Ultimate Obstacle

Mission: the thief rigged the room into one big obstacle course and locked the mascot behind it. Be steady, smart, and swift, solve the brain gates to pass, crack the finish-line code on the whiteboard, whisper the password, open the box, free the mascot. Character trait today: **Self-Management**.

1 · The Course Preview (5–16 min) — walk the five gates, teams plan their run

Gates 1 Dash (START tape, sprint to first cone). 2 Weave (5 cones/chairs, no touching). 3 Brain Gate A: unscramble P-E-T-S → **STEP**. 4 Balance line (heel-to-toe, no stepping off). 5 Brain Gate B: unscramble U-P → **UP**, then FINISH.

Plan lap Walk it slow, no timer. Teams huddle 60 sec to set runner order and who takes each brain gate. Reward thinking ahead over just charging.

Diff TK–2: coach reads each gate, tiny puzzles, helps trace the line, no timer. 3–8: tougher gates, plan under a 45-sec clock, teams design one extra brain gate for the coach to approve and add.

2 · Run the Ultimate (16–31 min) — race the course, solve gates to pass, fastest clean run wins

Run One team at a time, single file, non-contact. Time each run. Answers: Gate 3 = STEP, Gate 5 = UP. Wrong answer = pause and re-solve, never force through. A full run is about 45–75 sec.

Penalty Touch a cone or step off the balance line = +3 sec each. Fastest CLEAN run wins. Post best times on the whiteboard as you go.

Diff TK–2: no timer, coach helps at the gates, everyone finishes. 3–8: harder gates, skip penalty (+10 sec), head-to-head heats on two lanes, student timers and judges, score to the finale (3 pts fastest clean, 1 pt second), sudden-death re-run on a tie.

3 · Finish-Line Code (31–45 min) — the gate answers combine into the password

Pieces Gate 3 answer STEP, Gate 5 answer UP. Write both on the board in gate order.

Password STEP + UP = **STEPUP**. Teams lock it in, first to whisper it correctly opens the box. Backup: any two short gate answers read in order (STAY + LOW = STAYLOW).

Diff TK–2: blank line per letter, fill STEP then UP, cheer STEPUP. 3–8: pieces ciphered with a +1 Caesar shift (STEP→TUFQ, UP→VQ), beat-the-clock scoreboard, 30-sec lockout on a wrong whisper, teams design a course code for a rival and referee it.

4 · Finale + Wristband (45–60 min)

Open Winning team announces the password (STEPUP) to the room, coach turns the key, mascot lifts out, big cheer. Optional "thief's note" inside: "You out-ran my obstacle course. I surrender!"

Award the **Self-Management** trait wristband to detectives who paced the run and solved before they sprinted ("I stopped and solved the gate", "I stayed steady on the line").

3–8 For older kids and the two middle schools, run the whole hour competitive: fixed teams, score every game 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.