

Individual Learning Packet

Teaching Unit

*Six Great Sherlock  
Holmes Stories*

by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

written by Ashlin Bray

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## *Six Great Sherlock Holmes Stories*

### Objectives

By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:

1. differentiate between the author and the narrator.
2. use textual clues to anticipate action and deductions.
3. discuss the relationship between Holmes and Watson, noting the use of Watson as a foil, as an instrument of public relations, and as an informed observer.
4. evaluate how the practice and status of physicians has changed since the period of the Holmes stories in this edition (1892-1905).
5. cite examples from the stories to discuss social and class changes since the period of the stories.
6. focus on “A Scandal in Bohemia” and “The Adventure of the Speckled Band” to discuss Holmes’ attitude toward women in general.
7. discuss how these early examples of detective fiction have influenced modern detective fiction, TV shows, and/or movies featuring crime and detection.
8. cite conventions that have come to be associated with detective fiction, including the less-than-brilliant assistant, the bumbling detective, the use of “red herrings,” and the use of stereotypes to convey information.
9. locate examples of irony in the text, discuss its links to humor, and its use to strengthen characterization.
10. cite literary references from the text and discuss their appropriateness.
11. use “The Red-Headed League” and “The Adventure of the Engineer’s Thumb” as a springboard for a discussion of gullibility.
12. debate the proposition that Conan Doyle always expected to write more Sherlock Holmes stories after “The Final Problem,” using links between that story and “The Adventure of the Empty House” as the basis of the argument.
13. define the vocabulary words listed in the study guide.
14. discuss Holmes’ evaluation of the ability of the London police force.
15. pull examples from several stories to address universal themes including the power of greed, character as destiny, and the value of friendship.
16. demonstrate a greater understanding of customs and outlooks in England during the period 1880-1910.

# Six Great Sherlock Holmes Stories

## Study Guide Teacher Edition

### Note

#### Vocabulary

omniscient – knowing everything

conversant – acquainted with

relevant – pertaining to

resuscitate – to bring back to life; rescue

1. What was Sherlock Holmes' career?

*Sherlock Holmes was a private detective.*

2. Why did the author plan Holmes' death?

*The author wanted to write about subjects other than Holmes, so he decided that Holmes would die in a story.*

3. Why did Conan Doyle return to writing about Holmes?

*The public demanded more Holmes stories; Conan Doyle realized that Holmes was the key to his success.*

4. What is unusual about how the author's name is used?

*Although the author's name is Arthur Conan Doyle, the last two elements of this name, Conan Doyle, are considered his last name. The title "Sir" was conferred on him when he became a knight, an honor given to him because of his importance as a writer.*

## A Scandal in Bohemia

### Vocabulary

eclipses – blocks from view

predominates – controls, rules

abhorrent – repulsive, hateful

gibe – a spiteful or hurtful remark

intrusion – an invasion of another's privacy

dubious – uncertain, unreliable

loathed – hated

Bohemian – unconventional

cocaine – an addictive drug derived from the opium poppy

spirit case – a liquor cabinet

gasogene – a system for carbonating beverages

incorrigible – unable to be improved, incurable

malignant – evil, sinister

slavey – the underclass of servants

iodoform – an early anesthesia

nitrate of silver – a compound used as an antiseptic

trifling – unworthy, insignificant

half a crown – a low price

Gazetteer – an atlas

Wallenstein – an Austrian general

brougham – a closed coach

guinea – a gold coin

Boswell – a biographer who wrote about Samuel Johnson

astrakhan – a looped wool made to resemble fur

brooch – a large pin

beryl – a semiprecious stone

opulence – richness, showiness

vizard – a face mask worn as a disguise or to protect the wearer

hanging lip – a loose and dominant lower lip, similar to the Hapsburg lip that characterized members of that royal family

incisive – quick-thinking, sharp

condescend – to lower oneself

hereditary – attaining by birth, not by merit

incognito – disguised

docketing – listing, documenting

compromising – dishonoring, jeopardizing (a reputation)

carte blanche – a French expression meaning *blank check*; having license to act at will

chamois – a soft leather

exalted – superior

subtle – indirect

inextricable – tangled

## Vocabulary (Cont.)

**freemasonry** – a friendly companionship

**bijou** – French term meaning *jewel-like* or *pretty*

**mews** – an area where horses are kept and cared for

**ostlers** – those who care for horses

**half and half** – a mixture of half lager (light beer) and half stout (dark beer)

**Inner Temple** – one of the London areas where lawyers have their offices

**landau** – a four-wheeled carriage with a convertible-style top

**expostulating** – explaining or objecting in a heated or emotional way

**preposterous** – ridiculous

**smoke-rocket** – a smoke bomb used by plumbers to locate leaks in pipes

**Nonconformist** – a Protestant but not a member of the Church of England

**Mr. John Hare** – a famous Nonconformist clergyman

**succinct** – brief, short, concise

**scissors-grinder** – a man who went from house to house sharpening scissors and knives

**copper** – a penny

**marm** – a title of respect

**compunction** – qualms or reservations

**ulster** – a loose, full-length cloak

1. How does the narrator describe Holmes?

*The narrator calls Holmes "...the most perfect reasoning and observing machine that the world has seen..." The narrator goes on to describe Holmes as coldly logical and unaffected by love or any other "...distracting factor that might throw a doubt upon all his mental results." (Pg 1)*

2. Why has the narrator seen little of Holmes lately?

*The narrator, who formerly shared lodgings with Holmes, has married and moved out.*

3. What serious problem does Holmes have?

*Holmes is a regular cocaine user.*

4. What is the background of the narrator? How does the reader learn his name?

*The narrator is a doctor with his own practice; this is a civil practice, indicating that he was formerly a military doctor. The reader learns his name, Watson, when he is greeted by Holmes.*