



Pedagogical sequence/Introductory sheet

Murder in the Manor

Language level	B1 - B1+
Skills	Reading
Time	30 - 45 minutes
By the end of the sequence, students will be able to...	Understand and identify crime and investigation vocabulary, parts of a house, some common day-to-day idioms and direction (moving from one room to the other)
Inclusiveness	The layout is adapted for students with Specific Learning Disorders (SLDs): font, line spacing, contrast and text in chunks. However, it remains a text-based narrative game requiring a lot of reading, which will make it more challenging for learners with reading difficulties.
Operating system	Any (web browser based) but not recommended for small screens

Where to find the game

You can download the game file and open it in any web browser, or play the game online at <https://logopsycom.itch.io/murder-in-the-manor>.

Hosting the game sessions

Accessibility

English level

B1 - B1+: The game contains basic English grammar and vocabulary coupled with more advanced features.

A2: Learners with a lower language level may also be able to play the game with the help of the (translated) player's guide, and, if necessary, the player's guide annexe.

Accessibility features

The game is a narrative game played in a browser, presented as interactive text.

It does not require sharp and precise movements and is therefore suitable, for example, for learners with dyspraxia.

The text meets inclusive guidelines (sans-serif font, left alignment, 1,5 line spacing), even though the textual nature of the game will make it more challenging for learners with reading difficulties and/or visual impairment.

Advice for specific student profiles

Since the game is played in a regular web browser, you can advise students that have difficulties to read to simply zoom in the entire page.

Classroom organisation

Duration

Solving the game should take around 30 to 45 minutes, but it may vary depending on the language level of your students and if they work in groups or in solo mode.

Students should be made aware of the expected duration of the activity. If the game is played in the classroom (or computer lab), make sure to keep track of time and help learners that are behind in the story. The game is not linear, which means that students have the freedom to explore the manor (in text form) how they like. They should keep track of their game surroundings and objectives: remind them to look at their game objectives (in the header bar) and to use the worksheet to help them orient themselves in the manor house. Taking notes will also help.

Single-player mode

Solo

The game can be played in single-player mode, for example either with only one player behind the screen, or a small group of students, that read the story and make the decision together. To launch the game, simply double-click on the game file "Murder in the manor.html".

In Group

"Murder in the manor" was designed to offer a multiplayer experience as well.

When launching the game, the number of devices to play is asked. It can be 1, 2 or 3 devices, with ideally 1 player per device, or up to two players if necessary to form a group of maximum 6 students collaborating. Notice that, in multiplayer mode, the players need to talk together and collaborate to solve the case, they should

therefore be placed close together. If your students have very different levels, the multiplayer mode could feel more frustrating, though, because students with a lower level could feel more pressured, and students with a lower level too restrained.

Play as homework

It can also be used as a homework activity. You could then provide a vocabulary list (have a look at the player guide), and authorise students to use an online dictionary (eg. [deepl.com](https://www.deepl.com)). The multiplayer mode is also an option for remote play, provided that a reliable communication channel is set up between the players of a same group.

Briefing

Pedagogical requirements

The game is tailored for B1-B2 learners. The story and dialogues should be understandable for learners of these levels, even though the narrative nature of the game allows to expose the learners to small doses of more complicated, literary vocabulary.

The game covers the following topics:

- Crime and investigation vocabulary
- Parts of a house
- Common day-to-day idioms
- Direction (moving from one room to the other)

Explanations to give before playing

Before the activity, prepare your students by telling them that they are going to play a game. It is important to **tell them that the game is not a graphically intensive video game, but simply a narrative game in textual form.**

Tell them that they are going to play an **interactive story** where they will have to solve a case of murder.

Emotional security and other warnings

The theme of this narrative story is a murder case, involving treachery and cheating. It is advised to make sure that these aspects are not emotional triggers for some of your students.

Other than that, the game being purely textual, it should not be problematic.

Follow-up and Post-play activities

Evaluation: score analysis or resolving difficulties encountered

To verify the level of exploration and of understanding of the game, the first resource that you can use is the “Worksheet - investigation notebook”, where students can write their discoveries during the game (the places of the rooms of the manor, and the non-playing characters).

You could also ask them to go a bit further by writing, in a few words, a summary of the story.

Before leaving the game, you can also ask them to take a screenshot of their “Game Objectives” page, in order to have an overview of what they have actually discovered, or what they may have missed of the story. You could then organise a discussion between the groups, to ensure that every aspect of the story is understood.

Lesson plan using the in-game content learned

If you opt for the option of a classroom activity in a computer lab, it is advised to take note of the vocabulary that your students need during the game, and design some exercises based on the vocabulary they should acquire.

Debrief or production based on the game session

Debriefing session

A debriefing session after the game is always a good idea, in order to make sure that the story was understood and spot the most difficult aspects as felt by your students. It’s also the opportunity to ask them if they enjoyed the activity and what they think could be done to improve the experience.

Written activity

In addition to playing the game and filling out the “Worksheet - investigation notebook”, students could be asked to provide a short written production that summarises the crime story.

The game

Context and story

Plot

The story is set in our time. A rich actress, Amelia McOlen, holds a fancy party in her Manor, where her art collection is currently exhibited. In one of the rooms, a dead body is discovered during the party. The police is called and all the guests are asked to stay for the rest of the evening. No guest has left the party, which makes it likely that the murderer is still there ...

Lore – game world

21st Century, in a manor of a famous and rich actress.

Characters

Protagonist(s)

Police Inspector Donna McNally is the person in charge of the investigation. She has an eagle eye for spotting clues and excels in questioning witnesses and suspects.

The goal of the inspector is to solve the murder case. In single-player mode, the inspector is the only playable character and has access to all the information needed to solve the case.

Forensic scientist Karim Kaye is a brilliant individual. He will deal with detailed analysis, collecting fingerprints, finding hidden clues and analysing a victim's body.

This character is playable in 2 or 3-player mode.

Investigation Officer Adam Miles is the perfect sidekick. He is very good at spotting clues and may see things that the inspector, Donna McNally, doesn't.

This character is only playable in 3-player mode. Otherwise, his skills and analytic faculties are shared between the forensic scientist and the inspector.

Antagonist(s)

Daniel Woods is the killer. He is David Phillips' assistant.

After talking to David Phillips, he confirms he was sick between 7 and 8 PM, in the upstairs bathroom. He killed the victim, James Myers, because they had stolen the most expensive painting of Amelia McOlen, but James was having second thoughts and wanted to confess.

During the game, Daniel can be found in the entrance hall of the manor.

Other characters(s)

James Myers is the victim of the crime.

Distinctive signs: blue eyes, brown hair cut short, a 3-day looking beard and a greenish tuxedo.

Before being killed, he was trying to confess the theft by sending a mail on Amelia's computer.

He was killed by Daniel Woods because they had a disagreement over their thievery plans. James wanted to confess, but Daniel didn't want to.

James was killed by Daniel with the bedside lamp that was in the office.

James knew the password of Amelia's computer from the weekend he spent with Katelin in the manor.

Amelia McOlen's is the hostess. She is a famous actress. She is hosting the party, exposing works of art in her manor. She actually organised the exhibition to impress David Phillips, a producer, because she wants the lead role in the movie "The Museum Scandal".

She is a very close friend of Katelin Ridley, who is one of the guests of the party with her husband, Leopold Ridley.

She says she hasn't met James until tonight, when they exchanged only polite greetings. James arrived at the manor with Nathan.

Later, when she learns that James was actually Katelin's lover, she realises that he was in the manor before: Katelin had asked her to have access to the manor a weekend with her lover.

Amelia can be found in the entrance hall.

Nathan Rogers is a movie producer and one of the guests. He is there for the art exhibition, mostly, but also to find business opportunities. He knows Amelia McOlen from work, since he is a movie producer (he is not the producer Amelia is trying to impress with the exhibition, though).

He came with Nolan Rogers, his husband, and James Myers, his assistant and the victim of the crime.

He can be found in the entrance hall too.

Nolan Rogers is Nathan's husband. He is a former police captain. He doesn't know James well, but noticed things tonight.

He tells valuable information to the police:

- James was quite anxious when he arrived, he was staring at his watch a lot a lot
- He saw James go in the library with a woman an hour after they arrived, trying to be discrete (they didn't enter the library at the same time).

Nolan can be found in the reception hall.

Katelin Ridley is Leopold's wife. She is also a famous actress, co-star of the movie "Neighbours in the dark" with Amelia McOlen, who is actually a very close friend of hers.

She had a secret affair with James, whom she met on a movie set a few months back. She only told Amelia about the affair, even though she had never divulged her lover's name.

During the evening, she went with James upstairs so that they could talk privately. They took the hidden spiral staircase to the office for more discretion, around 6 pm.

Then, she came back downstairs, one hour later. James was supposed to go back after her in a short while, which he never did.

Katelin is in the back garden.

Leopold Ridley is Katelin's husband. He knew about his wife's affair, they are actually getting a divorce.

"Our marriage was not going well lately anyway, this was for the best." He himself is already invested in another relationship.

But none of this is public yet, that is why he didn't mention it at first. To his knowledge, the only person that knows about the love affair is Amelia, the hostess.

Leopold is in the living room.

Dafina Prifti is the curator of the National Museum. She secretly lent some of tonight's exhibits to Amelia. Amelia needed additional works of art because her collection is actually rather small. Amelia asked the favour to Dafina, because the famous actress is actually in debt and needs to impress a producer to get a new role.

Dafina helps the police realise which painting has been stolen and replaced by a fake one.

She is in the reception hall.

David Phillips is the producer that Amelia is trying to impress to get the lead role in his next movie: "The Museum Scandal".

He came with his assistant Daniel Woods for work, to look for business opportunities. But Daniel has not been a very good assistant tonight. He said he was sick and disappeared between 7 pm and 8 pm, locking himself in one of the upstairs' bathrooms.

David is in the living room.

Gameplay

Gameplay 1: Interactive text

The game launches in a regular internet browser. The text of the story is displayed on the screen, and the players can click on links to interact with the story, move around in the manor and talk to the non-playing characters.



A header menu on top of the screen allows the player to:

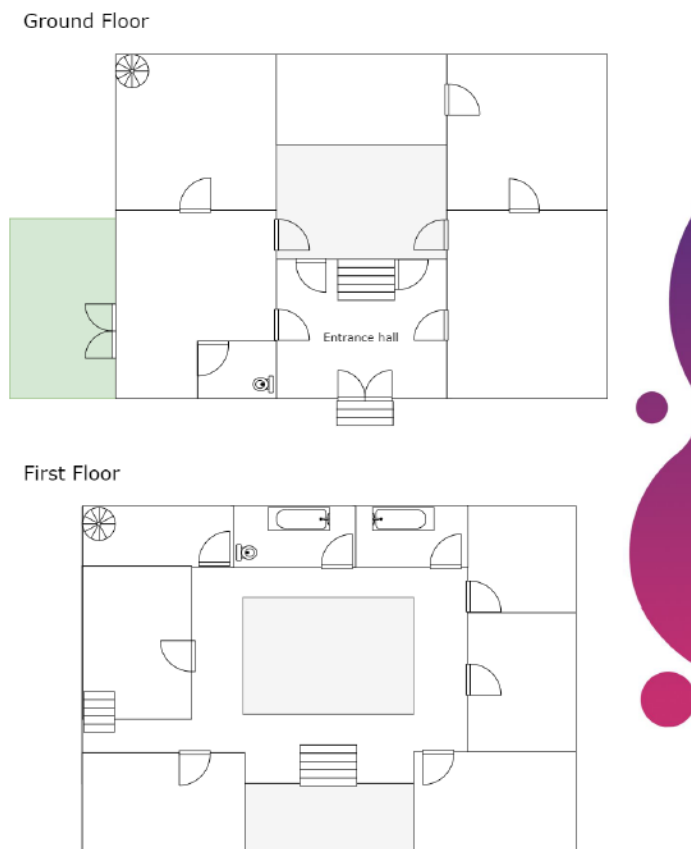
- Show the description of the game character that was selected
- Open a dialog box to enter codes that unlock objectives (multiplayer mode)
- Open the current and completed objectives of the game

The “Game Objectives” page is useful for the players to keep track of what is expecting from them throughout the games.

Gameplay 2: accompanying investigation document

Orientation in the manor and keeping track of the story can be tricky. Fortunately, the players have their investigation notebook that they can fill out.

They can write the names of every room on the blueprints of the manor that are provided. They can also write the name, location and description of the characters of the story.



Pedagogical impact of the gameplay

The advantage of a purely textual narrative story is that it offers the opportunity for the learners to read relatively **long texts that are by nature divided into small, manageable chunks.**

The interactions that the players have with the game and the decisions they have to take should make them more engaged in the activity.

The interactivity and the narrative nature of this type of game is a good opportunity to expose the learners to a somewhat more complex, literary vocabulary, as long as that said more complex vocabulary is not an obstacle to the overall understanding of the storyline.

The “Worksheet - investigation notebook” will also help learners take notes and orient themselves in the game.

Roadmap and solutions

Phase A – Get to the office where the unidentified corpse is and look for clues

After the initial set up of the game in single or multi-player mode, the players arrive in the entrance hall.

A.1 – Talk to Amelia McOlen and go into the office

When the game starts, Amelia talks to the players and gives them their first objective: go upstairs and step into the office.

The problem is: the door of the office is blocked from the inside.

All the players, in single or multi player mode receive this objective.

Grammar: directions, present perfect and past tenses

Idioms: “thank god”, “good luck”

A.2 – Talk to Amelia McOlen again and learn about the hidden passage

When the players arrive at the door of the office and find out that it is blocked, a new objective is activated: they need to go back to Amelia to ask her if she knows of another way to access the office.

Someone blocked the door of the office, you cannot open the door!

There must be another way in. Go back and ask Amelia, the hostess of the party, she may be able to help!

Objective completed:

- Go to the office upstairs, where the corpse is.

New objective:

- The door of the office is blocked from the inside. Ask the party's hostess, Amelia McOlen for help.

You can see your current objectives in the "Game Objectives" menu in the top bar above.

The players go back to the entrance hall downstairs and talk to Amelia. She tells the police that there is a secret spiral staircase in the library that leads to the office.

Amelia McOlen

"You say that someone blocked the door of the office?"

"Well, try the other access: there is a hidden passage in the **the ground floor library.**"

"To access the library from here:

- Take the door to your left, to the **reception hall,**
- then the door to your right, to the **library.**"

The discussion with Amelia unlocks 3 game objectives, that are dispatched among the players in multiplayer mode:

- Go inside the office by the library and analyse the corpse to find clues (forensic scientist).

- Go inside the office by the library and unblock the door (investigating officer or inspector)
- Go inside the office by the library and analyse the scene to find clues (inspector)

Grammar: directions, simple past

Vocabulary: “go back”, “turn around”

A.3 – Go to the library and then take the spiral staircase to the office

The players arrive in the library and take the spiral staircase. Then they arrive in the office and complete their 3 objectives. Using codes, in multiplayer mode, they sync their advancement and unlock other objectives (in single player mode, the process is automatic).

New objectives:

- Identify the victim by showing the picture to the guests and ask questions to try to get the story of the victim.
- Explore the manor for clues and evidence.
- Ask Amelia if she has an idea of what could be stolen in her office.
- Ask Amelia the password of her office computer

Phase B – Identification of the victim and his affair with Katelin Ridley

The players have completed their objectives in the office and have new objectives to complete. One of the new objectives is to identify the victim.

During this phase, other objectives will be unfolded and lead to the solving of the story of the love affair between James Myers (the victim) and Katelin Ridley.

B.1 – Identify the victim

Talking either to Katelin (in the back garden), to Nolan Rogers (reception hall), or to Nathan Rogers, the players find out the identity of the victim: James Myers.

B.2 – The woman that followed James in the library

Talking to Nolan Rogers (reception hall), the player learns that a woman had followed James in the library. The players can induce, given how they accessed the office by the library, that they may have been together in the office.

B.3 – Identity of the woman

Talking to Katelin Ridley in the back garden, the players pretend that they know she went with James in the library. Katelin confesses her affair with him.

A new objective is then accessible to the player: Talk to Leopold Ridley, Katelin's husband.

B.4 – Leopold Ridley

Talking to Leopold Ridley in the living room, the players find out that he knew about the affair but wasn't jealous: Katelin and him are getting divorced and he is also invested in a new relationship.

B.5 – Finding out that James has been in the manor before...

Talking to Amelia, the player learns that, even though she didn't know his name at the time, James and Katelin had the manor for themselves for a week-end.

If the players have advanced in the first steps of phase C, they can therefore understand that James had the opportunity to steal the painting during that time.

Phase C – The stolen painting

The players have completed their objectives in the office and have new objectives to complete. If they haven't identified the victim by now (phase B), it will be done before the end of the phase.

C.1 – Get the password from Amelia

The players talk to Amelia. They learn that, except a script on her computer, she doesn't see what could be stolen in her office. She also gives them a piece of paper with the password of the computer.

C.2 – Unlock the computer and learn about the theft

With the password of the computer, the players can now open the computer and find a draft email written by James explaining that he stole a painting and want to set things straight and give it back to Amelia.

If the players have solved phase B, they can understand that James got the password of the computer when he was in the manor before with Katelin.

C.3 – Talking to an art expert

Talking to the art expert, Dafina Prifti, the players identify a painting that is fake: this is the stolen picture.

Players also find out that Amelia is trying to impress a producer with tonight's party, because she has a lot of debts and needs a lead role in a movie.

They also learn that several persons seemed particularly interested in the picture, including James, and Daniel Woods, the assistant of David Phillips.

Phase D – Finding the killer

The players have completed phase C. If they are careful to complete all their objectives, they should also have solved phase B, but they could miss part of the love affair between Katelin and James if they are not careful.

By now, they should have had several suspects in mind, but who were categorised as probably innocent now.

D.1 – Talk to the producer Amelia is trying to impress

The players find the movie producer Amelia is trying to impress: David Phillips.

By talking with David, they learn that his assistant, Daniel Woods, was absent during part of the evening, which corresponds to the time of the murder.

D.2 – Talk to Daniel Woods and discredit his alibi

Talking with Daniel, he tells the players that he was sick during the part of the evening when he was absent. He was actually in Bathroom 2 upstairs the whole time. The players go to the bathroom 2 to find evidence, but they realise Daniel could not have been sick there.

Their new objective is to talk to Daniel again.

D.3 – Arrest Daniel Woods

Talking back to Daniel, he panics and tries to run. But the players arrest him and he confesses: He killed James because he needed the money of the stolen painting and didn't want to give it back to Amelia and confess the theft.

References

The game has been realised with Twine 2.5.1 .



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