

SRC Week 1: Mystery Stories, Detectives, and Crime

Welcome to week 1 of Summer Reading Club! This week's theme is Mystery Stories, Detectives, & Crime. Check out these activities for adults & teens!

This week we have two challenges for you:

1. See if you can solve these (currently) unsolved mysteries. What possible explanations, logical or not, could there be for each phenomenon?
2. Complete our mystery-themed crossword!

Send us your theories about these mysteries or other unsolved cases at summerreading@tnrd.ca!

Unsolved Mystery: The Mary Celeste

In November of 1872, the Mary Celeste set off from New York City and headed for Genoa, Italy. The boat was outfitted expensively and carried enough supplies for six months, and was occupied only by Captain Benjamin Briggs, his wife, daughter, and seven crew members.



Roughly one month later on December 4th, 1872, the Mary Celeste was found abandoned and adrift in the Atlantic Ocean. Its cargo and supplies were all still there, and there did not appear to have been any signs of a struggle or attack. There was one singular lifeboat missing, which appeared to have been used calmly and without distress. No one from the ship was ever heard from again.

What do you think could have caused everyone on board to suddenly evacuate the ship?
What could have occurred that would not have left any traces behind?

Unsolved Mystery: D.B. Cooper

On November 24th, 1971, a man named Dan Cooper was a passenger on Northwest Flight #305: 30 minutes from Portland to Seattle. After takeoff, he proceeded to hand one of the flight attendants a note that urged crew that he had a bomb, and made these demands:

- \$200,000 in “negotiable American currency” (worth about \$1 million today),
- Four parachutes, and
- A fuel truck standing by to refuel the plane upon its arrival in Seattle.



At 5:39pm, the plane landed, and all passengers and two crew members were allowed off the plane to safety. Cooper's demands were met and he informed them of his plan, stating that he wanted to be flown towards Mexico, stopping once more in Reno, Nevada to refuel. However, upon their landing in Reno, Mr. Cooper disappeared from the aircraft.

None of the ransom money was ever used, and no parachute was found. Since 1971, some packets of ransom money have been found in Oregon and a parachute strap was located at a possible landing site, but nothing has ever been connected to Mr. Cooper.

What do you think happened to Dan Cooper, and why did he take the aircraft hostage if he never ended up using the money?

Image from Encyclopedia Britannica,
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/D-B-Cooper>, accessed on June 22nd, 2021.

Unsolved Mystery: The Voynich Manuscript

The Voynich Manuscript is a roughly 250-page text that is written in an entirely unknown language/writing system. It has been carbon-dated to the 1400s and it includes illustrations of plants that don't resemble any documented species of the present day.

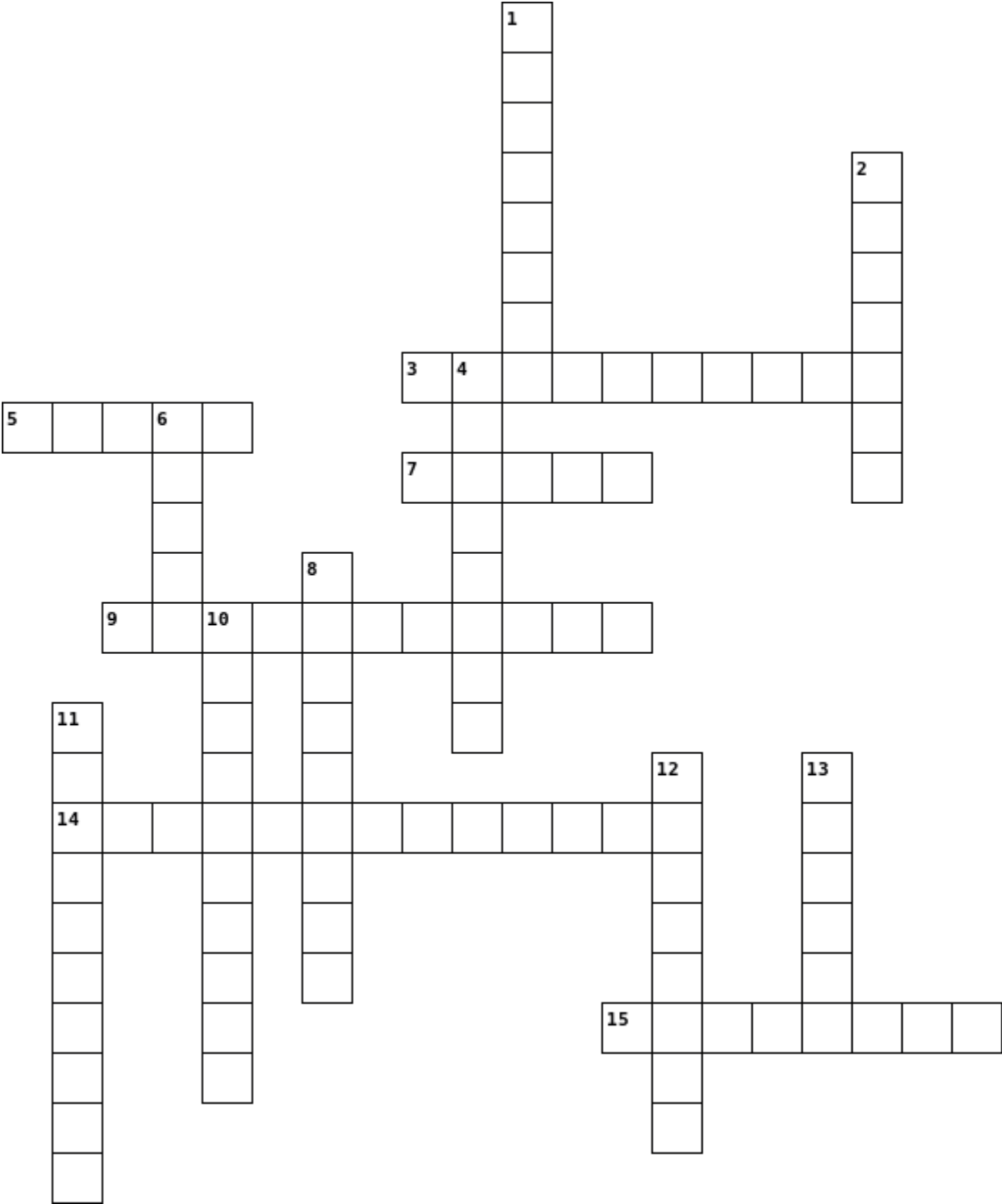


It is believed to have been intended to be used as a medical text, and has been held by several different owners since its believed creation by either Albertus Magnus (an alchemist) or Roger Bacon (an early scientist).

Some people believe one of its owners to have manufactured the book as a hoax, but no confirmed origin has ever been established. Where do you think this book came from, and what are your theories about what it's trying to communicate?

Mysteries sourced from <https://www.rd.com/list/strangest-unsolved-mysteries/>.

Mystery Crossword



Clues

Across

3. A person who helps another commit a crime
5. A feeling or guess based on intuition rather than known facts
7. Confirmation that a person was somewhere else at the time that a crime took place
9. A person who carries out an illegal or unlawful act
14. Formal or systematic research into some phenomenon
15. Information or material used in crime scene investigation (often collected to document crime scenes)

Down

1. The use of scientific methods in the investigation of crimes
2. A person who sees a crime/accident take place
4. An unsolved investigation that has been open for a long time (2 words)
6. An illegal activity
8. A person whose job is to research/investigate crimes
10. A clue that is meant to be misleading or distracting (2 words)
11. A detective who works for paying customers rather than for the police (2 words)
12. A word describing a case that was not concluded
13. A reason for doing something, especially one that is hidden or not obvious

Answer Key

Across

3. A person who helps another commit a crime – **accomplice**
5. A feeling or guess based on intuition rather than known facts - **hunch**
7. Confirmation that a person was somewhere else at the time that a crime took place - **alibi**
9. A person who carries out an illegal or unlawful act – **perpetrator**
14. Formal or systematic research into some phenomenon – **investigation**
15. Information or material used in crime scene investigation (often collected to document crime scenes) – **evidence**

Down

1. The use of scientific methods in the investigation of crimes – **forensic**
2. A person who sees a crime/accident take place – **witness**
4. An unsolved investigation that has been open for a long time (2 words) – **cold case**
6. An illegal activity – **crime**
8. A person whose job is to research/investigate crimes – **detective**
10. A clue that is meant to be misleading or distracting (2 words) – **red herring**
11. A detective who works for paying customers rather than for the police (2 words) – **private eye**
12. A word describing a case that was not concluded – **unsolved**
13. A reason for doing something, especially one that is hidden or not obvious – **motive**