

Sylvia McNicoll's Tips for Mystery Writers

1. Read a lot of mysteries.
2. Think of your ending first.
3. Choose names that mean something to you or add to the character.
4. Think of the outside of your characters (solvers and suspects.)
Give them interesting possible clue details: a scar, tattoo, different-coloured eyes or a limp.
5. Think of the inside of your characters. What they like to eat and do. What they want in this story.
6. Give your main character/solver/detective a strong reason to solve the crime/puzzle.
7. Make sure every suspect has a strong motive.
8. Make your characters change along the way: suspects become more suspicious, hero becomes more determined to solve crime.
9. Add pressure: give hero a time limit for crime solving or else...Make the crime re-occur.
10. Give your villain a deep dark secret that is revealed at the end.

