

**2 weeks prior:** Invite your guests and read the game kit for your mystery. Do not read the final round clues if you want to keep the mystery a surprise. At this time, plan which optional games you are going to play in the mystery.

**1 week prior** – check your RSVPs to ensure you have the required characters filled and make adjustments as necessary. Make sure you have all of the props you need for the party – double check the host instructions for each round. Send your (optional) pre-game clues to your guests via email /snail mail – or hand it to them in person. Double check the prop list on the host instructions of each round. Print the game pdf file and cut out all of the round clues, stuff them into envelopes and label with the appropriate character's name. Also, cut out the name tags and any required or optional game materials in the game kit (i.e. make the charade's slips, etc.).

**2 days prior:** buy the food (appetizers /snacks, drinks, dinner items (optional) dessert and coffee/hot chocolate), party décor, music (if applicable) etc. Read over the game kit carefully and double check that all characters have an envelope for each round and all of your side game materials are ready. Make sure you have a copy of the character list and guest instructions for your guests for when they arrive.

**The day of the party:** do all necessary food prep; decorate the party room according to your theme. Play theme music in the background and play movies in your theme without the sound in the background. For a dinner party – choose to cook stuffed chicken, roasts, or lasagna that can bake during round one. (During round two, you'll pull it out of the oven and serve.) Make sure you have enough ice, napkins, etc for your guests. Figure out a way (glass markers or if you're using plastic cups – sharpie markers) to mark your guests' glasses so they don't get mixed up during the party.

**When guests arrive,** give them their name tag and take their pictures individually in their costume. You can print these out and give them as party favors later. When all of the guests arrive, make sure to take a group picture – you can also print the group picture and give as a party favor. Begin **round one** by handing out the round one envelopes. These always have an ice-breaker as well as mystery clues. Round one is typically cocktails and appetizers for adults and yummy drinks (mini milkshakes, etc.) and snacks for teens /children. In all games there are optional and required side games to play and these are outlined in the round instructions.

**Round two** is typically when dinner is served – but this is optional – and after dinner, with most games, the investigation takes place. If you are serving dinner, allow your guests to mingle in character while you complete the finishing touches on dinner. Hand out the round two clues and allow your guests time to enjoy dinner while they mingle in character.

During round two is when the mystery will surface (in most games – with the exception of a couple of children's games where the mystery is known 'up front'). Some games will have pre/post mystery clues on their clue cards for this round. Dinner should always be served during the 'pre' clue time period. Again, read the host instructions for each round to determine your game's specifications.

(Also, please note that some games will have 4 rounds.)

The **final round** is the solution round where the character's clue cards will give their involvement, if any, with the mystery or in the case of some children's games – will unveil the solutions to multiple mysteries. During this round, serve dessert and coffee /hot chocolate. The guests will typically sit in a circle / semi circle and stand before the group and read their solutions. There is often a last trivia challenge or joke on the cards to lighten the mood! All games have an exciting finale such as a charades challenge in adult/teen games and a hunt for a treasure or other item in children's games.

**The most important thing to remember during all mystery parties is to ensure that you and your guests have FUN!!!!!!**