



DEDUCEQUEST

# The Case of the Missing Blue Ribbon

*A self-checking detective gamebook — no pencil, no peeking.  
Follow the arrows. Wrong turns just make you laugh.*

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*A self-checking detective gamebook — no pencil, no peeking. Follow the arrows. Wrong turns just make you laugh.*

**Detective on duty:** \_\_\_\_\_

## How this gamebook works

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This is a gamebook, not a worksheet. You do **not** write in it and you do **not** read it straight through. Instead you make a choice, and the arrow tells you which **Station** to turn to next. Pick the right idea and you move forward through the case. Pick a wrong one and you land in a **Dead End** — a quick, silly page that shows you the clue you skipped, then bounces you right back to try again. Nobody marks you. Getting sent to a Dead End is not losing — it is how detectives learn. Some of the best sleuths in this book took every wrong turn twice.

1. Read the **Case Brief** first, then turn to the Station it sends you to.
2. At each Station, read the scene and pick the choice that a careful detective would make.
3. Follow the arrow on your choice: → **turn to Station 6** (keep going) or → **turn to Dead End D2** (a clue you missed).
4. A Dead End is never the end — it explains, then sends you back. Keep going until you reach **The Reveal**.
5. **No pencil.** The stations are scrambled on purpose, so you cannot cheat by reading the next page. Only the arrows know the way.

## Meet your detectives

| Detective         | Their move                          | What they do                                                         |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Deducia</b>    | Predict, then observe, then explain | Your host. She sets the scene and never, ever tells you the answer.  |
| <b>Cogent</b>     | Build the chain                     | Links each fact to the next until they point somewhere.              |
| <b>Reeve</b>      | Cross-reference                     | Lays two records side by side to see who could not have done it.     |
| <b>Contra</b>     | Assume the opposite                 | Takes a claim, supposes it is true, and follows it until it crashes. |
| <b>Odds</b>       | Weigh it                            | Asks how strong a clue really is before you trust it.                |
| <b>Nona</b>       | Fill the picture                    | Reads a hidden shape out of number clues.                            |
| <b>Tablo</b>      | Rule it out                         | Crosses off boxes on a grid until one answer is left standing.       |
| <b>Rulewright</b> | Form the rule                       | Turns the pattern of clues into the one story that fits them all.    |

How this gamebook works

The Case Brief

The Stations

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# The Case Brief

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**Deducia** sets the scene

The school science fair is winding down. At **3:00**, I pinned the shiny **blue First-Prize ribbon** to the prize board myself. At **3:15**, a helper shouted — the ribbon was **gone**. The pin was still stuck in the board. No blue ribbon anywhere. Three fair helpers were near the board that afternoon: **Mo**, **Pip**, and **Wren**. One of them unpinned that ribbon.



**Predict first**

Before you see a single clue, make a **prediction** — just a guess. Who do you think took it: Mo, Pip, or Wren? Hold your guess in your head. A detective predicts first, then lets the clues change her mind. That is how you catch yourself before a clue does.

→ **turn to Station 4 to begin.**

# The Stations

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Follow the arrows. The numbers are out of order on purpose — only the arrows know the path.

1

EVIDENCE

## The Sign-Out Log



Reeve leads

Reeve slides two papers together: the **timeline** (ribbon there at 3:00, gone by 3:15) and the hall's **sign-out log**. The log reads: "*Mo — signed OUT 3:00 to fetch juice — signed BACK IN 3:30.*" Reeve taps the two papers. "Cross-reference them," she says. "Lay one on top of the other. When could Mo have stood at that board?"



**Mo was signed out of the hall from 3:00 to 3:30. The ribbon vanished between 3:00 and 3:15. What does crossing the two records tell you about Mo?**

Mo was **out of the hall for the whole window** (3:00–3:15), so Mo could not have been at the board. **Clear Mo** and move on.

→ turn to **Station 6**

Mo **left in a hurry** right when the ribbon was there — that is suspicious. **Accuse Mo.**

→ turn to **Dead End D2**



Odds leads

Odds pulls out one more clue: little **Teo**, age four, said *"I saw RED by the board!"* "Careful," says Odds. "Wren wears a **red cap**. But Pip wears green. Before you jump — look up." Above the prize board hangs the huge **red PRIZE BANNER**, and a fan makes it flutter. "Weigh it," Odds says. "How strong is one small kid's glimpse of *red* right under a giant red banner?"

**Does Teo's 'I saw red' clue point to Wren?**

**No — it is weak.** A fuzzy glimpse of red, right under a big red banner, could be the banner. It does not name a person. Set it aside and keep the **strong** clue (the footprint that named Pip).

→ turn to **Station 5**

**Yes — red cap, guilty!** Teo saw red, Wren wears red. Case closed on **Wren**.

→ turn to **Dead End D4**

3

RULE IT OUT

Tablo's Grid

 **Tablo** leads

Tablo draws a grid and fills in what you have proven so far. Three columns — **At the board?** · **Had the chance (in the hall 3:00–3:15)?** · **Physical evidence?**

| Suspect | At the board?         | Had the chance?    | Physical evidence?   |
|---------|-----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Mo      | —                     | NO (signed out)    | —                    |
| Wren    | —                     | on stage 3:04–3:14 | clean shoes          |
| Pip     | YES (lied, footprint) | YES                | chalky print matches |

"Cross off every row that has a **NO**," Tablo says. "One suspect is still standing with a **YES** in every box."

**? After you cross off Mo (no chance) and Wren (on stage, clean shoes, weak red clue), who is the only suspect left with a YES in every column?**

**Pip** — the only row that is YES / YES / YES. **Pip took the ribbon.** Turn to The Reveal. → turn to **Station 7**

Go back and accuse **Wren** — the red cap still bugs me. → turn to **Dead End D5**

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## Cogent leads

Cogent lines up the two hard facts like train cars. "At **3:00** the ribbon was **pinned** to the board — Deducia saw it. At **3:15** the ribbon was **gone**, but the **pin is still there**. Link them," he says. "A pinned ribbon does not just fall off and leave its pin behind. So what is the chain telling you?"

**? The ribbon was pinned at 3:00 and gone at 3:15, with the pin left behind. What is the strongest link to draw?**

**Someone unpinned it and took it** during those 15 minutes — a person, on purpose. That is the chain. Keep building.

→ turn to **Station 1**

It probably **fell and blew away** — no big deal, no thief.

→ turn to **Dead End D1**

5

PLAY

## Nona's Picture Clue



Nona leads

Nona has a tiny **picture-logic** puzzle she found chalked under the table. Fill each row using the number clue: the number says **how many squares in that row are filled, in a row, from the left**. A filled square is ■, an empty one is □. When you finish, read the filled squares top to bottom — they spell a shape you know.

5 rows of 5 squares. Fill from the LEFT.

Clue Fill from the left →

4

□ □ □ □ □

1

□ □ □ □ □

1

□ □ □ □ □

3

□ □ □ □ □

1

□ □ □ □ □

**? This one has no wrong turn — it just proves you are in the right place. When your picture looks like a ribbon on a pin, keep going.**

My picture makes a **ribbon** — I am on the right table. **Turn to Station 3** for Tablo's grid.

→ turn to **Station 3**



## Contra leads

Contra kneels by the prize board. "Two clues," she says. "**Pip told me: 'I never went near the prize board.'** And here, right **under** the board, is a **chalky white footprint** — and only **Pip** has chalky soles, from painting the chalk mural." Contra smiles. "Watch this. Let us **assume Pip is telling the truth** and follow it."

**? Assume Pip's claim ('I never went near the board') is TRUE, and follow it. What happens?**

If Pip never went near the board, **no chalky Pip-print could be under it** — but there **is** one. That is a **contradiction**, so the claim is **false: Pip WAS at the board**. Keep going.

→ turn to **Station 2**

**Believe Pip.** She said she wasn't there, so look somewhere else for the culprit.

→ turn to **Dead End D3**

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## The Reveal — but read it twice

### Rulewright leads

You did it, detective. Rulewright forms the whole rule out of your clues:

*"Mo was signed out of the hall the entire time, so Mo is cleared. Wren was on stage from 3:04 to 3:14 with clean shoes, and the 'red' Teo saw was the giant prize banner — so Wren is cleared. That leaves Pip: a **gold** ribbon was pinned at 3:00; a chalky footprint that matches Pip's soles sits under the board; and Pip's claim of never being there contradicts that print. **Pip unpinned the ribbon.**"*

Rulewright grins. "A good detective checks her own report for a slipped fact. There is **one thing wrong** in what I just wrote. Find it before you sign off."

### Spot the slip

Read Rulewright's write-up again, slowly. One detail does **not** match the case. Which word is the planted mistake?

**? Once you have spotted the planted mistake, your case is solved. Turn to Deducia's Case Files to check your whole path.**

I named **Pip** and I caught the '**gold**' → **blue**  
slip. **Case solved!** (Check yourself in the Case Files.) → check the **Case Files**

# Dead Ends

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*A Dead End is never the end — it shows you the clue you skipped, then sends you back. No shame, no marks.*

## **D1** 🦴 **Whoops — the Case of the Blowing Ribbon**

You decided the ribbon just **fell and blew away**. But look again: the **pin is still stuck in the board**. A ribbon that blew off in the wind would take its pin, or at least flap loose — it would not leave the pin behind, empty. Something **unpinned** it. That takes fingers, not wind. → **Go back to Station 4** and build the chain again.

## **D2** 🦴 **Whoops — the Case of the Thirsty Suspect**

You accused **Mo** for leaving to fetch juice. But leaving is not the same as taking! The **sign-out log** shows Mo was **out of the hall from 3:00 to 3:30** — the ribbon vanished while Mo was gone. A person who is not in the room cannot lift a ribbon off a board. Cross-referencing clears Mo. → **Go back to Station 1**.

## **D3** 🦴 **Whoops — the Case of the Trusting Detective**

You **believed Pip's word** and moved on. Kind of you! But a claim has to **survive the hard clues**, and this one doesn't: Pip said 'never near the board,' yet Pip's own chalky footprint is **right under it**. When a claim contradicts a solid fact, the claim loses. That is Contra's whole trick. → **Go back to Station 6**.

## **D4** 🦴 **Whoops — the Case of the Big Red Banner**

You pinned it on **Wren** because of the red cap. But weigh the clue: a four-year-old glimpsed **'red' under a giant red banner**, and Wren was **on stage from 3:04 to 3:14** with **clean shoes**. One fuzzy flash of colour is weak; a footprint that names a suspect is strong. Do not let a bright colour beat a hard fact. → **Go back to Station 2**.

### **D5** **Whoops — the Case of the Crossed-Off Row**

You went back to accuse **Wren** — but Tablo's grid **already crossed Wren off**: on stage 3:04–3:14, clean shoes, and only a weak red-cap flash. A row with a **NO** in any column cannot be the one suspect with a **YES** in *every* column. The grid is the proof; do not undo it for a colour that already lost. → **Go back to Station 3.**

# Deducia's Case Files



The detective's notebook — only for after you finish

The detective's notebook — check your path here, in order. If your route matched this, you cracked it clean. If you took a Dead End or two along the way, that is exactly how it is supposed to work.

1. **Case Brief** → **Station 4**. Blue ribbon pinned at 3:00, gone (pin left) by 3:15. Suspects: Mo, Pip, Wren.
2. **Station 4 — Cogent (build the chain)**: pin left behind ⇒ someone **unpinned and took it**, on purpose, in the 15-minute window. → Station 1.
3. **Station 1 — Reeve (cross-reference)**: the sign-out log shows Mo **out of the hall 3:00–3:30** ⇒ **Mo cleared**. → Station 6.
4. **Station 6 — Contra (assume the opposite)**: assume Pip's 'never near the board' is true ⇒ no Pip-print under the board ⇒ contradicts the chalky print that matches Pip ⇒ the claim is false, **Pip was at the board**. → Station 2.
5. **Station 2 — Odds (weigh it)**: Teo's 'red' is weak (a giant red banner + a fan); it names no one. Keep the **strong** clue (Pip's print). → Station 5.
6. **Station 5 — Nona (picture clue)**: the fill spells a **ribbon on a pin** — confirms the right table. → Station 3.
7. **Station 3 — Tablo (rule it out)**: Mo = NO chance; Wren = on stage 3:04–3:14, clean shoes, weak red clue; **Pip = YES / YES / YES**. Only Pip stands. → The Reveal.
8. **Station 7 — Rulewright (the reveal)**: the write-up names **Pip** correctly, but plants one error to catch.

**Nona's picture**: Rows filled from the left (4,1,1,3,1) draw a small **ribbon rosette on a pin** — the prize itself.

## Why each Dead End was a Dead End:

- **D1**: The pin left behind rules out 'it blew away' — a person unpinned it.
- **D2**: Mo was signed out 3:00–3:30 — out of the hall the whole window, so cleared.

- **D3:** Pip's claim contradicts Pip's own footprint under the board — the claim loses.
- **D4:** 'Red' under a red banner + Wren on stage with clean shoes = a weak clue, not a culprit.
- **D5:** Tablo's grid already crossed Wren off (on stage, clean shoes) — a NO in any column can't be the all-YES suspect.



### **The planted slip**

In The Reveal, Rulewright wrote '**a gold ribbon**' — the missing ribbon was **blue**. That is the planted slip. Culprit: **Pip**.



## Sealed Case File

### **GROWN-UP PAPERWORK — BORING! DETECTIVES, SKIP THIS PAGE.**

(Psst — grown-ups, this page is for you. The 'skip it' label is a friendly trick so the young detective owns the case.)

**If they get stuck at a Station:** do not give the answer. Ask the cast member's question back to them — 'What does crossing the two records tell you?' (Reeve) or 'What happens if we assume that's true?' (Contra). The move, not the answer, is the point.

**When they land in a Dead End:** celebrate it. 'Nice — you found the clue you'd skipped.' Dead ends carry zero shame here; they are the fastest way to learn a deduction move.

**Stage a small win:** if they are close, read the scene aloud in a dramatic detective voice and pause right before the choice. Let them make the call. Then act amazed when they nail it.

**After the case:** ask 'How did you catch the planted mistake in The Reveal?' Naming their own thinking out loud is where the learning locks in.

## For the grown-up

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This gamebook practices real reasoning moves — cross-referencing, proof by contradiction, weighing evidence, and grid elimination — inside a low-stakes mystery. There are no scores and no red marks; a wrong turn routes to a friendly Dead End that explains and bounces back, so every choice ends in understanding rather than a grade.

**Wrong turns are the design, not a failure.** The self-checking dead-end loop means your detective can never truly be 'wrong' — only routed to the clue they missed. That removes the fear that stops many kids from guessing, which is exactly when reasoning grows.

**One case, many moves.** Each Station is led by a different cast member whose behaviour **is** one reasoning move (Contra = proof by contradiction, Odds = weighing evidence). Naming the move ('that was a cross-reference') helps it transfer to homework and real life.

**The reveal teaches self-checking.** The planted-error finale asks the detective to audit a correct-sounding report and catch the one slip. Checking your own conclusion against the facts is the single most transferable habit in the book.

**No timer, no penalty.** Let them take every wrong turn twice if they like. The gamebook is a calm, replayable space — there is nothing to beat and no one to beat it against.

# Your badge



## Certified Deduction Detective

This certifies that Detective

solved *The Case of the Missing Blue Ribbon* — cross-referenced the log, trapped a lie by contradiction, weighed a weak clue, ruled it out on the grid, and caught the planted mistake.

— *Deducia, Detective-Scientist, DeduceQuest*

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