BRAIN TEASER | TEAM MOOD 1+ | PREP: 5 MIN

Two-Minute Mysteries

15 minutes · 4 to 40 people · office, hybrid or remote

Nobody has to talk about themselves, perform or share feelings. Teams just think together, and the room wakes up. It works on a heavy Monday as well as a good Friday.

You need

- The big-screen deck (PowerPoint or PDF). Answers are in the speaker notes
- Optional: the mystery cards on the last pages, if you prefer paper
- A timer on your phone
- A flipchart or whiteboard for the score (optional)

Before you start (5 min)

- Pick four or five mystery cards. Mix true stories with puzzles.
- Edit the two final slides with one true, positive fact about your team. Examples are in the notes.
- Read every answer twice. You are the only one who knows them.

1 · The rules 2 min

Split the room into teams of three to six. Mix people who don't usually sit together.

> SAY
> “I’ll read you a strange story. You find out what happened by asking me questions I can answer with yes or no. Teams take turns. First team to explain it gets a point.”

2 · Mysteries 9 min

Read the first card out loud, slowly, twice. Start a two-minute timer.

Teams take turns asking one yes-or-no question each. Answer only “yes”, “no” or “doesn’t matter”. A team can try a full explanation instead of a question.

No solution after one minute? Give the first hint. After 90 seconds, give the second. At two minutes, read the answer and move on.

Four mysteries fit in nine minutes. Keep the pace up. The fun is in the questions, not in the points.

3 · The final mystery 3 min · the twist

Announce the last mystery. Then read the card you filled in about your own team.

This time the teams don’t compete. Everyone may ask, from any team, and the whole room solves it together.

> SAY
> “Last one. No points, no teams. This mystery happened in this room.”

4 · Closing 1 min

Read out the score in one sentence. Thank the team that asked the funniest question, not the winner.

> SAY
> “You just solved five mysteries in fifteen minutes. See you at the next one.”

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Tips from event producers

- **Answer strictly.** “Doesn’t matter” is your best friend. It keeps teams from getting stuck on details.
- **Let the silly questions happen.** They make the room laugh, and they often lead to the answer.
- **The final card makes the game.** Pick a fact that is true and specific, not a compliment. “We closed 140 tickets in March and nobody worked a weekend” beats “We are a great team”.
- **One team runs ahead?** Let the other teams ask two questions in a row for the next mystery.
- **Keep the cards.** Use the ones you didn’t play next month. There are eight in this guide.

Hybrid and remote

- Remote people form their own team and ask through you, or through the chat.
- Read the mystery from the card and also paste it into the chat, so everyone can reread it.
- Fully remote: teams ask by raising a hand and unmuting. Use a visible timer on screen share.

1+

TEAM MOOD

Works at any mood, even 1. People think in teams, nobody is on stage, and there is nothing personal to share. If something heavy just happened, name it first in one or two sentences, then play.

Not sure where your team is? Run a Mood Check in the Rhythual app. Everyone taps 1 to 10 anonymously, and your library shows what fits.

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Mystery cards

Print · cut along the dashed lines

Host only. The answer is on the card, so don’t show them around. True stories are marked.

MYSTERY 1 — PUZZLE

The upside-down photo

A photographer hangs her best photo upside down at an exhibition. Nobody complains, and it sells in the first hour.

Answer: It is a photo of a mountain reflected in a still lake. Hung upside down, the reflection looks like the real landscape, only softer. The buyer loved it that way.
Hints: There is water in the photo · It looks right because it is upside down

MYSTERY 2 — TRUE STORY

The silent concert

A pianist walks on stage, sits at the piano and plays for just over four and a half minutes. The audience does not hear a single note. The piece is still performed around the world.

Answer: It is “4′33″” by John Cage (1952). The performer plays nothing. The music is the sound of the room: coughs, rain, people shifting in their seats.
Hints: The pianist did exactly what the music said · Listen to the room

MYSTERY 3 — TRUE TRADITION

Two coffees

Every morning a woman in a café in Naples pays for two coffees but drinks only one. The café never throws the second one away.

Answer: It is a “caffè sospeso”, a suspended coffee. She pays in advance for a stranger who can’t afford one. Later, someone asks if there is a suspended coffee and gets it for free.
Hints: The second coffee is for someone she will never meet · It is an old Naples tradition

MYSTERY 4 — TRUE STORY

The lucky theft

A painting is stolen from one of the most famous museums in the world. When it comes back two years later, it is far more famous than before.

Answer: The Mona Lisa was stolen from the Louvre in 1911 by Vincenzo Peruggia. The theft was front-page news around the world. When it was recovered in 1913, crowds came to see it and it became the most famous painting on earth.
Hints: Newspapers did the marketing · She smiles

MYSTERY 5 — TRUE STORY

The expensive word

An online shop changes one word on one button. In the next year it makes 300 million dollars more.

Answer: The button said “Register”. Shoppers hated creating an account before paying, so many left. The shop changed it to “Continue” and let people check out as guests. Designer Jared Spool wrote about it as “The $300 Million Button”.
Hints: The button appeared right before paying · People don’t like making accounts

MYSTERY 6 — TRUE STORY

The glue that failed

A scientist tries to make a super-strong glue and fails badly. Years later, his failure sits on almost every office desk in the world.

Answer: Spencer Silver at 3M made a weak glue that stuck but peeled off easily (1968). His colleague Art Fry used it for bookmarks in his hymn book. It became the Post-it Note, sold from 1980.
Hints: It is probably within two metres of you · It sticks, but not for long

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MYSTERY 7 CLASSIC STORY

The slow lifts

People in an office building keep complaining that the lifts are too slow. The owner doesn't make the lifts any faster, and the complaints almost stop.

Answer: He puts mirrors next to the lift doors. People look at themselves, fix their hair and check their teeth, and the wait feels much shorter.
Hints: He changed the waiting, not the lift · Everybody likes to look at one thing

MYSTERY 8 PUZZLE

More noise, more quiet

An open-plan office adds a new sound that plays all day. Afterwards, people say the office feels quieter.

Answer: It is sound masking: a soft, even background hiss. It covers the words of nearby conversations, so they stop being distracting. The room is not quieter, but it feels calmer.
Hints: The new sound has no words · You hear voices, but not what they say

FINAL MYSTERY YOU WRITE IT

It happened in this room

This team did something _____ that _____. Nobody outside this room knows how. What was it?

Example: "In March this team did something with 214 tickets that no other team in the building managed." Answer: we closed all of them without anyone working a weekend.

Answer: Write a true, specific, positive fact here: _____

SCORE OPTIONAL

Team names

Let each team name itself after a famous detective, real or invented. Write the names and the points on the flipchart.

Team A: _____ Team B: _____

Team C: _____ Team D: _____

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