Ages 6–8 30–40 minutes · 1 child, a team, or a whole class

The Great Potluck Mix-Up

Six guests brought six dishes to the potluck, and every label has gone missing. Your Potluck Detectives sort out whose dish is whose, and find out where the labels went.

The detectives make five stops: the front door, the kitchen counter, the buffet table, the big table and, last, underneath it. At each stop something is in the way (a heap of shoes, dishes in secret code, a seating plan nobody can read), and solving the puzzle gets them past it and earns that stop's clue letter. On page 8 the five letters go into a new order and reveal who took the labels. Then everyone makes name cards for your own table and gets a certificate. The guests and their dishes are invented, so it fits a family dinner, a Friendsgiving or a classroom.

Skills: noticing details · picture code and early reading · logic (ruling out) · reading a map (next to, across from) · sequencing · cutting curves · folding

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What you need

- Pencils and crayons
- Scissors (a grown-up can cut) and a glue stick
- Plain printer paper. Card stock makes sturdier name cards.

How to play

1. Read the story on page 2 together and meet the six guests. Early readers can read the short lines; help with the rest.
2. Go stop by stop, in page order. Each puzzle gives a letter for that stop's box.
3. Kids can team up. If someone gets stuck, read the puzzle aloud again and point to the pictures. The answers page has three hints for each stop, from a gentle nudge to almost the answer.
4. On page 8, each box has a stop picture and number under it. Copy that stop's letter into the box; the boxes spell the answer.
5. Finish with the name cards and the certificate. The name cards can go on your own table at the next shared meal.

Answers and hints are on page 11. They aren't hidden, so keep that page to yourself until the end.

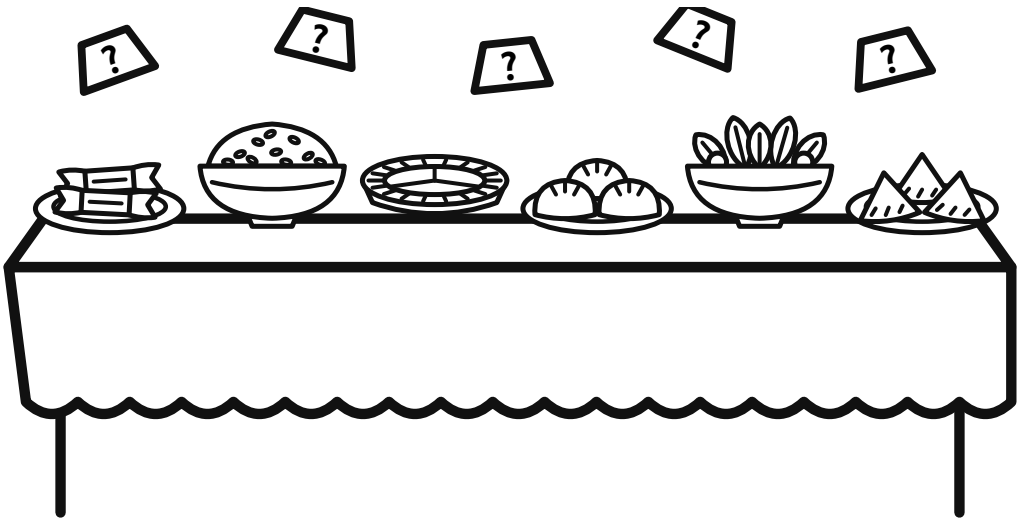
If a player can't easily see the pictures or uses a screen reader, page 12 tells you what to read aloud at each stop.

In a classroom

Copy pages 2–10 once per child, or once per team of two or three. It fits a 40-minute period, or split it: stops 1–3 on one day, stops 4–5 and the name cards on the next. Pages avoid big black areas, so they're easy on toner.

Free for home and school use. Please don't post it publicly or sell it.

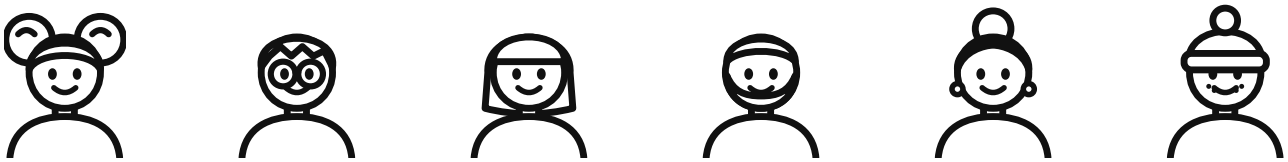
The Great Potluck Mix-Up



Today is the big potluck! Every guest brought a dish to share, with a label that says who made it.

But **WHOOSH!** Every label is gone. Whose dish is whose? You are the Potluck Detectives. Can you sort it out?

The guests:



Amara **Ben** **Mei** **Omar** **Rosa** **Sam**

Your path:



1 door → **2** kitchen → **3** buffet → **4** table → **5** under it

At each stop, solve the puzzle. Write its letter in the box.

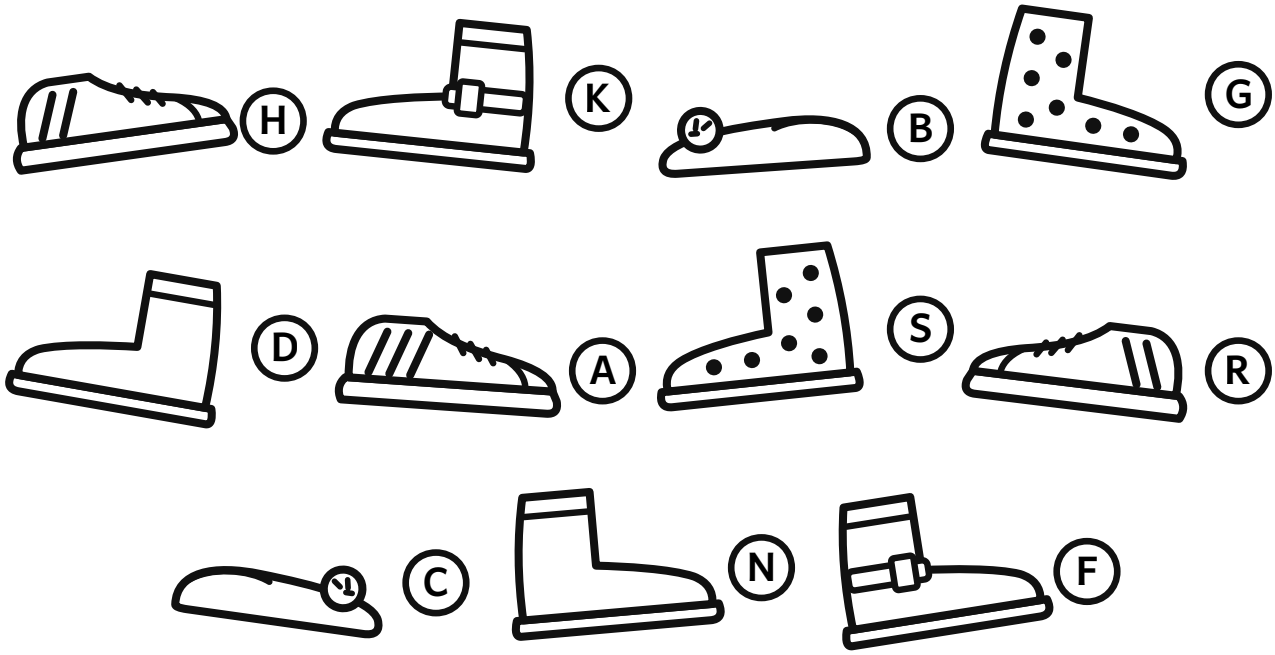
Color the table while you plan!

STOP 1

The front door

Shoes everywhere! You can't get in the door.

Find each pair. Color both shoes in a pair the same color.



One shoe has no partner!

Write the letter of the shoe with no partner in the box.

Stop 1

Where did the other shoe go? Hmm. Next stop: the kitchen →

STOP 2

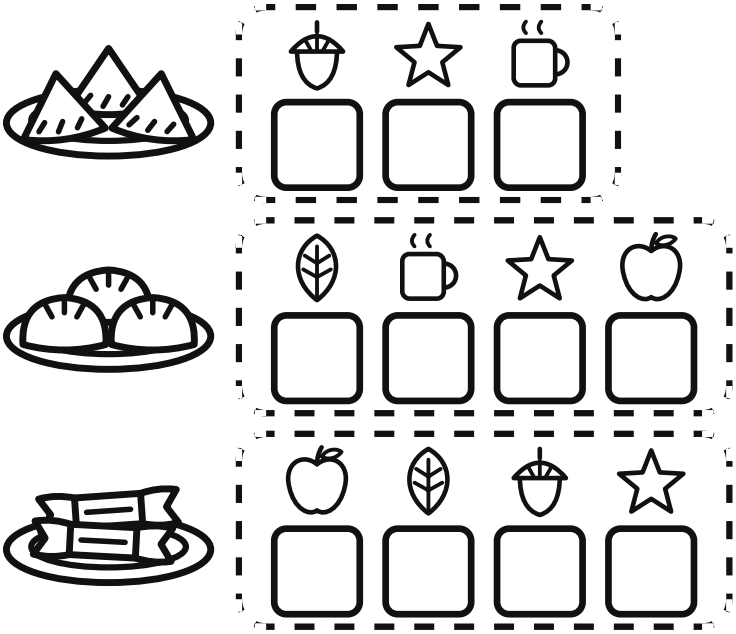
The kitchen counter

Three dishes have a sticker in picture code. Who brought them?

The code key

R	A	M	O	N	S	E	T

Write the letter under each sticker picture.



Cross out each guest who has a dish here.

Omar	Mei	Rosa	Sam
K	G	D	U

Who is left? Write their letter in the box. Stop 2 ☐

Their dish must be somewhere else. Next stop: the buffet table →

STOP 3

The buffet table

Three more dishes, and no stickers at all! Two guests tell you a clue.



Mei

"My dish is **not** in a bowl."



Amara

"My dish has **no** leaves."

Put ✗ where it can't be. Put ✓ where it must be.

	 pie T	 rice O	 salad B
 Mei			
 Amara			
 Ben			

What did Ben bring? Write the letter under it in the box.

Stop 3

Every dish has its guest! Next stop: the big table →

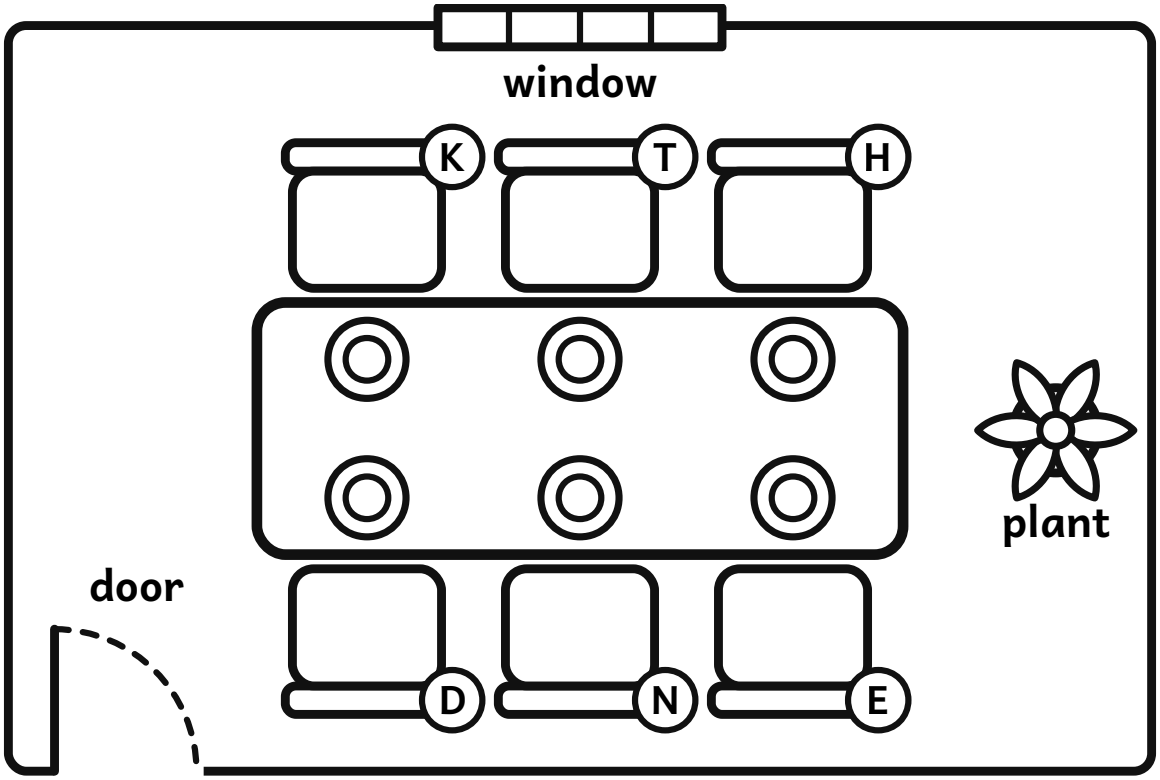
STOP 4

The big table

Time to sit down! But who sits where?

1. **Omar** sits in the middle, by the window.
2. **Rosa** sits across from Omar.
3. **Sam** sits by the window, next to the plant.
4. **Mei** sits next to Rosa, close to the door.
5. **Ben** sits across from Mei.

Write each guest's first letter on their chair.



The empty chair is for Amara! Write the letter on it in the box.

Stop 4

STOP 5

Under the table

But where did the labels go? Under the table, you find four photos. They show what happened!

1. Cut off the photo strip at the bottom of the page.
2. Cut out the four photos.
3. Glue them in order, from first to last.

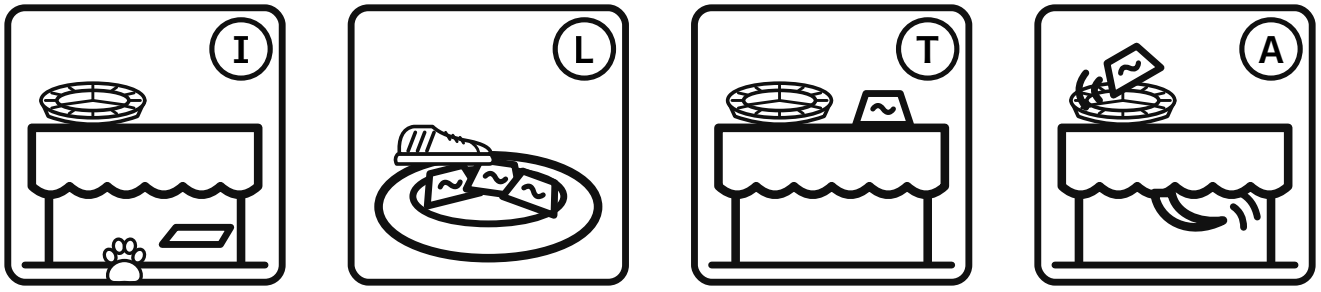
1st	2nd	3rd	4th

Read the letters from 1st to 4th.
Did they spell a word? Then you got it right!

Write the letter on the LAST photo in the box.

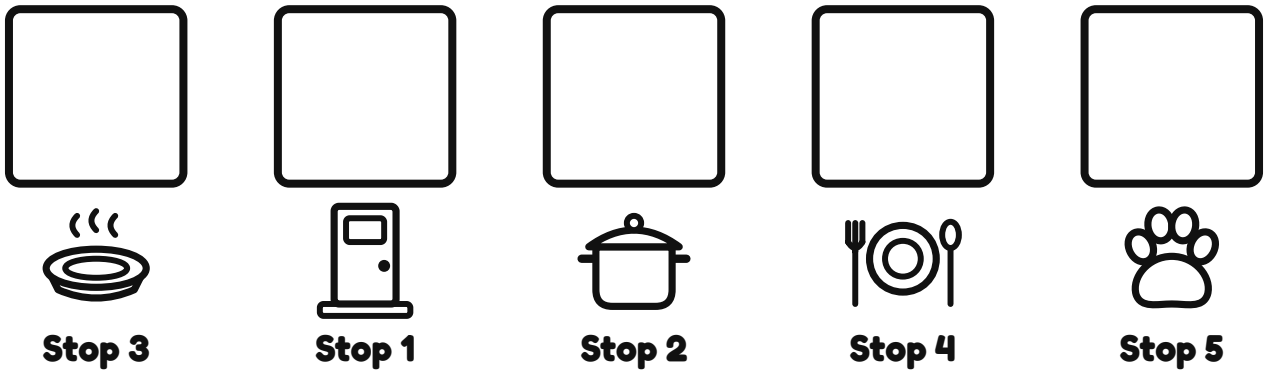
Stop 5 ☐

Something is wagging under the tablecloth. Turn the page!

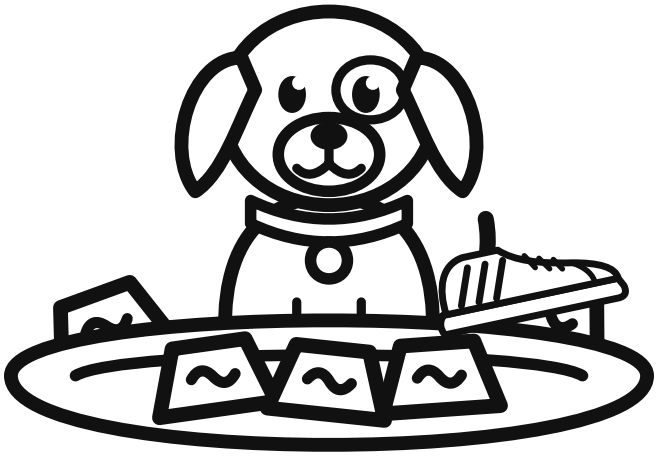


Who took the labels?

Under each box is a stop. Write that stop's letter in the box.



You lift the tablecloth. It's the puppy, and her name is in the boxes! She's sitting in her bed, on top of every label, and one sneaker.



She wanted to help set the table. Everyone laughs, and the labels go back on the dishes. Now every guest has a seat, and every dish has its label.

Before you eat, go around your table. Everyone says one thing they're thankful for.

Color the puppy. Then turn the page!

Name cards for your table

1  Cut around the wavy line. A grown-up can help.

2  Fold on the dotted line, so the card stands up.

3  Write a name on the front. On the back, write or draw a thank-you.

I am thankful for

Name

I am thankful for

Name

I am thankful for

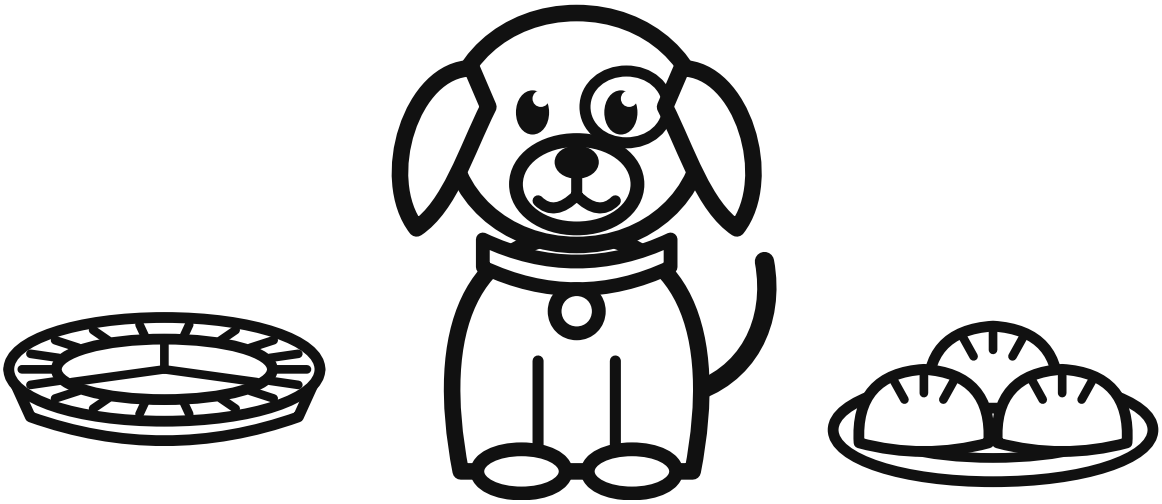
Name

I am thankful for

Name

POTLUCK DETECTIVES

Mix-Up Solved!



This certifies that

_____

sorted out every dish at the Great Potluck Mix-Up
and found the sneaky label-taker.

Date: _____

Answers and hints, for grown-ups

Stop 1, the front door

The pairs: two-stripe sneakers H and R, buckle boots K and F, plain boots D and N, rain boots G and S, slippers B and C. The three-stripe sneaker has no partner → **A**. (Shoes face both ways; that doesn't matter.)

Hints: (1) Some shoes look almost the same. Look at every part of each one. (2) Start with the boots: which ones have a buckle? (3) Count the stripes on every sneaker.

Stop 2, the kitchen counter

The stickers say SAM (samosas), OMAR (dumplings) and ROSA (tamales). Mei is left → **G**.

Hints: (1) Find the first sticker picture in the key. What letter is under it? (2) Write a letter under every picture, then read each sticker as a name. (3) Three stickers, four guests. Cross out each name you read.

Stop 3, the buffet table

Mei's dish isn't in a bowl, so Mei brought the pie. Amara's has no leaves and the pie is taken, so Amara brought the rice. Ben brought the salad → **B**.

Hints: (1) Which dishes are in a bowl? Which one isn't? (2) Mei's row: only one dish isn't in a bowl. Put ✓ there and ✗ under the pie for everyone else. (3) Which dish has leaves? Amara can't have it. Now what is left for Ben?

Stop 4, the big table

By the window, left to right: Ben (K), Omar (T), Sam (H). By the door, left to right: Mei (D), Rosa (N), and the empty chair is Amara's → **E**.

Hints: (1) Start with clue 1. Which chairs are by the window? Which one is in the middle? (2) "Across from" means on the other side of the table, straight across. (3) Mei's chair is next to Rosa's, on the side nearest the door. Who is across from her?

Stop 5, under the table

Label on the pie, tail bumps the table and the label flies, label on the floor by a paw print, labels in the pet bed. The letters spell TAIL. The last photo → **L**.

Hints: (1) Where is the label in each photo? (2) First the label is on the pie. Last, it's somewhere cozy. (3) The word is part of a dog.

Who took them?

The final boxes take stops 3, 1, 2, 4, 5: B, A, G, E, L = **BAGEL**, the puppy.

If they get stuck

- Read the puzzle out loud and point to each picture.
- At the big table, let them put a finger on each chair as you read a clue, and write the letter right away. A wrong guess is easy to rub out.
- Guessing the name early is part of the fun. Let them check it by finishing the stops.

Grown-ups get a kit too

Our free escape-room kit for teens and adults is on the same page you got this one from. New kits for this age are added there too. Kinundrum makes personalized puzzle countdowns for families and group chats.

Credits

Illustrations: original art made for this kit. Fonts: Andika (SIL International), SIL Open Font License 1.1; Fredoka (Milena Brandão and Hafontia), SIL Open Font License 1.1; Noto Sans Symbols 2 (The Noto Project Authors), SIL Open Font License 1.1.

Reading the pictures aloud

For a player who can't easily see the pictures or uses a screen reader. When they reach a stop, read its part aloud; they still solve the puzzle. The hints on page 11 are the same.

Stop 1, the front door

Read each shoe and its letter, then ask which one has no partner. Which way a shoe points doesn't matter.

- Top row: H, a sneaker with two stripes. K, a boot with a buckle. B, a slipper. G, a rain boot with dots.
- Middle row: D, a plain boot. A, a sneaker with three stripes. S, a rain boot with dots. R, a sneaker with two stripes.
- Bottom row: C, a slipper. N, a plain boot. F, a boot with a buckle.

Stop 2, the kitchen counter

The key: apple R, star A, cup M, leaf O, sun N, acorn S, heart E, pear T.

The stickers: samosas, acorn, star, cup. Dumplings, leaf, cup, star, apple. Tamales, apple, leaf, acorn, star.

The guests' letters: Omar K, Mei G, Rosa D, Sam U.

Stop 3, the buffet table

The pie sits in a flat pie dish, letter T. The rice is in a bowl, letter O. The salad is in a bowl, with leaves sticking up, letter B. Read the two clues, then let them fill the chart, or say it out loud together.

Stop 4, the big table

The map shows the room from above. The window is along the top wall. The plant is at the right end of the table. The door is in the bottom left corner. Three chairs are on the window side; left to right, their letters are K, T, H. Three chairs are on the door side; left to right, D, N, E. Each chair is straight across the table from one on the other side. Read one clue at a time.

Stop 5, under the table

The photos, as they're printed:

- I: a label on the floor next to a paw print. The pie is on the table.
- L: a pet bed holding labels and a sneaker.
- T: the pie on the table, with its label.
- A: a tail wags under the tablecloth, and the label flies off the pie.

They can put the photos in order out loud by their letters, then cut and glue if they like.

Who took them?

The boxes on page 8, in order, sit over stops 3, 1, 2, 4 and 5. The name cards and the certificate need no notes.