between the lines

A lesson written for every student in the room

FREE LESSON SAMPLER

Detective fiction: Sherlock Holmes: Seeing and observing

How does Conan Doyle show that Holmes thinks differently from Watson?

Lesson 3 of 14 from the scheme of learning

Teacher notes, slides and student pages at all three levels

Written for the English national curriculum at Key Stage 3



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What is in this sampler

This is one complete lesson from our Detective fiction: Sherlock Holmes scheme for Year 8. It comes exactly as it appears in the full scheme, so you can teach it next week and see how our lessons work.

Teacher notes	Timings with slide numbers, Do Now answers, the exploded quotation, the hinge question and what each answer tells you, the task at three levels, a model paragraph and notes on misconceptions and adapting the lesson (next pages).
Slides	The editable PowerPoint deck for Lesson 3, with teacher notes on every slide (separate file).
Student pages	The lesson's pages from the student booklet: one question, with the Securing, Strengthening and Soaring support side by side (at the end of this document).

How every lesson works

Know	Do Now from memory, vocabulary, then the reading. The five Do Now questions build on what students learned in Lessons 1 and 2 of the full scheme.
Apply	Explode one quotation together; a hinge question checks understanding.
Master	One shared question answered as a What–How–Why paragraph, with Securing, Strengthening and Soaring support; then a model paragraph and an exit ticket.

Three levels of support

Every student answers the same question in every lesson. What changes is the support on the page, so the whole class does the same lesson:

Securing	The most support: a word bank, a choice of quotations, a worked example and sentence starters.
Strengthening	Some support: prompts for What, How and Why, a planner and a checklist.
Soaring	The most challenge: a debatable statement, prompts to think further and an argument planner.

The names describe the support, never the student. The hinge question shows who might start where, and students move between levels from lesson to lesson.

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In the full scheme

- 14 lessons like this one, with editable slides and a teacher handbook (lesson notes, unit map, assessment guide and knowledge bank)
- A student booklet with every lesson and all three levels of support, plus the same lessons as one pack per level
- Six weeks of independent practice homework at three levels
- A checkpoint (Feedback Loop kit) with a whole-class feedback sheet and improvement tasks
- A two-part end-of-unit assessment with a teacher guide, band guidance and annotated models
- A catch-up sheet for every lesson, for students who missed it
- An inclusion guide: pre-teaching, SEND, EAL and pupil premium notes for every lesson

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Lesson 3: Seeing and observing

SEQUENCE 1: BAKER STREET AND THE CITY: 'A SCANDAL IN BOHEMIA', 'THE RED-HEADED LEAGUE' AND 'THE BLUE CARBUNCLE' · 60 MINUTES

How does Conan Doyle show that Holmes thinks differently from Watson?

By the end of the lesson, students can

- Explain how Holmes reasons from small details and how Watson reacts
- Link the difference between seeing and observing to Watson as narrator
- Write a What–How–Why paragraph on how Conan Doyle shows Holmes thinking differently from Watson

Lesson at a glance

Time	Phase	What happens	Slides
0–8	Know	Do Now: five quick questions on Lessons 1 and 2. Students check their answers from the answer slide.	2–3
8–18	Know	Pre-teach "deduction", "observation", "inference" and "contrast". Read the extract aloud while students follow and underline every detail Holmes notices about Watson.	4–6
18–28	Apply	Explode the quotation together. Think aloud about the two verbs and the word "but", then students annotate their copy. Before you reveal any notes, students try the four empty boxes on the first explode slide, on their own or after you model one box.	7–8
28–33	Apply	Hinge question on mini-whiteboards. Use the answers to decide who starts on which level of support.	9–10
33–53	Master	Students write one What–How–Why paragraph using their level of support in the student booklet. Share the model paragraph in the last five minutes.	11–12
53–60	Master	Exit ticket. Collect and sort into three piles to plan the start of the next lesson.	13

Do Now answers

1	What job did the League pay Mr Wilson to do?	Copy out the Encyclopedia Britannica
2	What does Holmes call a puzzle that needs a great deal of thinking?	A three pipe problem
3	In which magazine did the Holmes stories first appear?	The Strand Magazine
4	Who tells almost every Holmes story?	Dr Watson, Holmes's friend
5	What is Scotland Yard?	The headquarters of London's police

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Vocabulary

deduction	working out a fact by reasoning from clues
observation	noticing something carefully and thinking about what it means
inference	a conclusion that you reach from evidence, not from being told
contrast	a clear difference between two things placed side by side

Reading

‘A Scandal in Bohemia’, Part 1: Holmes explains

Dr Watson, now married and working as a doctor again, visits Holmes one night in March 1888. Holmes looks him over and says that he has been out in the wet and has a careless servant girl. Watson asks how he knows. Holmes explains.

> “It is simplicity itself,” said he; “my eyes tell me that on the inside of your left shoe, just where the firelight strikes it, the leather is scored by six almost parallel cuts. Obviously they have been caused by someone who has very carelessly scraped round the edges of the sole in order to remove crusted mud from it. Hence, you see, my double deduction that you had been out in vile weather, and that you had a particularly malignant boot-slitting specimen of the London slavey. As to your practice, if a gentleman walks into my rooms smelling of iodoform, with a black mark of nitrate of silver upon his right forefinger, and a bulge on the right side of his top-hat to show where he has secreted his stethoscope, I must be dull, indeed, if I do not pronounce him to be an active member of the medical profession.”
>
> I could not help laughing at the ease with which he explained his process of deduction. “When I hear you give your reasons,” I remarked, “the thing always appears to me to be so ridiculously simple that I could easily do it myself, though at each successive instance of your reasoning I am baffled until you explain your process. And yet I believe that my eyes are as good as yours.”
>
> “Quite so,” he answered, lighting a cigarette, and throwing himself down into an armchair. “You see, but you do not observe.

Arthur Conan Doyle, ‘A Scandal in Bohemia’ (1891), Part 1

Word help **scored**: marked with cuts · **slavey**: an old slang word for a servant girl · **iodoform**: a strong-smelling chemical once used to clean wounds · **nitrate of silver**: a chemical doctors used, which stains skin black · **baffled**: completely puzzled

Explode the quotation

Method
A contrast set up by the word “but”. Two short clauses balance each other, so the line sounds like a rule Holmes has learned by heart.

Zoom in
The verbs “see” and “observe” sound close, but Holmes gives them different meanings. Seeing is looking. Observing is looking and thinking.

“You see, but you do not observe”

Effect
Watson sees everything and still understands little. Readers feel the sting of the remark and want to learn how to observe.

Purpose
Conan Doyle makes Holmes teach the reader. The line becomes a rule that every later case tests.

Hinge question

Why does Watson laugh when Holmes explains how he knew?

A. Once Holmes explains, the deductions seem very simple. **(the right answer)**

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B. Holmes has just told a joke.

C. Holmes has got the facts wrong.

What the answers tell you

B means the student reads the laugh as a reaction to humour: ask what Watson says next about the reasons seeming "ridiculously simple". C means the student thinks Holmes is wrong: ask whether Watson says that, or says he is baffled until Holmes explains. These may be your students who start on Securing.

Why the answer is right

Watson laughs because the reasons sound so simple once Holmes has given them, yet he could not find them himself.

Master task

How does Conan Doyle show that Holmes thinks differently from Watson in this extract?

Securing the most support

Quotations to choose from

"It is simplicity itself"

"the leather is scored by six almost parallel cuts"

"I am baffled until you explain your process"

Starters

Conan Doyle shows that Holmes ____ while Watson ____. Holmes says, "____". The ____ (adjective) ____ (word class) "____" shows ____. Conan Doyle wants readers to ____ because ____.

Strengthening some support

Prompts

What: Make a clear point about how Holmes thinks and how Watson thinks.

How: Choose a quotation from Holmes and one from Watson. Name the method and zoom in on one word. Then say how the extract changes: Watson laughs, admits he is baffled, and Holmes turns to the steps.

Why: Think about why Conan Doyle lets Watson tell the story. What does he want readers to feel about Holmes?

Soaring the most challenge

The debate

"This extract makes Watson look foolish."

Write two paragraphs. In the first, argue for the statement. In the second, begin with "However" and test the statement against the extract.

Model paragraph

What	Conan Doyle shows that Holmes thinks differently from Watson by making Holmes reason from tiny details while Watson only looks.
How	Holmes notices that "the leather is scored by six almost parallel cuts". The exact number "six" shows an eye that counts, and the careful adverb "almost" shows that he measures before he judges. Watson, in contrast, admits "I am baffled until you explain your process". The strong adjective "baffled" shows a mind that cannot follow.
Why	Conan Doyle lets readers share Watson's confusion and then rewards them with Holmes's explanation. We admire Holmes more, and we want to learn how to observe like him.

Exit ticket

Holmes thinks differently from Watson because…

Teacher notes

Subject knowledge

'A Scandal in Bohemia' was the first Holmes story in The Strand, in July 1891, and it is set on 20 March 1888. Watson is married and in practice again. Holmes reasons from small physical facts: scratches on a shoe, a smell, a stain, a bulge in a hat. Watson narrates, so readers share his puzzlement before Holmes

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