

# King Leopold

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History's Mysteries—Solve the Crime of the Time



### **About the author**

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10200 Jefferson Blvd • P.O. Box 802 • Culver City, CA 90232  
Phone: (800) 359-0961 • [www.teachinteract.com](http://www.teachinteract.com)  
ISBN# 978-1-56004-571-7

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# WELCOME TO KING LEOPOLD!

In this hands-on investigative activity, students are given an authentic task: to think like criminalists and review mock forensic files of a historical event. Students gather, analyze, and interpret evidence, engaging in tasks such as examining physical objects (e.g., a model of a guillotine, bullets, a blood-spattered uniform), poring over photographs, analyzing documents, and reading maps and charts. A PowerPoint® presentation includes an introduction to the task, a coroner's report, and several types of sources from the "crime scene." Students then fill out a "forensic report" graphic organizer, hypothesize how the event took place, and conclude by reading a "Mystery Solved" handout that provides historical background on the "crime." Optional extension activities include having students create a "breaking news" TV report, write a front-page newspaper article, or compose a "news alert" text message. Grades 6–12.



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## Purpose and Overview

### Activity Introduction

Welcome to *History's Mysteries: Solve the Crime of the Time*. Included are investigative case files that cover some of the main areas of world history standards-based curriculum. The central purpose of these files is to spark interest and excitement in students for further study of a given unit.

A History Mystery is rooted in having students act like a criminalist whose job is to gather, analyze, and interpret forensic evidence. Real-life criminalists are skilled in studying everyday items, examining bullets, and analyzing documents. Likewise, in a history class a teacher's job is to help students develop critical thinking skills also based in gathering, analyzing and interpreting data.

In this hands-on investigative activity, students are given an authentic task—to think like criminalists and review mock forensic files of a historical event. Each file contains primary and secondary source replica/realia that students analyze in order to hypothesize how a given event took place.

This activity works best as an introduction to a world history unit, but it may also be used as a way to review before a DBQ based assessment at the end of a unit. Students are motivated to solve each Mystery both with accuracy and speed as the first student/team to do so correctly wins a "Criminalist of the Year" nameplate for classroom display.

### How does a History Mystery work?

Students are given the task of reviewing a historical event case file and filling out a Forensic Report. Once this initial step is completed, students then read a **Mystery Solved: Press Release** that reveals all the accurate details of the real life History Mystery.

Each *History's Mysteries Case File* review and **Forensic Report** are completed in a single (60 minute) class session. The follow up **Mystery Solved: Press Release** reading and follow up activities (**Front Page News, Breaking News Report, or Text Message News Alert**) can take another half to full one hour class period.

Each unit comes with reproducible student analysis sheets, teacher directions, student directions, CD-ROM that allows students to view the files on a computer (or the entire class with an LCD projector).



#### Teaching tip

For more scaffolding and challenge to the activity, you can also add a step where students work on a **Front Page News Article, Breaking News Report, or a Text Message News Alert** in which students further synthesize what they believed took place in either an essay, short skit, or short summary form (for better language mastery, beginner or advanced writing skills, ELL and/or AP Students).

What did Imperialism look like in the Congo?



AREA 1:  
CRIME SCENE



October 21, 1906: A dead body was found in the water lying near a fishing net filled with 2 dead fish.

AREA 2:  
CORONER'S REPORT



NOTES  
Left hand severed from the body.

VICTIM'S NAME (LAST, FIRST, MIDDLE)

**Unknown**

SEX	AGE	RACE	WEIGHT	HT
<b>(M)</b> F	<b>NA</b>	<b>Congolese</b>		

DESCRIPTION OF CORPSE

**Older male.**

EXTERNAL INJURIES

**Bullet wound (see entry indication on outline). Severed left hand—appears to be removed near the wrist.**

INTERNAL INJURIES

**Massive loss of blood due to bullet entry and loss of limb.**



**AREA 3:  
DETECTIVE'S RESEARCH**



Note that the areas on the map that are not filled in and are blank are not ruled by an outside country, they are independent.

\* The **Congo** was an Independent Nation in 1870.

