The Hamilton House Mad-Libs

TEACHER / AUTHOROVERVIEW | GRADES 6–8

Inspired by Friends and Phantoms • Hamilton House Hauntings

Students work in pairs to supply 12 surprise words, then discover how those words transform one of three short ghost stories. All three stories use the **same list of universal words**. No matching or sorting is required.

At a glance

Duration: 20–30 minutes (plus optional sharing time).

Grouping: Pairs or individual.

Materials: One universal word list and one randomly selected story per pair, plus pencils.

Learning goals: Parts of speech, word choice, fluency, collaboration, and expressive reading.

How to run the game:

1. Give every pair the Universal Word List (page 2). Keep the story pages for now.

2. Partners invent one answer for each numbered prompt. Encourage playful but classroom-appropriate choices.

3. Randomly hand out one of the three story pages (pages 3–5) to each pair. Any story is compatible with the Universal Word List.

4. Students transfer their answers into the matching numbered blanks and read their stories together.

5. Invite volunteers to read aloud, or collect a few stories and have the author or teacher read them with students' permission.

Helpful teaching notes

Briefly review adjectives, verbs, and past tense if needed. Accept imaginative answers; remind students that each answer should fit its requested word type. Students may pass on reading aloud.

Printing: Make one copy of page 2 per pair, plus one story page per pair. Mix story pages 3–5 in any proportion.

Universal Word List

Partners: _____ Grade: _____

Write one answer for each prompt. Keep this sheet when you receive your mystery story!

1. An adjective (describing word)	_____
2. An animal	_____
3. A household object	_____
4. A name	_____
5. A food	_____
6. A verb ending in -ing	_____
7. A number	_____
8. A place	_____
9. An emotion	_____
10. A past-tense verb	_____
11. A colour	_____
12. An exclamation	_____

The Ghost in the Attic

Partners: _____

It was a particularly **(1)** _____ evening at the Hamilton House when Clair heard scratching above her, in the ceiling. She crept up the stairs to the attic and pushed open the door.

Floating beside an old trunk was a translucent **(2)** _____. It waved a **(3)** _____ in the air. Clair stared for a long moment before grinning, “Awe, you’re so cute! I’m going to call you **(4)** _____!”

It walked towards Clair. She reached out to pet it. Startled, it began **(6)** _____ around the attic, knocking dust from the rafters.

Margerate came up and gasped. “Oh my! It’s been at least **(7)** _____ years since I last saw you! I looked everywhere, in **(8)** _____!”

Clair felt **(9)** _____**.** **“**You two know each other?” The ghost **(10)** _____ with joy, turning the entire attic **(11)** _____.

“**(12)** _____!” Margaret laughed and rushed over to hug her long-lost friend. She took the **(4)** _____ from it. “Let's go downstairs.”

Finished? Read your story together. Would you like to volunteer to share it with the class?

The Midnight Séance

Partners: _____

Clair knew that holding a séance alone was a **(1)** _____ idea, but the halls of Hamilton House had become too quiet. She arranged her notes on the dining-room table and waited.

A ghost shaped like a (2) _____ burst from the fireplace, holding a (3) _____. "Greetings!" it announced. "You may call me (4) _____."

"Hello. I'm Clair. What unfinished business do you have?" Clair asked.

"I am here to deliver the ancient secret of (5) _____!" the ghost replied, then started (6) _____ across the table. "This message has been lost for **(7)** _____ years. I searched every corner of **(8)** _____ before I found you."

Clair felt **(9)** _____. She had expected a warning about a haunting, not a recipe. The ghost **(10)** _____ dramatically, and all the candles flashed **(11)** _____.

"**(12)** _____!" Clair shouted. Aunt Cleo opened the door, took one look at the dining room, and quietly closed it again.

Finished? Read your story together. Would you like to volunteer to share it with the class?

The Missing Halloween Decorations

Partners: _____

Aunt Cleo was having a **(1)** _____ morning. The Halloween decorations at Hamilton House had vanished overnight, leaving only muddy footprints and a trail of glitter.

Clair followed the trail and found a ghost shaped like a **(2)** _____ balancing a **(3)** _____ on its head. “Who are you?” she demanded.

“My name is **(4)** _____,” said the ghost. “I borrowed everything for my party. There will be music, dancing, and plenty of **(5)** _____!”

The ghost began **(6)** _____ down the hallway. “I have been planning this celebration for **(7)** _____ years! I even invited guests from **(8)** _____!”

Clair felt **(9)** _____. “You cannot take things without asking,” she said. The ghost **(10)** _____ sadly, and the hallway lights turned **(11)** _____.

“**(12)** _____!” Aunt Cleo exclaimed as she appeared behind them. Then she smiled. “Next time, just ask. We could use another ghost for the Halloween attraction.”

Finished? Read your story together. Would you like to volunteer to share it with the class?