Window Calendar Hunt

Original family mystery for 2-8 players plus an adult host. Host suggestion: around ages 6+ with reading help and 30-45 minutes; these are planning suggestions, not a tested completion time.

Host setup - keep this page

The host reads the answer on the last page. Draw eight numbered windows on paper; these are clue-card numbers, not calendar dates. Tell players that today is 4 December and someone replaced the picture in calendar window 4. Read cards 1-8 in order, pausing for discussion. Children may work together. No actual advent calendar, food or hidden objects are required. The four suspects are Nia the postal worker, Tess the piano teacher, Omar the baker, and Gus, whose birthday is 19 December.

Print single-sided. Role/clue cards follow. Host solution is on a separate final page.

Clue card 1

The date is 4 December. The printed master sheet says window 4 should show a STAR. It now shows a marmalade BUN with a tiny 19 on its corner.

Clue card 2

Nia put a lost mitten beside window 1. It is a real mitten pinned outside the calendar, not a picture moved between windows.

Clue card 3

Tess drew a pencil music note beside window 2 while waiting. All printed pictures use coloured ink, so her doodle did not replace a picture.

Clue card 4

Omar baked marmalade buns yesterday. Gus asked whether one could be his birthday cake. Omar replied: "Your birthday is on the nineteenth, not the fourth."

Clue card 5

The original STAR picture from window 4 is found behind the calendar. It is dry, with no flour. Someone deliberately took it out.

Clue card 6

The day-19 BUN picture has a torn lower corner. A matching paper corner marked 19 falls from Gus's pocket. Put the edges together: they match.

Clue card 7

Omar was in the bakery from 6 to 8 a.m. Nia and Tess met at the piano studio at 7 a.m. A neighbour saw Gus beside the calendar at 7 a.m., just before the swap was noticed.

Clue card 8

Gus says: "If today's window shows my birthday bun, perhaps my cake will come early." Each player now names a suspect and one printed clue before the host reveals the answer.

HOST SOLUTION - keep separate

Gus replaced the day-4 STAR with the day-19 BUN because he wanted his birthday cake early. The matching torn corner in his pocket links him to the moved picture; his conversation with Omar gives the motive; the neighbour places him there. Nia's mitten and Tess's doodle never replaced printed pictures, and Omar stayed in the bakery. Restore the STAR to window 4. Gus can apologise and the group can choose an ordinary treat without pretending the date changed.