How to play | Christmas Mystery Challenge

Your team

Work in teams of 3-5. You need pens, printed pages and a table number. All locations and objects are fictional and shown on paper. Do not search or move anything at your real venue.

Before Round 1

Write your team number and one whole-number estimate from 0 to 999 for the hidden gold-seal count. The host records it before any clues open. You will not see the sealed count first: this is a chance-based tie estimate, not a puzzle. Guesses cannot change.

Rounds and points

Four core rounds are worth 5 points each. The five bonus tasks are worth 2 points each: maximum 30. Show working where requested. Open only the round announced by the host and keep earlier evidence.

Marking

At each deadline stop writing. Pass the answer sheet to the next numbered team; the last team passes to team 1. Mark ONLY the completed round from the host explanation. Write its score and your team number beside it, then return the sheet. Do not rewrite earlier answers. The host supplies the correct carry-forward facts so a missed round cannot block later play. Exchange and mark all three bonus pages together after the bonus deadline.

Fair play

No phones or reference books except agreed access support. No speed bonus. All teams receive the same hints and time extensions. Tell the host immediately about missing or unreadable pages. Early finishers check their current work without opening later packets.

Winners and support

Highest total wins. Equal totals are separated by the closest valid locked guess; equally close guesses share the win. Blank, late, altered or invalid guesses lose to valid guesses on equal points; if none is valid, share the win. Raise disputed marks before winners are announced. Ask privately about reading, writing, hearing or visual support before play.

Small-group printing | Christmas Mystery Challenge

Choose A4 OR US_Letter, single-sided at Actual Size / 100%. Print one test pack before bulk copying. Host and promotional sheets are extra.

Guest set per team

GUEST_RULES.pdf: 1 page(s)

TEAM_ANSWERS.pdf: 1 page(s)

EVIDENCE_1.pdf: 1 page(s)

EVIDENCE_2.pdf: 1 page(s)

EVIDENCE_3.pdf: 1 page(s)

EVIDENCE_4.pdf: 1 page(s)

BONUS_MISSION.pdf: 3 page(s)

Quantities including one spare

9 sheets per team. 10 players: 2 teams, 27 sheets. 20 players: 4 teams, 45 sheets. 30 players: 6 teams, 63 sheets. 40 players: 8 teams, 81 sheets. For any count, teams = CEILING(players/5); sheets = (teams+1) x 9.

Host pack

START_HERE, HOST_RUNBOOK_V2, HOST_EVENT_SUPPORT, HOST_SHOW_SCRIPT, HOST_SOLUTIONS, SCOREBOARD, SEALED_TIE_REVEAL_HOST_ONLY, HINTS and BONUS_SOLUTIONS_HOST_ONLY.

Release and collect

At each round deadline stop writing and pass the answer sheet to the next numbered table; the last table passes to table 1. Mark ONLY the completed round from the host key. Write the round score and marker table number, then return it. Earlier answers cannot be rewritten. The host gives the correct carry-forward key so a missed answer cannot block later play.

Prepare one closed packet per core round per team, plus a separate bonus packet. Keep bonus pages closed until the announced bonus start.