Secrets of Willow Creek: A Mystery Room Challenge

This hands-on activity is designed as a follow-up to \*The Hawthorne Mystery\*. Students will work in groups to design an escape-room-style challenge using the settings, clues, and themes from the novel.

# Teacher Guide

Objective:

* Students will demonstrate comprehension of \*The Hawthorne Mystery\*, apply vocabulary in context, and use creative problem-solving to design and solve mystery puzzles based on the novel.

Preparation:

• Divide the class into small groups.  
• Provide materials such as boxes, paper, markers, and optional props (old keys, maps, journals, etc.).  
• Assign or let each group choose a mystery scene from the book.

Suggested Scenes:

• The Hawthorne Mansion  
• The Sealed Well  
• The Secret Vault  
• The Underground Tunnel  
• The Library or Cellar

Game Structure:

• Each group designs 3–5 puzzles (riddles, cipher codes, matching clues to locations, etc.)  
• Include at least one vocabulary-based puzzle and one inference-based challenge  
• Puzzles must be solvable using logic, teamwork, and clues from the story  
• Groups take turns solving each other's rooms

Materials (suggested):

• Cardstock or paper  
• Scissors, tape, markers  
• Envelopes or lockable containers (real or simulated)  
• Clue props (keys, flashlights, old books, maps)  
• Excerpts from the book, printed journal pages, or 'news clippings'

# Student Planning Worksheet

Group Members:

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Scene from the Book:

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What is the story line or mystery in your escape room?

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List 3–5 Puzzles You Will Create:

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

How do your puzzles connect to the book?

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What props or materials will you need?

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Final Reflection (to be completed after activity):

What did your group learn about teamwork and problem-solving?

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