Escape the Time Machine

Mission: the thief scrambled the time machine and locked the mascot in a box with a three-part code. Crack the three timed locks, assemble the code, whisper it, open the box, free the mascot together. The full box code is **1-6-9**. Character trait today: **Relationship Skills**.

1 · Set the Clock (5–16 min) — solve the elapsed-time puzzle, the answer is part 1

Main "Clock reads 10:00, run forward 3 hours." 10:00 + 3 = 1:00, the hour is 1. Part 1 = **1**.

Backup "It is 9:00, jump forward 4 hours." 9:00 + 4 = 1:00, the hour is 1. Part 1 = **1**.

Move 90-sec round. One teammate solves, a different teammate explains it back, team agrees before locking in. Show the hour on "reveal," don't shout it.

Diff TK–2: whole-hour jump on a drawn clock face, call the hour together on three. 3–8: multi-step (10:45 + 2h30m, back 15m = 1:00), head-to-head on a countdown, wrong guess costs the round, cracker designs a puzzle for a rival and checks it.

2 · Fix the Timeline (16–31 min) — order the numbers, the middle is part 2

Main Board: 8, 2, 10, 6, 4. In order: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10. The MIDDLE number is 6. Part 2 = **6**.

Backup Order the six steps of a time jump (power on, set year, close hatch, pull lever, land, open hatch). Last step is step 6. Part 2 = **6**.

Move Everyone places at least one number, no grabbing the marker. If they argue, coach them to listen and agree instead of shouting over each other.

Diff TK–2: three numbers (6, 2, 4), just get the order right, coach holds part 2. 3–8: two-step rule (8, 5, 10, 7, 9 -> "add 3, subtract 1, repeat" = 5, 8, 7, 10, 9) under a 30-sec shot clock; a blown clock passes the turn. Teams then design a scrambled sequence for a rival to fix.

3 · Era Cipher + Escape (31–45 min) — decode part 3, assemble the code 1-6-9

Main Write O J O F, rule "step each letter back one." O→N, J→I, O→N, F→E = NINE = 9. Part 3 = **9**.

Backup Write 14 - 9 - 14 - 5, rule "A=1, B=2 ...". Spells N-I-N-E = 9. Part 3 = **9**.

Assemble Part 1 (clock) 1, part 2 (timeline) 6, part 3 (cipher) 9. Full box code = **1-6-9**. First team to whisper it opens the box.

Diff TK–2: nine tally marks, count to 9, say the three numbers together. 3–8: mixed cipher with a decoy word (CODE = 3-15-4-5) they must ignore, sudden-death (one wrong whisper sits out the round), a student verifier from another team confirms the code before the box opens.

4 · Finale + Wristband (45–60 min)

Open Winning team assembles the code out loud ("one, six, nine!"), coach turns the key, mascot lifts out, big cheer. Optional "thief's note" inside: "You put my timeline back together. I surrender!"

Award the **Relationship Skills** trait wristband to detectives who listened, took turns, and agreed on an answer as a team ("I listened to my team", "we took turns", "we agreed before we locked it in").

3–8 For older kids and the two middle schools, run the whole hour competitive: fixed teams, score every lock on the whiteboard, visible timer each round, crown a champion here. Games bank adds **Detective Mafia** (2–3 Culprits + a Detective, 5–7 min rounds) — the one middle schoolers ask to replay.

Detective's Oath (say together, magnifiers up): I am a detective. / My brain is my best tool. / I don't guess, I reason. / I follow the clues to the truth.