**mystery**—something that is secret or unknown; a problem needing to be solved

**observant**—careful to look at things and note details

**perpetrator**—someone who is guilty of committing a crime

**photographic memory**—the ability to form an accurate and lasting visual memory or mental picture

**plot**—the arrangement of events or incidents in a story

**puzzle**—a game that tests someone’s reasoning ability

**setting**—the time, place, surroundings, and circumstances in which a story takes place

**sleuth**—another name for a detective

**suspect**—a person who might have committed the crime

**victim**—a person who is harmed by a crime

**witness**—someone who saw something related to the crime
CRACK THE CODE!

SECRET CODE
A=z   B=y   C=x   D=w   E=v   F=u   G=t   H=s   I=r   J=q   K=p   L=o   M=n
N=m   O=l   P=k   Q=j   R=i   S=h   T=g   U=f   V=e   W=d   X=c   Y=b   Z=a

Test your Super Sleuth skills! Use the Secret Code above and the clues in parenthesis next to each question to fill in the blank mystery terms. For example, if the letter in the clue is an “A,” fill in the blank with a “z.”

1. A ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ is a person who might have committed a crime (HFHKVXG)
2. A ____ ____ ____ ____ is the arrangement of events in a story (KOLG)
3. A ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ is an act that violates the law (XIRNV)
4. ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ is another name for a detective (HOVFGS)
5. A ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ is something that is secret or unknown (NBHGVIB)
6. A ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ is someone who saw something related to the crime (DRGMVHH)
7. A ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ allows a person to form an accurate and lasting visual memory or mental picture (KSLGLTIZKSRX NVNLIB)
8. An ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ is an excuse given by an accused person to show that he/she was somewhere else when a crime was committed (ZORYR)
9. A ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ is the reason that a person does something or acts in a certain way (NLGREV)
10. ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ is a person who gathers information and investigates crimes (WVGVXGREV)