

Mystery Vocabulary

alibi – an excuse used to avoid blame or punishment

cat burglar – a burglar who is able to break into a building without being noticed

cozy mystery – a mystery involving a close group of people who would not normally be party to a crime. Many of Agatha Christie's Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple mysteries are examples of this type of story.

deduction – a conclusion reached by logical thinking

embezzlement – to steal money or property entrusted to one's care

evidence – something that furnishes proof

felony – a serious crime punishable by imprisonment

forensic science – scientific examination of evidence for use in a criminal case; the study of scientific evidence found on a dead body or at a crime scene

foreshadowing – a technique used by mystery writers to drop hints to the solution

hard-boiled mystery – a detective story featuring a tough, no-nonsense detective who has a matter-of-fact attitude toward violence.

locked -room mystery – a mystery in which a seeming impossible crime is committed; for example, a crime occurs in an apparently locked room, allowing no entrance or exit for the criminal

motive – the reason for committing a crime

private eye – another name for private investigator, a person who is licensed to perform detective work but who is not part of a police force

red herring – a clue or detail that draws attention away from the criminal

sleuth – a detective

stool pigeon – an informer or spy

suspect – person suspected of committing a crime

thriller – a mystery designed to hold a reader's interest through intrigue and suspense. Stephen King and R.L. Stine write thriller mysteries

whodunit – a mystery or detective story

witness – a person who offers evidence about a crime and/or is called on to testify in court

Record more mystery vocabulary words and their definitions here:

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