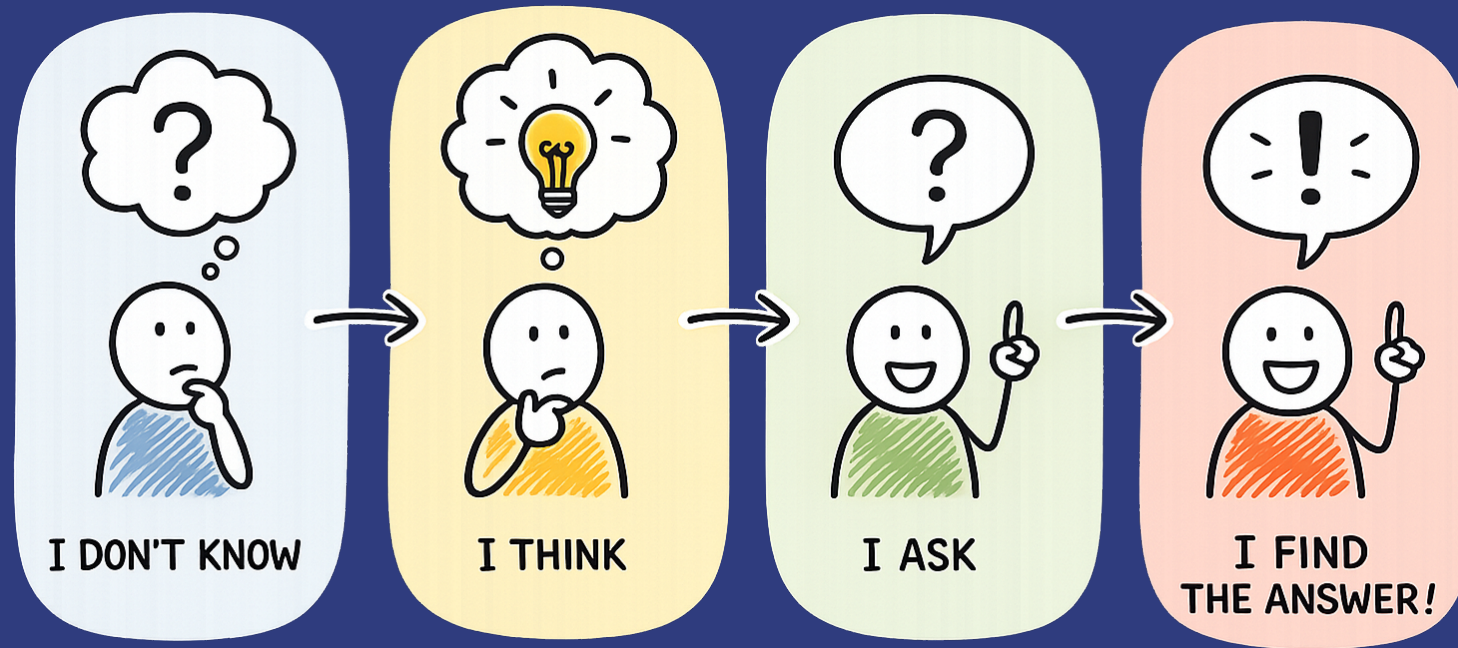


FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED

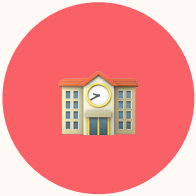
A detective question game for English conversation practice



Teacher's guide — how to run the activity, plus 3 ready-to-play mystery stories

How to Play

Three simple rules to get started



One person knows the story.

The teacher — or one student — secretly knows what really happened.



Everyone else asks questions.

The rest of the class tries to find out what happened, one question at a time.



Don't guess too early.

Ask questions that uncover clues first — save your guess for when you're sure.

Ask Like a Detective

Skip the big, one-shot questions. Build the story with small, specific details instead.



Too broad — avoid these

- ✗ What happened?
- ✗ Why?
- ✗ Tell me more.

These ask for the whole answer at once — there's nowhere to go next.



Ask for specific details

- ✓ Where were you?
- ✓ Who was there?
- ✓ Were you alone?
- ✓ Did anyone see you?
- ✓ What time was it?

Tip: yes/no questions are perfect here — they narrow the story down one step at a time.

Try It Together First

Model one round as a whole class before students play in pairs or groups.

Student: Were you outside?

Teacher: Yes, I was.

Student: Was it at night?

Teacher: Yes — good question!

Whole-class round: play one story together first so students see how detail questions build the picture — then split into pairs or small groups for the rest.

Teacher Tips

Quick notes for running the activity smoothly



Timing

Plan about 10–15 minutes per story, including the reveal and a quick recap.



Group size

Start as a whole class, then move to pairs or small groups of 3–4 once students know the rules.



Differentiate

Weaker students: stick to yes/no questions. Stronger students: any open question is fine — just not the banned ones on the Rules slide.

MYSTERY 1



I spent the night in a police station.

→ Find out what happened!

MYSTERY 2



I accidentally became famous for one day.

→ Find out what happened!

MYSTERY 3



I have never forgotten seat 14A.

→ Find out what happened!

Mystery 1 — The Story

"I spent the night in a police station."



Reveal to the class after the questions run out.

It happened a few years ago after a concert. I was walking home when I saw a little boy standing outside a supermarket. He was crying and looked very frightened. I asked him if he was OK, but he was too upset to explain what had happened. After a few minutes he told me that he couldn't find his parents. He knew his first name and where he lived, but he didn't know his address or his parents' phone number. I called the police, and they asked me to bring him to the nearest police station. We spent several hours there playing board games, drawing pictures and waiting. The police eventually found his parents, who had been looking for him all over the city. By the time everything was finished, it was almost five o'clock in the morning. I was exhausted, but very happy that the little boy was safe.

Mystery 2 — The Story

"I accidentally became famous for one day."



Reveal to the class after the questions run out.

This happened on a long train journey from Prague to Budapest. I had to get up at four in the morning to catch the train, so I was extremely tired. About an hour after we left Prague, I fell asleep. I had no idea that another passenger took a photo of me. In the picture I was sleeping with my mouth wide open, hugging my backpack like a teddy bear. The passenger posted the photo on social media with the caption: "When you trust your backpack more than anyone else." A few days later, one of my friends sent me the picture. It had been shared thousands of times, and people had started making funny memes with it. For one day, complete strangers recognised me online. Luckily, everyone found it funny, including me.

Mystery 3 — The Story

"I have never forgotten seat 14A."



Reveal to the class after the questions run out.

It happened about ten years ago. I was flying from Prague to London for a weekend city break. I was travelling alone. The plane was completely full, so I couldn't change my seat. The man sitting next to me smiled and asked if I was going to London for work or on holiday. We started chatting before take-off and talked for almost the whole flight. It turned out that we had a lot in common. We both loved travelling, hiking and live music. We even had the same favourite author. Before we landed, we exchanged phone numbers. A week later, we met for coffee. Two years later, we got married. That's why I'll never forget seat 14A.