

# Prime Suspects:

## Unlocking History's Mysteries

Kids love solving mysteries, so we use them to engage our learners by creating Breakouts for them. We use them to introduce a lesson or to review a topic.

### How to Build a Breakout:

1. Assess your locks and figure out what kind of clues you need. (3-digit, 5 letters, 4 colors, etc.)
2. Collect primary sources related to your topic and read them to find clues.
3. Set your locks. Write down the combinations and date the document.
4. If you have set up multi-step clues, run through the order to make sure students can solve them. For example, do they get the blacklight before they open the clue written in invisible ink?
5. Consider making multiple sets of clues and dividing students into small groups. Each group can have a lock worksheet to keep track of which locks they have solved.

### Some of our favorite mysteries are:

What happened to Amelia Earhart?  
The Lost Colony of Roanoke  
Who Was Harry Moffatt? (local)  
Where in the World?  
Who Really Discovered America?

### PRO TIP:

After the breakout, have a debriefing discussion or writing so students can synthesize their thinking.

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