

How to Host Your Murder Mystery Party



General instructions for hosting
your murder mystery party game
from [Host-Party.com](https://www.host-party.com)

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Establishing the Time and Place

To begin your party you will need to update the 'Party Information' section with the time, place and RSVP details for your party. This information will be used in your printed and interactive invitations. If you enter address details a map will be available to your guests as well.

Where you hold the murder mystery party sets the stage for the party. Finding a location with a suitable ambiance is important, but that doesn't mean you need to go out and rent your local castle. Often a few minor alterations in your home can make it a more than acceptable setting.

Here are a few things to think about when preparing your location for the party.

Anachronisms: For games set in the past you might want to hide or remove anachronistic items.

Props: Planting props that play into the game or props that set the ambiance. Yellow Crime Scene Investigation tape and masking tape to outline where the body was found is a nice touch for many of our games.

Evidence Table: You may want to setup a table to display the evidence as it is revealed. This will provide a common location for your guests to review the facts of the case. This is optional and works best for large group games.

Music: Period music or sound effects can be used to create an atmosphere. Large libraries often have a music section, with a wide selection of sound effects. Some games have downloadable music and sound effects.

Assigning Guests

One of the first steps in creating a murder mystery party at Host-Party.com, is to assign guests to a character. This is a simple process of assigning each of your guests to a character. From the 'Guest Characters' page, click "Add Guest" or "Add Cast Member" link, and enter your guests name and email address. The email address is required if you want to use the interactive invitation, clue, and party web site features. You may also want to upload a picture of your guest. This adds to the pre-party fun.

Guest vs. Cast Members (Large Group Only)

In a large group murder mystery your guests are detectives trying to determine who-dun-nit. You can create your detective mailing list by adding each guest's email address separated by a comma or semicolon in the Add Guests Page. A cast member is a primary suspect in the murder. They will know the full script and work with the host prior to the party to prepare for the party. Cast members are used to act out the sequence of events that lead to the murder.

Required Characters

Each game denotes which characters are required. In most games, you will want to have a guest for each character, but at minimum you should have a guest for each required character.

Not Enough Guests

If a guest drops out at the last minute or your just can't fill all required characters you can have a guest play two roles (this can be quite funny) or adapt the clues such that the missing character's clues are revealed in some other way. For example you could give all the clues to another guest and have them say something like "Tommy could not be here tonight but I have his journal that documents his recent where-about's") The best approach to do this varies from game to game, but it only takes a little creativity to accommodate for this.

Not Enough Characters

Do you have too many guests and not enough characters? This problem can be solved in a number of ways. Some of the mysteries have optional (not designated as required) characters that can be added to the game to accommodate extra guests. In addition, all Host-Party.com mysteries are designed to allow you add custom characters, so adding extra guests is not a problem.

Creating a Custom Character

Do you have too many guests and not enough characters? This problem can be solved in a number of ways. This problem can be solved by adding a custom character. You can easily add characters to any Host-Party mystery (On the 'Guest Characters' page click the 'Add a Custom Character' in the bottom row of the character list). By doing this through our site your guest and their character will automatically be included in all mystery party game materials and throughout the website. Your guests will not be able to tell which characters are the base characters and which are custom.

Adding a customer character is easy, but incorporating that character into the story line can be a lot of work. Generally speaking we advise that you create an "assistant character" that will allow the new character to team up with an existing character. A good example of an assistant character might be a spouse, twin brother/sister, a business assistant. By doing this you can have these two characters share clues, so you don't have to amend the story line or add clues for the new character.

Alternatively, you can create a separate character with their own motive and clues. This can be lots of fun for the more ambitious and creative host. If you take this approach, you will want to read through all of the game materials first and then add the clues as required to incorporate

them in the game. To add a clue click the 'Clues' link in the right hand column of the 'Guest Characters' page. Then click 'Add New' in the header of the Custom Clues box or use the 'Copy' button to copy an existing clue). As a rule of thumb, you will want to add one conceal and one reveal clue for each character for each round.

The next time you regenerate the GameKit form the Game Materials page, you should see your new character and/or clues. On some browsers, you need hit the refresh button once the pdf document is opened to see the changes.

Sending Communications

Much of the fun of a murder mystery party is the pre-game build up. Host-Party provides a number of communication tools to help you send information to your guests to get them excited for your event.

Sending Invitations

You may invite your guests by sending them an invitation via email or by printing their invitation. Sending the invitation via email is the preferred method, as it gives them instant access to your pre-game web site that contains character information clues and information about the mystery. The printed invitations give them the important information and also provide log in details to allow them to log into the pre game site

Track Invitations

You can see which invitations have been sent and a status of the RSVPs from the Track Invitations page on the Invitations menu.

Sending Pre-Game Clues

Some games provide clues that can be sent before the game. The host determines the timing of when these clues are sent.

Sending Materials to Cast (Large Group Only)

In large group mysteries, you will need to send the game materials to your cast members a week or two before the event. This will allow them to study their part and prepare for the mystery. The easiest way to do this is to do this through our website.

Sending Other Emails

A host may choose to continue to build the anticipation of the event by providing other communications prior to the event. This email function will allow you to quickly send emails to all guests with direct links back to the pre-game or post game site.

Pre Party Website

Once you have assigned guests to your characters the link to your Pre-Party website will be created. This site gives interesting information to allow your guests to research their character and learn more about the murder mystery game they are about to play. The real purpose for this site, and many of the features of our site, is to build the excitement for your party.

The screenshot shows a web page titled "Welcome to Murder at the Stanley". It is divided into several sections:

- Party Information:** Hosted by: Fred Blasse; When: Saturday, November 30, 2002 7:00; Where: Ted's house; Directions: Go north on Main and take a left on elm.; Invite Status: accept (change your status).
- Learn more about:** Links for Your Character, Pre-Game Clues, This Mystery, How to Play, and Other Mysteries.
- Guest Comments:** A list of comments from guests, such as "The party will be at my house... - John Adamson" and "I am READY!!!! - Beverly Kite".
- Character and Mystery Information and Clues:** A table listing characters with their descriptions and status.

Annotations with arrows point to the following features:

- Party Information:** Points to the top-left section.
- Character and Mystery Information and Clues:** Points to the middle section.
- Comments from party guests:** Points to the top-right section.
- View of whether guests have accepted or declined:** Points to the status column in the character table.
- Uploaded photos from Guest or Host:** Points to the small portrait photos next to the character descriptions.

Character	Description	Photo
Steve Smith as Jake Daniels Status: accept	Jake travels town to town getting work where he can find it. Standing during prohibition is an odd occupation indeed. Jake's real income comes from accessory sources: moonshine bootlegging and seeking wages.	
Mr Biggs as Ivan Michael Richland Status: accept	Ivan "The Great" real-estate tycoon. He has brokered a lion-share of the land deals in Colorado. He is nearing the conclusion of a grand development plan that will allow him to build his crown jewel, the first World Class resort in the Rocky Mountains. Ivan has amassed fortunes from deals in the past and has prospered significantly from his close mafia ties.	
John Jones as Lawrence Railburn, Sr Status: invited	The victim. He is the aggressive owner and operator of the Western Pacific Railroad. His over bearing, authoritarian style tends to alienate or attract all whom he encounters. With Lawrence, you either love him or hate him, or more often than not love to hate him.	

There is no information critical to the game on this site, so if some or all of your guests cannot access this site it should not impact your game. However, in this situation, you may wish to deliver printed invitations, pre-game clues and guest instructions to any guest who can't access the site.

Guest Login

The easiest way for a guest to access this site is by clicking the link from any email that was sent to them from our site. These emails include: invitations, game clues, cast materials and general emails. In addition, Guests can access this site by going to www.host-party.com and selecting the 'Guest Login' icon at the top of every page. They will need the email address you assigned to their character and the password generated for them. Both the email and password are included in the printed invitations and can be found in the Guest Characters page.

Party Preparation

In most games it's helpful for the host to know the outcome of the murder mystery to help coordinate the flow of events. While this is not required, it is recommended. Don't worry this does not mean you can't participate. In fact, you will probably have the most fun prodding characters and watching as the antics unfold.

To prepare for the party you will want to read all of the instructions and game materials. Take your time reading the materials. Some games are quite involved and take a while to absorb. In particular, you will want to understand the plot and outcome. The best way to do this is to review the character descriptions and motives and read the solution (final round) clues. Note, each mystery is organized a little different so this information might be called something slightly different.

After reviewing these materials, you may want to acquire appropriate props to plant during the party. Some of the murder mysteries will suggest props to use; other mysteries you will have to use your imagination to determine what props might fit the game.

Standard (Clue Based) Mystery

In order to prepare for the party, you will want to print all of the game materials and pull the clues from the package. Generally speaking each character has a different set of clues for each round of the game. You will want to have separate envelopes for each character for each round (e.g. Round 1 - Professor Plum Clue). The exact approach of handling the character clues will vary from game to game, so in this area you will want to follow any specific host instructions provided by the author. The guests will need some time to read their clues so plan appropriate times through out the night when you would like to hand out the clues. The final (Solution) round of clues will reveal the mystery. In our standard mysteries these clues are meant to be read out loud at the end of the party after each member of the party guesses who they think did, how they did it, and why.

Large Group (Scripted) Mystery

In order to prepare for the party, you will want to print all of the game materials and send a copy to your cast members. You should send these materials a week or two before the party. Next, schedule a meeting with the cast members to talk through the script and rehearsal key scenes. The rest of the instructions should be found in the Game Materials and Facilitator's guide.

Changing Information

Our games are designed so you can adjust the content to tailor to the needs of the host, setting and guests.

Changing Murder Mystery Name and Mystery Descriptions

You can change the name or description of the game from the 'Party Information' page. This change will be reflected in the invitations and pre-game website. This change will have no impact on the clues or solution. Substantive changes should be avoided as they may conflict with the game plot and cause confusion to your guests.

Changing Character Descriptions

You can change the description of the game characters from the 'Guest Characters' page. This change will be reflected in the invitations and pre-game website. This change will have no impact on the clues or solution. Substantive changes should be avoided as they may conflict with the game plot and cause confusion to your guests.

Modifying Invitations

You can change the contents of the printed invitation through a fairly simple exercise of copy and paste. From the "Invitations" page select "Print Invitations". Then click the HTML version link on the lower right corner to open an HTML version of the invitation. From this window you can select all and copy the contents and then paste it into your favorite word processor. From here, you have complete freedom to change as you please. This technique is also a good way of avoiding the browser header and footer from being printed.

Changing Clues and Murder Mystery Game Materials

You can create your own custom clues from within our site. This allows you to add new clues to characters you have created or add to the base characters. All custom clues will automatically appear in the game materials kit the next time it is printed.

To create a custom clue, select the clues link on the View Characters page. This will take you to a page with all of the clues for that character. At the bottom of the clues page, you will see a box for customer clues. Click the "Add Clue" link to create a new clue or click 'Copy' button to copy an existing clue. Enter the clue details and click update.

Because custom clues are always included in the beginning of the round, they generally do not work with scripted mysteries.

Hosting the Party

Hosting a Murder Mystery Dinner Party Game is easy, although there are some basic mechanics you should understand. This page should give you a run down of the basics of hosting a murder mystery party.

Starting the Game

As your guests arrive, you should greet them (in character of course) and give them a nametag and any pre-game materials. This may include pre-game clues that you were not able to deliver or 'Guest Instructions'. Once all guests have arrived, you may want to review the guest instructions. Instructions are not required, but they may make first time players more at ease.

Introducing the Guests

It is usually a good idea to introduce each of the guests (cast members for large group games). Even if everyone knows each other, it is likely they will not know the role each guest is playing. We recommend that each guest do his or her own introduction.

One way of doing this is to start the mystery by having someone play a role of police detective. They can announce there has been a murder and everyone present is a suspect. They can then ask everyone to provide a brief introduction and their relationship to the victim. This is just an idea and this approach may not work for all games.

Distributing Clues

The clues are broken into rounds, and should be delivered to each guest through the course of the party. You should evenly space out the rounds through the course the party, to allow the clue contents to disseminate among the group.

Revealing Clues

Generally speaking, our murder mystery games have two types of clues. One that you **reveal**, one that you **conceal**. Clues marked as reveal should be casually shared with other guests. There is no need to make an announcement, just try to get the message out. The idea is that different people will hear different things and therefore have different conclusions. Conceal clues, on the other hand, are secrets you are trying to keep quiet. While someone else will likely reveal these, your goal is to keep these clues from incriminating you. You can stretch or hide the truth, but if confronted you cannot lie!

Crime Scene Investigation Tools

Some of our games include interactive Crime Scene Investigation (CSI) tools. Because these tools require a computer to play, they are optional and are not needed to solve the mystery. If your game includes a CSI tool (e.g. Fingerprint Analyzer) you can setup a computer and make this tool available to your guests during the party. Tips on how to incorporate the CSI tools are usually included with the game materials.

Solving the Case

In the end of the game, the solution will be revealed. We recommend that you ask each guest to collect their thoughts from the evening and conjecture the cause of the crime. Then ask each (for large parties this can be done in groups) to share their theory of who did it, how and why? Then reveal the solution in the manner specified in the game/round instructions.

Playing the Game

To play one of our murder mysteries requires no special props or acting abilities, just a willingness to have fun and immerse yourself in the character. Guests do not need to study or memorize any scripts or other information about the scenario. The mystery game is designed so that the individuals who are playing will mingle around asking questions about each others character and perhaps about any other information that the players may have gathered so far. As the game progresses each player will gather more and more information and at the end of the allotted time they need to sift through what they think is fact and what they think is fiction to make their choice on who they think is the true murderer.

The characters can be played to suit the comfort zone of each player. If you like the spotlight or enjoy role playing, immerse yourself in your character's persona and live the night as you think they would. You may even decide to exaggerate your character's personality for even more effect. On the other hand, if you prefer to participate in a less theatrical capacity, you may want to sit on the couch and let people come to you, approach each character off to the side or just listen in on other conversations until you get your feet wet and are feeling a bit more comfortable.

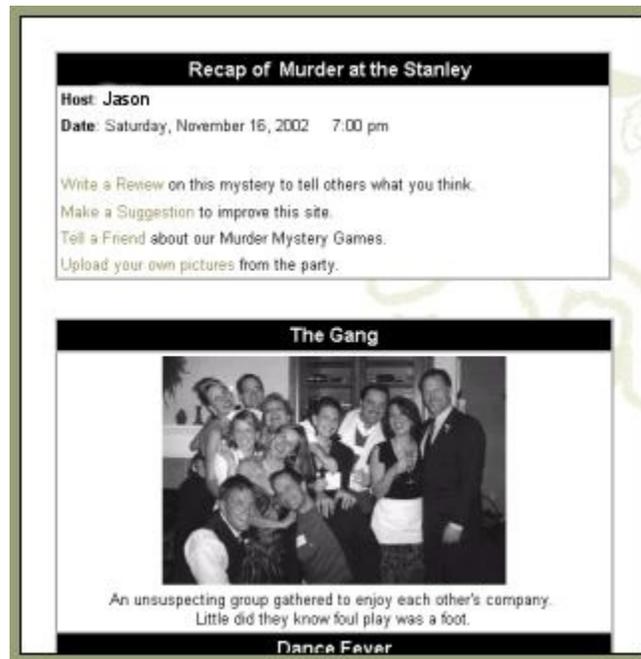
Each game takes approximately 1-1/2 to 3 hrs, depending on the number of people playing.

Post Party Website

The post game site provides a place to post pictures comments from the host and guests. It is a great way for all to reflect on the fun that was shared. This site is available to the guests the day after the event.

In addition, the post party site allows you to

- **Write a Review** on this mystery.
- **Submit Feedback** Son how we can improve this site.
- **Suggest an Idea** for a new game.
- **Tell a Friend** about our Murder Mystery Games.
- **Create a Host** Suggestion as a tip to future hosts of this game.
- **Rate the Game** (★★★★★)



Other Tips

Here's our list of the top 10 things to do to make your party really go with a swing!

1. Persuade everyone to ad lib and develop his or her character.
2. It is good fun to dress up, try to encourage everyone to come in costume.
3. Try to assign your guests to characters they will feel at ease with.
4. Set the mood by decorating appropriately.
5. You can add to the fun by adding props that you think may be appropriate for the use by the characters throughout the evening.
6. Remember parties are fun, so make the most of opportunities to put your friends on the spot and watch them try to squirm out of it.
7. Upload pictures of you and your friends
8. Select appropriate music and ambiance to set the stage of the mystery.
9. Print your materials well ahead of time to ensure everything is ready in time.
10. Don't take things too seriously. The idea is to have fun!

Be sure to review our Hosting Frequently Asked Questions (<http://www.host-party.com/faqs.asp>).