

Summary of the stories

The League of Redheads

Dr Watson finds Sherlock Holmes, a famous detective and his close friend, in his flat with a new client. Mr Wilson runs a shop, and wants Holmes to explain a strange series of events that has happened recently.

One day his assistant, Vincent Spaulding, shows him a newspaper advertisement placed by the League of Redheads, offering well-paid work for a redhead. Since Wilson has red hair, and his business hasn't been doing well, he decides to apply. He is interviewed by a Mr Ross and is given the job, copying a dictionary four hours a day.

Wilson does it for eight weeks, until a notice on the office door announced the closure of the league. Wilson is puzzled and annoyed. Holmes learns from him that Spaulding is a recent employee at Wilson's shop, and then recognises his description. He and Watson go to the shop and see Spaulding, noting the man's dirty trousers. Then they look at the homes and businesses around the shop.

Holmes realises that a bank robbery is planned. That night he goes with Watson, a police officer called Jones, and a bank employee called Merryweather, to the vault of a bank near Wilson's shop. They catch two men. One is Spaulding,

Level 4	
Suitable for:	young learners who have completed up to 200 hours of study in English
Type of English:	British
Headwords:	800
Key words:	15 (see pages 3 and 6 of these Teacher's Notes)
Key grammar:	adverbs (e.g. <i>carefully</i> , <i>quietly</i>), past simple, sequence words (e.g. <i>Then</i> , <i>next</i>), prepositions.

better known as the notorious criminal John Clay. Holmes has realised that Spaulding / Clay took the job in Wilson's shop, and then lured Wilson away from it with the phony job, in order to dig a tunnel from the shop to the bank vault.

The Three Students

Holmes's client in this story is Mr Soames, who lives and teaches in a college. While he is out one day, someone reads and moves an important exam paper that is in his office after Soames's servant, Bannister, accidentally leaves his key in the door. Soames thinks that someone has copied some or all of the paper. The person leaves pieces of clay on the desk, as well as pieces of a pencil.

When he visits the college with Watson, Holmes decides the pencil is blue, and asks where

Did you know ... ?

- Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, creator of Sherlock Holmes, was also a ship's surgeon, a boxer, Deputy Lieutenant of Surrey and a first-class cricketer.
- The author, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle believed in fairies and helped popularise skiing in the late 1800s when he moved to Switzerland.
- He had to ski at night because the locals used to laugh at him practising.

Bannister sat when he heard the news that someone had been in the room. Holmes finds more clay in a bedroom cupboard. He then learns that three students have rooms in the building: Gilchrist, Ras and McLaren. Holmes is interested in their heights, and he also visits two of them and looks at their pencils.

Finally, Holmes decides Gilchrist – the tallest student – could have seen the paper through the window. The clay fell from his sports shoes when he put them down. Holmes also knows that Bannister's choice of chair wasn't an accident. Bannister admits that he was hiding the gloves that Gilchrist left when he ran into the bedroom; Bannister used to work for Gilchrist's father, and loves the young man. Gilchrist is sorry about his behaviour and says that he will leave the college and go to work in Africa.

Background information

The League of Redheads (originally *The Adventure of the Red-headed League*) is one of 56 short stories written by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and one of the writer's favourites. It first appeared in a magazine in 1891, and then in a short story collection, *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, in 1892. The story has often been adapted for television.

The Three Students (originally *The Adventure of the Three Students*) appeared in Conan Doyle's collection *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*, published in 1905. This was the first collection of stories published after Sherlock Holmes 'died' in *The Final Problem*. Readers were so upset about his death that Conan Doyle brought him back to life again in these new stories.

The characters

Sherlock Holmes is a great British detective, who lives in a flat in London.

Dr Watson is Holmes's friend. He tries to help Holmes with his work, and writes accounts of the cases.

The League of Redheads

Mr Wilson is a red-headed shopkeeper and Holmes's client.

John Clay is a notorious criminal who has worked in Wilson's shop under the name Vincent Spaulding while planning a robbery.

Mr Ross is an associate of Clay's, who gives Wilson a strange job to get him away from his shop.

Officer Jones is a police officer, who helps Holmes catch Clay.

Mr Merryweather works for the bank that Clay intends to rob.

The Three Students

Mr Soames lives and works in a college.

Gilchrist is a tall student, with a love of sports.

Bannister is Mr Soames's servant. He used to work as a servant for Gilchrist's father.

Ras and **McLaren** are students who, like Gilchrist, have rooms in the same building as Mr Soames.

Topics and themes

Pointless jobs In the first story, Wilson spends four hours a day copying a dictionary. Ask students what Wilson must think of this job while he is doing it. Why does he do it? What is the real reason for the job? Can students think of pointless tasks that they do at home? They might, for example, think that it is pointless tidying a bedroom that will soon be untidy again. Are there any adult jobs that they think are pointless?

Crime In the same story, a crime is planned. Ask students to explain what the crime is and how the criminals hoped to succeed. How should a man like Clay be punished? Ask students to brainstorm other crimes, and then to order them from most to least serious.

Key words

(see page 6 of these Teacher's Notes for the Key words in context)

ago (adv)	mistake (n)
catch (v)	page (n)
copy (v)	pay (v)
cupboard (n)	save (v)
detective (n)	strange (adj)
exam (n)	student (n)
excellent (adj)	thief (n)
lazy (adj)	

Famous detectives and their work People come to see Sherlock Holmes because he is famous for his work. Ask students how he solves the mysteries in these two stories. Have they seen any film or television versions of Sherlock Holmes stories? Can they tell the stories? Do they know any other fictional detectives? What kind of problems do those detectives solve? Do they also have an assistant like Dr Watson?

Cheating In the second story, a student tries to cheat before an exam. Ask students how he does this. Does he plan it in advance? Why do people cheat? How do teachers and other students feel about exam cheats? Why?

Loyalty In the second story, Bannister is so loyal to Gilchrist and his family that he helps to conceal Gilchrist's cheating. How does he do this? Is this behaviour right? Do students feel loyalty for their friends and family? Who do they feel most loyalty towards? What would they do for that person?

Class Activities (After Reading)

Here are some activities to do with your class after reading *Sherlock Holmes Stories*.

1. Comic book creation

Materials: large sheets of blank paper or card; coloured pens and pencils

- Ask students to take a section of one of the Sherlock Holmes stories and make a storyboard of it, using pictures. They then add speech bubbles and add the dialogue of the story, using their own words.
- If different groups take different parts of the story, this could become a large classroom display, covering the whole book.

2. Finding clues

Materials: everyday objects to be placed around the classroom (such as umbrella, keys, hat, plant, cushion, teddy bear)

- In preparation for this activity write the word *clues* on the board and elicit from students what the word means (in L1). Go through both of the stories to list the clues that helped Sherlock Holmes to find the culprits in the stories.
- Depending on class size, divide the class into two or more teams. Then tell students there are a variety of objects placed around the classroom. Teams take it in turns to choose an object (without identifying it to the other team). One team then gives the opposing team a clue to the object; the opposing team must try to guess what the object is and point to it in the class.
- For example, if the team chooses an umbrella they could give clues such as:

*We often use it in (autumn) and we only sometimes use it in (summer).
You can buy small or big ones.
It keeps us dry.
Mine is (spotty / red / colourful)
It covers my head.*

- Allow three tries only. If the opposing team finds the object, they win a point; if they don't, the point goes to the team giving the clues.
- Continue with each team taking it in turn to give the clues.

3. Detective badges

Materials: digital camera; trench coat (if possible); paper and pens

- Create a detective ID badge using paper folded in two (cut to the appropriate size). Take a photo of each student wearing the trench coat or get students to bring in their own photos to create their ID badge.
- Students can choose a new detective name for themselves if they wish. Have students create a description of themselves to include height, hair colour, distinctive features (glasses / scar), and the languages they speak (their own language and English). They can also record any skills they have (e.g. can ride a bike very quickly, good swimmer).
- Have students introduce themselves showing their finished badges and giving the information they have recorded on it.

4. Story mapping poster

- Encourage students to vote on which story they prefer in the *Sherlock Holmes Stories* and use that as the basis for this activity.
- Write the following words on the board and check students understand each heading:
characters
setting
problem
clues / information
outcome
- Brainstorm together as a class to agree on the information under the heading for *setting* for each story. Students work in small groups to complete the information under the other headings for the story they have chosen.

- Students then create a poster which is visual representation of the story, using the information they have listed under the headings as a basis. In groups, students draw and label the key elements from the story.
- Display the posters around the classroom and ask group members to retell the story in their own words, giving one section to each group depending on the number of groups there are.

Key words

- ago** He showed me this advertisement eight weeks ago. (p. 4)
- catch** Holmes quickly caught the first man. (p. 12)
- copy** A student took one page at a time to the table by the window and started copying. (p. 17)
- cupboard** Holmes opened a cupboard door. (p. 18)
- detective** ‘You saved the bank tonight. You really are a great detective.’ (p. 12)
- exam** Today, I left an important exam paper on my desk and went out. (p. 14)
- excellent** Gilchrist is an excellent student who enjoys sport. (p. 18)
- lazy** McLaren is lazy and has problems with exams. (p. 18)
- mistake** My servant, Bannister, left his key there by mistake. (p. 14)
- page** The exam paper had three pages. (p. 15)
- pay** You bring the writing paper and we pay you at the end of every week. (p. 6)
- save** You saved the bank tonight. (p. 12)
- strange** Yes, it was strange – but the money was good! (p. 4)
- student** After you came back, the student hid here. (p. 18)
- thief** We have to stop a thief – tonight! (p. 10)

While-Reading activities

Activity 1 (pages 3–7)

Who said it? Match the sentences to the people.



Mr Ross



Sherlock Holmes



Mr Wilson

Come in, Watson.

It began with this ...

The job's yours.

That night I couldn't sleep.

Activity 2 (pages 8–10)

Rewrite each sentence or question in the correct order.

a me. was to job important That

.....

b did in he shop? start When your working

.....

c Spaulding? you describe Can

.....

d carefully the Holmes square. round looked

.....

e Holmes. stop a have thief said to 'We tonight!'

.....

Activity 3 (pages 11–13)

Read and write *T* (True) or *F* (False).

- a** Watson came home and found four men with Sherlock Holmes. ☐
- b** Officer Jones knows a thief called John Clay. ☐
- c** The policeman caught the first man and Sherlock Holmes caught the second man. ☐
- d** Mr Merryweather thinks Dr Watson is a great detective. ☐
- e** Clay made a tunnel from the shop to the bank. ☐

Activity 4 (pages 14–16)

Match the questions and answers. Draw lines.

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| 1 Where does Mr Soames live and work? | a An exam paper. |
| 2 What did Mr Soames leave in his office? | b Three pages. |
| 3 What did Mr Bannister leave? | c At the college. |
| 4 How many pages did the exam paper have? | d On Mr Soames' desk. |
| 5 Where were the three little balls of clay? | e A key. |



Activity 5 (pages 17–22)

Find the incorrect word. Then rewrite the sentences and make any other changes necessary.

a Which sofa did Mr Bannister sit in?

.....

b How much students use the stairs outside your door?

.....

c Gilchrist is a terrible student who enjoys sports.

.....

d Holmes asked them for a pencil and looked on the two pencils carefully.

.....

e ‘Only a very tall man could seeing the exam paper from outside, through your window,’ Holmes said.

.....

f ‘I’m not going to stay at college. I’m going to go and work in America.’

.....



After-Reading activities

Activity 1

Choose the best word to complete the sentences.

advertisement assistant college detective dictionary exam
job office problems servant shop student

Sherlock Holmes is a famous ¹_____. He helps people with their ²_____.

Wilson saw a newspaper ³_____ and got a strange ⁴_____. He had to sit in an ⁵_____ and copy a ⁶_____. He left his ⁷_____, Spaulding, in his ⁸_____.

Soames lives and works in a ⁹_____. One of his students copied an ¹⁰_____ paper – but which ¹¹_____
Does Soames's ¹²_____, Bannister, know?

Activity 2

Who or what did Sherlock Holmes think of when he saw or heard about these? Match.

The League of Redheads

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 a scar | a a thief |
| 2 a bank | b an underground tunnel |
| 3 dirty trousers | c John Clay |

The Three Students


- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 4 a high window | d a pencil |
| 5 little balls of clay | e a tall student |
| 6 pieces of wood and lead | f a sports ground |

Activity 3

What does a detective need? Choose and draw the items.

You can also add your own.

shop notebook student magnifying glass a friend key gloves
exam paper underground tunnel



Activity 4

Answer the questions.

a Do you like reading detective stories?

.....

.....

b Can you describe Dr Watson and Sherlock Holmes?

.....

.....

c Do you know of any other famous detectives?

.....

.....

d Can you name any other types of stories?

.....

.....

e Think of one of your favourite stories. Describe what happens in it.

.....

.....

Answer Key

In the back of the Reader

Before You Read

- 1 1 a Sherlock Holmes b
b Dr Watson a
c Mr Wilson c
d Mr Wilson c
e Sherlock Holmes b
- 2 a Dr Watson b Sherlock Holmes c Mr Wilson
- 3 Students' own answers.

After You Read

- 1 a 5 b 3 c 4 d 1 e 6 f 2
- 2 a Soames b Bannister c Gilchrist d Bannister
e Gilchrist f Holmes g Watson
- 3 Possible answers
- a Spaulding / Clay wanted to get Wilson away from the shop. Wilson had very red hair, so Spaulding and his friend made a job for a redhead.
- b After Holmes heard about Spaulding's scar, he thought of Clay. Clay was a famous thief, so Holmes had an idea about Clay's plan.
- c Only a tall person could see the exam paper through the window, from outside Soames's room.
- d Bannister worked for Gilchrist's father and loved the young man.

In these Teacher's Notes

While-Reading activities

Activity 1

'Come in, Watson.' – Sherlock Holmes
'It began with this ...' – Mr Wilson
'The job's yours.' – Mr Ross
'That night I couldn't sleep.' – Mr Wilson

Activity 2

- a That job was important to me.
b When did he start working in your shop?
c Can you describe Spaulding?
d Holmes looked carefully round the square.
e 'We have to stop a thief tonight!' said Holmes.

Activity 3

a F b T c F d F e T

Activity 4

1 c 2 a 3 e 4 b 5 d

Activity 5

- a Which **chair** did Mr Bannister sit in?
b How **many** students use the stairs outside your door?
c Gilchrist is a **an excellent** student who enjoys sports.
d Holmes asked them for a pencil and looked **at** the two pencils carefully.
e 'Only a very tall man could **see** the exam paper from outside, through your window,' Holmes said.
f 'I'm not going to stay at college. I'm going to go and work in **Africa**.'

After-Reading activities

Activity 1

1 detective 2 problems 3 advertisement 4 job
5 office 6 dictionary 7 assistant 8 shop
9 college 10 exam 11 student 12 servant

Activity 2

1 a 2 c 3 b 4 e 5 f 6 d

Activity 3

Students' own answers.

Activity 4

Students' own answers.