

## Plot a Multi-Modal Murder Mystery: an Honors I Mini-lesson

We will be spending the next few weeks creating a multi-modal murder mystery website. First, we will read and take notes on a variety of short stories which involve mysteries of some kind. You will find that typically, a mystery story poses a question: Who stole the diamonds? Where is the missing will? Why did the professor set his wet boots inside the house and then walk away? What happened to the medieval tapestry that was shipped from Venice but never arrived in New York?

While mysteries usually involve crime, they can also concern puzzles that do not originate from wrongdoing. They may include searches for lost objects or for people who have disappeared even when no crime was involved.

Mysteries make frequent use of detectives, amateur or professional, as main characters. Clues are discovered. Finally, a satisfying answer to the major question of the story is required for the ending.

**Our mystery stories are going to be a bit unique, in that you will be creating a multi-modal murder mystery.**

What is a multi-modal writing project? In a multi-modal writing project, students incorporate images, sound (music, podcasts, voice-overs), video, animation, clip art, etc. into their writing. We are going to be publishing our murder mysteries with the website Weebly using the free version, so we will be limited as to the technology we can include. However, you will find a list of web page requirements at the end of this pre-writing exercise.

So, let's get on with YOUR mystery!

### **1** Choose a victim:

Name

Age

Occupation

Physical Description: What do they look like? What are they wearing? Any distinguishing characteristics (glasses, a cane, braces, etc.)?



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## FOR CLASS >> from Lynn Aprill, Bonduel High School

**2** Now figure out the details of the crime itself:

What was the murder weapon?

Where did the murder take place?

How was the victim killed?

**3** Next, choose your suspects. You should have several people who could have “done the deed.” Each suspect should have a motive for wanting the victim dead:

A.

B.

C.

D.

E.

**4** OK, what are your clues? You should have a list of things that the killer needed to have known or places that they should have been. Also there’s always evidence. Where did they find blood? Where was the murder weapon found? Whose fingerprints were found where?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.



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**5** Last, but not least, bring it all together. Fill in the chart so **ONLY** the murderer could have **ALL** of the clues point to him or her:

Clues → Suspects ↓	A	B	C	D	E

**6** Now that you've got your case figured out, how will you present it to the rest of us? This is where the multi-modal approach comes in.

### REQUIREMENTS:

- Award acceptance
- Eye-witness account of an event
- Talk-show script
- Diary / journal entry
- Interview
- Eulogy
- Judge's ruling
- Conversation with a famous figure
- News report
- Résumé
- Military/government report
- Newsletter
- Brochure
- Emails
- Tabloid article
- Sermon
- Police report
- Letter / notes to a friend

## **FOR CLASS >> from Lynn Aprill, Bonduel High School**

**Four pieces of realistic fiction (at least 20 sentences, four paragraphs in length)**

**Four or more photos or clip art supporting your writing**

- from the Internet
- taken by you

**Two other works supporting your writing**

- poem
- comic strip
- fakebook
- sticky note
- professionally recorded music or you singing
- “text messages”
- other (like detention slip, use your imagination)

### **FINAL WRITING PIECE**

Word document revealing the crime and the perpetrator

When taken all together, your audience should be able to figure out “Who Done It!”

### **WEBSITE REQUIREMENTS:**

- Use of Weebly site
- Five webpages
  - One page per genre listed above with appropriate graphic clues included
  - Last page with a list of suspects with pictures and brief descriptions, an embedded survey for readers to vote on their choice of murderer, and a link to a Word document revealing the crime and the perpetrator

### **WEBSITE EXTRA CREDIT:**

Recreate a scene on film, upload to YouTube, and embed in your murder mystery.

See an example at <http://ladysingstheblues.weebly.com/>