

Dyslexia Word Detective

Crack the Clues — a fun, no-pressure word puzzle game

Welcome, Detective. Your job is to investigate words rather than race through them. Use a pencil, point, say the answer aloud, ask someone to read the clues or use a ruler to track the page. There is no timer and no score to beat. Clues and second attempts are part of detective work.

DETECTIVE RULES

1. Take as long as you need.
2. Ask for a clue whenever you want.
3. Answers can be spoken or written.
4. Try a different strategy if the first one does not help.
5. Every completed case earns a detective star.

CASE 1 — The Missing Letters

Use the clue to complete each word.

Clue	Mystery word
Something you read	b _ _ k
It shines in the sky	s _ n
You sit on it	ch _ _ r
An animal that barks	d _ g
You wear it on your foot	sh _ e
You open it to enter a room	d _ _ r

My detective clue for somebody else: _____

CASE 2 — Rhyme Investigation

Circle the word that rhymes with the first word.

cake	lake	lock	look
light	night	net	lot
tree	bee	boy	tray
fish	dish	dash	five
moon	spoon	man	mine

Detective tip: say the words aloud. Listening can reveal a pattern that is harder to see.

CASE 3 — Word Family Files

Which word does NOT belong to the same pattern family?

rain	train	brain	book
play	day	stay	dog
boat	coat	goat	cat
light	night	right	run

CASE 4 — The Mixed-Up Word Mystery

The letters have been scrambled. Use the clue to solve the word. You may cross letters out as you use them.

Mixed-up letters	Clue	Word
t a c	an animal that purrs	_____
g o d	an animal that barks	_____
k o o b	something you read	_____
n i a r	water from clouds	_____
r a t s	seen in the night sky	_____
p m a l	gives light	_____

CASE 5 — Hidden Word Search

Find the smaller word hiding inside the longer word. Circle it or underline it.

Find	Inside
sun	sunshine
rain	rainbow
book	notebook
room	bedroom
day	daylight
play	playground

CASE 6 — Meaning Match

Match each word to the best meaning. Write the letter next to the word.

Word	Letter	Meanings
tiny	___	A. very quick
rapid	___	B. very small
silent	___	C. not making a sound
enormous	___	D. very large
begin	___	E. to start

CASE 7 — Which One Is Different?

Choose one word that is different and explain your detective reasoning. More than one answer may be possible if your reason makes sense.

apple	orange	banana	carrot
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bus	train	bicycle	bed
happy	glad	joyful	angry
read	book	story	spoon

My reason: _____

CASE 8 — Sentence Detective

Choose the word that makes the sentence make sense.

The sun is ____ today.	bright	bread	blueberry
I put my shoes on my ____.	feet	food	fish
The dog likes to ____.	bark	book	bike
I use an umbrella when it ____.	rains	reads	runs
At night I go to ____.	sleep	shop	sing

CASE 9 — Sound Clue Files

Read or listen to the clue, then write or say a word that fits. There can be several good answers.

Clue	My word
Starts with the same sound as SUN	_____
Rhymes with CAT	_____
Starts with B and is something you can read	_____
Rhymes with LIGHT	_____
Starts with D and can be an animal	_____

CASE 10 — Become the Detective

Create your own mystery for another player. Pick one type: missing letters, rhyme, hidden word, mixed-up word, meaning clue or odd-one-out.

My mystery:

My clue:

The answer: _____

CASE CLOSED — My Detective Toolkit

Tick any strategies you used. These are not shortcuts — they are ways of making language accessible.

☐ I said the word aloud	☐ I asked someone to read
☐ I looked for a pattern	☐ I covered part of the page
☐ I used a finger or ruler	☐ I broke the word into parts
☐ I asked for a clue	☐ I changed my answer
☐ I took my time	☐ I invented my own strategy

CASE SOLVED ★

Good detectives do not know every answer immediately. They look closely, gather clues, try strategies and change direction when something does not fit. That is exactly what this game is designed to practise.

Space to Breathe Therapy

Detective Answer & Support File

Keep this page separate from the player if you want the cases to remain mysteries. The game is for engagement and confidence, not assessment.

Case 1: book, sun, chair, dog, shoe, door.

Case 2: lake, night, bee, dish, spoon.

Case 3: book, dog, cat, run.

Case 4: cat, dog, book, rain, star, lamp.

Case 5: each target word appears directly inside the longer word.

Case 6: tiny–B; rapid–A; silent–C; enormous–D; begin–E.

Case 7: suggested answers are carrot, bed, angry and spoon. Accept another choice when the player explains a coherent rule.

Case 8: bright, feet, bark, rains, sleep.

Case 9: open answers. Examples include sock/sand; hat/bat; book; night/right; dog.

Case 10: completely open-ended. Let the player become the puzzle designer.

Support note: Avoid timing the activities or counting errors as a measure of dyslexia. Read clues aloud when wanted, allow verbal answers and praise the use of strategies. This game is not a screening or diagnostic tool and should not be used to estimate intelligence, reading age or severity of dyslexia.