



HOW TO HOST YOUR OWN
MURDER MYSTERY
ON THE
HIGH SEAS



HOST'S
INSTRUCTIONS



You are about to embark on a fun-filled evening of
intrigue, deceit and wrongdoing!

It's 1910, and something sinister is taking place onboard the maiden voyage of the HMS Hope.

Can you and your guests save this cruise from disaster and discover whodunnit?

You can host your murder mystery over dinner, but this isn't essential. However, you will need a table to set up the various components of the game.

You will act as the host; but you may want to ask a friend to help with the hospitality side whilst you are busy orchestrating the game.

WHAT'S IN THE BOX

- 1 INSTRUCTION BOOKLET
- 13 NAME BADGES
- 13 PINS (one for each name badge)
- 12 CHARACTER NAME CARDS
- 12 SECRET TRAIT CARDS
- 9 MURDER WEAPON PROPS
- 1 DETECTIVE NOTEPAD
- 1 EVIDENCE FILE
- 12 ROUND ONE CARDS
- 12 CHALLENGE CARDS
- 3 SETS of ROUND TWO CARDS (6 GREEN, 6 RED and 6 YELLOW)
- 3 SETS of ROUND THREE CARDS (6 GREEN, 6 RED and 6 YELLOW)
- 1 ACCUSATION and VOTING PAD
- 3 AWARD TROPHIES
- 3 SOLUTIONS inside 3 SOLUTION ENVELOPES (one for each time you play the game)

EXTRA ITEMS YOU WILL NEED TO PROVIDE:

- 1 PEN per GUEST
- PAPER for DRAWING CHALLENGES
- OPTIONAL: SMARTPHONE to scan QR codes and access online content



TIP

The plot is broken down into three main rounds, designed to run as one round over each course of a meal. We recommend that you have a short break at the end of each round so that your guests can make notes and discuss what's happened so far.

GAMEPLAY

Preparing your murder mystery party is simple. Just choose a minimum of four friends or family members to invite, set the date, and send out your invitations! This game can be played by a maximum of 12 people (plus the host) but needs at least five participants (including the host) to run effectively. It can be played up to three times with a different solution each time you play. For the best experience, invite different guests each time.

- Select a colour; each one relates to a different scenario and a different ending. You can choose from RED, YELLOW and GREEN.

The game is split into six sections:

1. INTRODUCTION
2. THE MURDER - Crime Scene and The Missing Murder Weapon Hunt
3. ROUND ONE clues - BLUE cards (the same for every game)
4. ROUND TWO clues - RED, YELLOW or GREEN cards according to the gameplay colour chosen
5. ROUND THREE clues - RED, YELLOW or GREEN cards according to the gameplay colour chosen
6. FINALE - the Accusations, the Solution and the Awards

There is a CONVERSATION STARTER at the beginning of each round of clues to determine which of your guests should go first. These are intended to be played in character.

Have a quick read of the whole booklet before the evening.

INVITATIONS AND ALLOCATION OF CHARACTERS

There are a few things you might like to do to make your party go with a bang!

- Send out invitations for the evening to your chosen guests to tell them their character name and occupation in advance.

You should include the following details in your invitation:

- Time and date
- Character (tip: you could take a photo of the character card to send to the guest)
- Information on the nautical theme
- Ask your guests to dress up and bring a suitable prop, inspired by their character card
- Let them know there will be an award for best detective, best costume and most impressive acting.

IMPORTANT: There are 12 possible characters (plus the host), but you **MUST** allocate Ace Berg, Suz Spicious and Inez Cent every time you play. Once you have taken those three out of the stack of **CHARACTER NAME** cards, randomly choose as many as you need to give all your guests a character to play.

Visit <https://www.talkingtables.co.uk/pages/online-invites> to download invitations for your guests. Alternatively, you can scan the QR code on the back of the booklet to take you to the online invitations page.

BEFORE YOUR GUESTS ARRIVE SETTING UP THE CRIME SCENE

Place the following in an area where people can easily gather round, but preferably out of sight when they first arrive:

- Pillows in the shape of a body, under a white sheet.
- The nine **MURDER WEAPONS** provided around the crime scene.

CHARACTERS

- Take the relevant **NAME BADGES** out of the box for the characters who are attending along with the **CHARACTER NAME** cards, ready to give out to your guests when they arrive. The first time you play, you will need to attach one of the supplied **PINS** to the back of each name badge. There are 12 characters in total (plus the host).
- Place all **SECRET TRAIT** cards face down on the table.
- Place all **CHALLENGE** cards face down on the table.

LAYOUT THE ROUNDS

- Set out the three rounds of **CLUE** cards in separate piles, face down on the table, correlating to the colour of game you are playing. (**ROUND ONE** clue cards are all blue. **ROUND TWO** and **ROUND THREE** cards are colour-coded depending on ending).
- Place the empty **EVIDENCE FILE** on the table - you will need it to keep all the clues safe once they've been revealed, so they are available for review.
- Place the **DETECTIVE NOTE SHEETS** and some pens around the table so the guests can make their own notes.
- Keep the **ACCUSATION SHEETS** handy as you will need them towards the end of the game.

- Select the sealed SOLUTION ENVELOPE corresponding to your chosen gameplay colour. Keep it handy as you'll need it later, but make sure no-one opens the envelope - no peeking!
- Keep the trophies somewhere nearby so you can access them easily at the end of the game when it's time to award them to deserving guests.

MUSIC

Add to the atmosphere of the evening with some music. Scan the QR code on the back of the booklet with your phone camera to access our Spotify playlist to accompany the game.

NOTES TO YOURSELF

You, the HOST, are Billy Ocean. Your role is to make sure things run smoothly. You are the safety inspector of the HMS Hope, which is the most important job in the world!

You have a knack for scrutinising details and maintaining safety at any cost. Each one of your guests is a potential hazard and must be treated as such. Any time anyone does anything, it is your job to intervene and save them from potential disaster. It would be a stretch for people to call you a hero, but you don't think so. Demonstrate these character traits throughout the evening!

All the guests are either members of staff or distinguished guests. They might not all be **physically present** if you have invited fewer than 12 people. How many of them are present depends on how many guests you have invited, but **all 12** are still suspects in the murder. Although you, the host, are not a suspect in this murder, you might still have skeletons in your closet, and you won't know whodunnit until the very end, so you can play along with your guests and try to guess the identity of the murderer!

YOUR GUESTS ARRIVE

Introduction

- Serve pre-dinner drinks.
- Give out the relevant CHARACTER NAME cards to each of your guests. Ask them to read what's on the card, but not to share this information with anyone else for now.
- Now ask each guest to take a SECRET TRAIT card at random.
- Return the remainder of the SECRET TRAIT cards to the box.

- Tell your guests to read the information on the SECRET TRAIT cards to themselves and not to reveal it to each other until the end of the game.

When your guests are ready to start the game, read out the following:

"On behalf of the crew, I would like to personally welcome you all onboard the HMS Hope!!!

Throughout your stay, I trust each and every one of you has had the chance to observe the grandeur, craftsmanship and impeccable standards of safety that this magnificent ship will surely be remembered for in the annals of history.

As the ship's official safety inspector (no need for applause) I would like to assure you that your comfort and safety is our top priority. We want our guests to be completely at ease, safe in the knowledge that all is in hand and there is nothing for any one of you to worry about...apart from the murderer of course.

(Pause for gasps!)

Yes, I am afraid it is true. Our beloved ship singer Serena Dione was found dead in her cabin last night. However, I can assure you that she was quite comfortable and utterly safe...right up until the moment she was brutally murdered.

Now I don't want to frighten anyone, but I have surmised that the murderer is one of the people sitting in this very room!

Oh, where are my manners! I'm sure some of you already know each other, but many of you don't, so let's take a minute to introduce ourselves, eh?"

Now ask your guests to introduce themselves to each other using the information on their CHARACTER NAME cards, remembering their secret traits. Remind your guests to keep their Character Name/Trait Cards face down at all times to stop others peeking.

Encourage your guests to throw themselves into the traits and personalities shown on their cards throughout the evening.



TIP

This is a good time to remind everyone that award trophies will be handed out for best detective, best costume and most impressive acting at the end of the evening.

Once your guests have taken it in turns to introduce themselves to the rest of the group, read out the following:

Before we get started, I think it's best if I do a roll call just to see who's here. Please say 'yes' if you're present!

Ace Berg, Frida Floats, Ahab Whalesworth, Suz Spicious, Duncan Drowns, Patsea Diver, David Jones-Lockerton, Sia Gull, Captain Sian Sighted, Inez Cent, Bill Lowdeck, Mary Celeste."

NB: You won't need to say this sentence if you have invited 12 people.

"Well, I don't know where the missing people have got to, but we'll just have to keep an eye out for them."

CRIME SCENE AND MISSING WEAPON HUNT THE MURDER!

"First things first, I think we better have a look at the crime scene. I'm sure that's what good old Wikki would suggest. But for God's sake, don't touch anything!!!"

Warn those of a nervous disposition that they may need to prepare themselves for a horrible sight. Lead your guests to the crime scene. Tell your guests the following:

"It's probably a good idea to make notes of anything you think is relevant, and you can take photos if you wish. This is exactly how the body was found - in her unlocked room - by the bellhop. Nothing has been touched."

Once your guests have had a good look at the crime scene, return to the main room and read out the following:

"There's very little information at the moment, but one thing that seems to be missing is a murder weapon! There are, in fact, nine potential weapons hidden around the place. It's time for a little game of 'Hunt for the murder weapon!' You're looking for:

A stuffed swordfish, a rope, an anchor, a telescope, a fish knife, an ice pick, a harpoon, a broken violin, and a diamond choker!

If you find something, bring it back here and make sure you examine it closely. Remember, finding the potential murder weapons could help win you the Best Detective Award at the end of the game.

I hope everyone has their wits about them this evening. If there is any chance of this terrible murder being solved, you need to remember that everything you see and hear could be relevant!"



TIP

This is a good time to remind everyone that they're going to need to concentrate this evening and write some notes.

As the weapon props are found, the interesting information on the back of each one will need to be shared with the group – the person who finds the weapon should read the information aloud to the group. Make sure all nine weapons have been found and examined. Put them in the EVIDENCE FILE.

ROUND ONE

- When everyone is ready, ask your guests to sit down at the dinner table.
- Serve the starter.
- Make sure the ROUND ONE clues and CHALLENGE cards are easily accessible, face down. Read out:

"Now it's time to start looking at the clues and evidence that's gradually coming to light. It's now 6.30pm so the sooner we can get this all sorted out, the sooner we can eat."

CONVERSATION STARTER – Decide who is to go first by asking each guest in turn: "Based on first impressions, who out of our guests tonight do you think looks the most like a murderer?" The best or funniest answer (in your opinion) goes first.

That person should now take the top ROUND ONE card and follow the instructions on it. Once they have done that, they should take a CHALLENGE CARD and follow the instructions on it.

After they have performed the challenge, the next person around the table should take the next ROUND ONE card and follow the instructions, followed by a CHALLENGE CARD. Repeat until all ROUND ONE cards have been used. When all those clues have been revealed, put them in the EVIDENCE FILE.



TIP

At the end of this round, it is a good idea to recap some of the juicy bits of information that have just been uncovered.

ROUND TWO

- Serve the main course.
- Make sure the ROUND TWO cards are accessible. Read out:

"The second round will give you some forensic, witness and character clues; it would be a good idea to take notes."

CONVERSATION STARTER - To decide who should start, ask your guests: "If you could be any animal, what would you be and why?" Whoever comes up with the most impressive answer should take the first ROUND TWO card and follow the instructions on it. The clues must come out in the specific order marked on the reverse - from Clue 1 to Clue 6. If there are more than six guests, you might like to select which guests reveal the other five clues. If not, your guests can simply take it in turns. When all the ROUND TWO cards have been used and the contents read/acted out, put them in the EVIDENCE FILE.

ROUND THREE

- Serve the dessert.
- Make sure the ROUND THREE cards are accessible. Read out:

"The final set of clues will provide some physical characteristics of the suspects and other vital clues. Use these clues to draw your conclusions on who the murderer is."

CONVERSATION STARTER - To decide who should start, ask your guests: "Who, around this table, would you least like to be stranded on a desert island with and why?" Whoever comes up with the best/funniest answer should take the first ROUND THREE card and follow the instructions.

Again, they must come out in the specific order marked on the reverse - from Clue 1 to Clue 6. If there are more than six players, give players who did not reveal a clue in ROUND TWO the opportunity to reveal the ROUND THREE clues.

After all the clues and information have been revealed, invite everyone to review both their notes and all the evidence contained in the EVIDENCE FILE.

FINALE - THE ACCUSATION

- Serve coffee and after-dinner drinks.
- Give each guest an accusation form and a pen. Read out:

"So - all the evidence is in and the time has come to make your accusations. Complete your accusation form and be ready to reveal and justify who you think killed poor Serena."

Each person should now complete their form with the following information:

- their own character name
- the name of the person who they believe murdered Serena
- what they think the motive behind the murder was
- how they reached their conclusion
- their votes for best actor and best costume.

Remind everyone that apart from you (the host), everyone in the room, as well as any other characters mentioned in the course of the game, is a suspect. As the host, you can play along and guess the identity of the murderer if you wish, as the solution is contained in a sealed envelope.

Once everyone has written down their proposed solution, work your way round the guests, starting wherever you choose, and ask them all to reveal out loud what they've noted on their accusation form. They should all be prepared to justify and defend their proposed solution!

SOLUTION

You may now open the sealed SOLUTION ENVELOPE corresponding to the colour of the cards you used in ROUND TWO and ROUND THREE. Read the contents aloud to the room.

AWARDS

Once the murderer has been unveiled, collect everyone's accusation forms and tally up the votes for best costume and most impressive acting. It's up to you who gets the Best Detective Award! It's time to hand out the trophies based on:

- the person (or persons) who guessed the murderer/motive (or who came closest) for the Best Detective Award
- the highest number of votes for the Best Costume Award
- the highest number of votes for the Most Impressive Acting Award.

SUBSEQUENT GAME PLAYS

Simply choose a different gameplay colour, which will lead to a different solution. Don't forget to use the appropriate coloured cards in ROUND TWO and ROUND THREE.

CHECKLIST

Advance Preparation:

- Decide whom to invite (minimum of four and maximum of 12 guests).
Send out your invitations in good time, ensuring you've invited the obligatory characters and then added others. Encourage your guests to dress to impress in 1910s attire. Perhaps buy a few 1910s accessories to add to your guests' costumes.

Party Food and Drink:

- If much of your menu can be prepared in advance, you will have less to do on the night.
Prepare as much as you can the day before and during the day of the party.

The Room:

- Arrange the furniture, making sure there is plenty of space for everyone and for all the components of the game.
Decorate the room to fit the theme.
Set the table in advance.
Set up the crime scene as per instructions.
Have a small separate table for the EVIDENCE FILE so the evidence is easily accessible for review during the evening.

On the Night:

- Get everything ready at least an hour before your guests are due to arrive so you can make any final touches.
Don't forget to scan the QR codes that appear at the bottom of certain clues to listen to the evidence online.
Remember to document the evening. Take photos and videos, and encourage guests to do the same.

Capture the moment and share your memories: #HostYourOwn
#MurderMystery #TalkingTables

ONLINE CONTENT

Don't forget, this game comes with optional online content.

This is not essential, and you will not need a smart device to play the game. However, the following features can be used to enhance the gameplay.

Online Invites

Visit <https://www.talkingtables.co.uk/pages/online-invites> to download invitations for your guests. Alternatively, you can scan the QR code below to take you to the online invitations page.



Spotify playlist

Add to the atmosphere of the evening with some music. Scan this QR code with your phone camera to access our Spotify playlist to accompany the game.



Audio clues

If a QR code appears at the bottom of any clues in round 2 or round 3, this means that you can choose to listen to the clue as an audio clip. Simply scan the code and hear the evidence first-hand for a more immersive experience.

