

Watergate

History's Mysteries—Solve the Crime of the Time



About the authors

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INT473CD

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Phone: (800) 359-0961 • www.teachinteract.com

ISBN# 978-1-56004-651-6

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WELCOME TO WATERGATE!

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).

How were the events of June 17, 1972,
more than a simple "break-in"?



AREA 1:
CRIME SCENE



June 17, 1972, 2:30 AM
Watergate Hotel and Office
Complex, Washington D.C.



AREA 2: POLICE REPORT



POLICE INCIDENT REPORT

Incident Date	06/17/1972
Address of Incident	Watergate Hotel and Office Building Foggy Bottom, Washington D.C.
Arrested Suspected perpetrator(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female Name(s): James W. McCord Eugenio Martinez Virgilio Gonzalez Frank Sturgis Bernard Barker Suspect(s) arrested for: Breaking into the offices of the Democratic National Committee Charges: Attempted Burglary and Attempted Interception of Telephone and Other Communications
Victim(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female Name(s): Not applicable Age(s):
Details	Security guard Frank Wills discovered five well-dressed men breaking into the offices of the Democratic National Committee. The men were each carrying hundreds of dollars in consecutive denominations, as well as walkie-talkies. They appeared to be attempting to bug the phones of the office.

Incident Type

- Robbery
- Assault
- Kidnapping
- Murder
- Failure to Comply with Current Law
- Conspiracy (a secret agreement between two or more people perform an unlawful act)
- Espionage (the systematic use of spies to get military or political secrets)
- Other: Burglary—the intent to break into a building without consent and with the intent of committing a crime inside (including theft).

AREA 3: DETECTIVE'S RESEARCH



Richard M. Nixon was elected president of the United States in 1968. He took office on January 20, 1969.



Nixon, a Republican, defeated the Democratic candidate, Hubert Humphrey, as well as American Independent Party candidate George Wallace, in one of the closest elections in U.S. history.



Governor George Wallace attempts to block racial integration at the University of Alabama.

The major issues in the election were the candidates' opinions on the civil rights movement and the Vietnam War.



Senator Hubert Humphrey meets with Martin Luther King, Jr. and Coretta Scott King.