

# PLANNING A PLOT



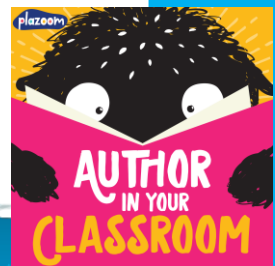
with **ROBIN STEVENS**  
(Murder Most Unladylike)

# THE DETECTIVE SOCIETY

I suppose I ought to give some explanation of ourselves, in honour of the new casebook. Daisy Wells is the President of the Detective Society, and I, Hazel Wong, am its secretary. Daisy says that this makes her Sherlock Holmes, and me Watson. This is probably fair. After all, I am much too short to be the heroine of the story, and who ever heard of a Chinese Sherlock Holmes?



*Murder Most Unladylike* by Robin Stevens, part 1, chapter 1, page 3



# CREATING A SETTING

Robin Stevens talks about using ‘a closed setting’. That’s somewhere that is hard to get in and out of and where the characters might know each other.

*Murder Most Unladylike* is set in a boarding school.

Where could your crime take place?

A train?

A ship?

A library?

A club?

Make sure your setting matches the sort of place your detective might visit...



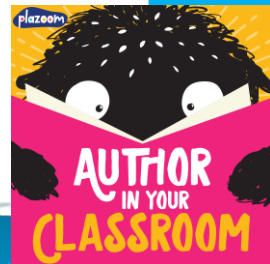
# A VICTIM AND A CRIME

Next, you need to think of a crime. Could it be:

- A theft?
- A murder?
- Something being broken or vandalised?
- Something or someone going missing?
- A kidnapping?

Then you need a victim. Make sure your victim matches with your setting.

Jot down as many ideas as you can think of and then choose your favourite.



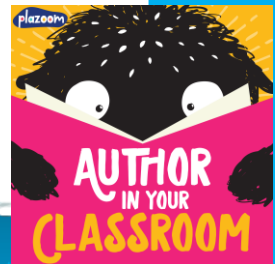
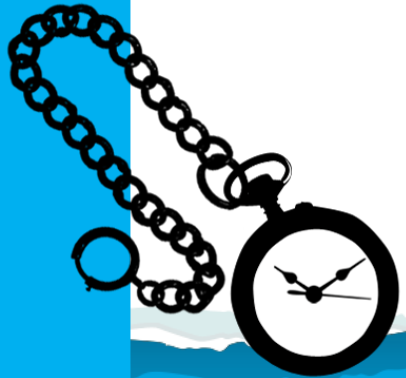
# SUSPECTS AND CLUES

Now you need to think up your list of suspects and the clues that might link them to the crime.

Think about:

- Who might have visited the crime scene?
- What might they have left behind that would identify them?

For all but one of the suspects, there needs to be an innocent explanation for why their clue is there.



# A RESOLUTION

Finally, you need to decide how your story ends. Think about:

- How does your detective know who committed the crime?
- How can you surprise your reader?
  - Is it the most unlikely suspect?
  - Is it several suspects working together?
  - Is it something completely different?



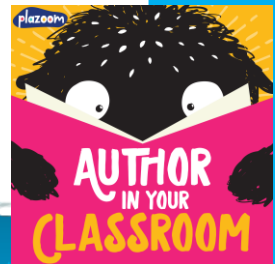
# HAZEL WONDERS...

I tried to focus on my Latin translation. *The Queen was in the woods*, I wrote. But, almost as though they were not under my control, my eyes kept sliding off of my work to stare at Miss Tennyson.

The third time I did it, I found her staring back at me. It gave me a nasty shock. Was Miss Tennyson remembering seeing our torchlight by the gym? Did she know it had been us, and was she plotting to kill me and Daisy, as she had Miss Bell? I shuddered. And I really looked at her, and what I saw surprised me. For a moment she did not look like an evil murderer at all, or even a mistress, but just someone who was terribly, terribly afraid. She had dark rings under her eyes, which were red rimmed as though she had been crying.

Was this what a guilty conscience looked like?

*Murder Most Unladylike* by Robin Stevens, part 5, chapter 6, page 178



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