

The Norwood Builder by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle Chapter 2

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Level: Intermediate

Age: Young adults / Adults

Time: 45 minutes (60 with optional activity)

Aims: In this lesson, the students will:

1. write some questions with which to interrogate the suspect;
2. learn some key vocabulary and discuss how it might relate to the story;
3. listen for gist and detail;
4. become more aware of, and practise, the pronunciation of *-ed* words (optional activity);
5. practise interrogating one another.

Materials: One copy of the worksheet per student; Track 1 (full audio) and Track 2 (a short extract from Chapter 2) downloaded from onestopenglish; one copy of full transcript per student

Summary: A young lawyer comes to Sherlock Holmes in desperate need of his help. John Hector McFarlane is the main suspect in the murder of Jonas Oldacre, a builder from Norwood. He claims he did not commit the crime. Holmes is interested and takes on his case. In Chapter 2, Inspector Lestrade arrests McFarlane in Holmes's apartment, but Holmes asks the inspector to let McFarlane speak before they take him away. Lestrade gives him just half an hour to tell his side of the story.

Writing

Aims: to prepare for listening; to create a reason for listening

1. Quickly recap the story in Chapter 1 by asking the class to summarize what they remember. You can ask them for the names of the characters, the details of the crime and anything else that they remember. Make sure the following elements of the story come up:

- McFarlane's visit to Norwood;
- the walking stick;
- the fire;
- the safe.

2. Put the students into groups of three or four. Ask them to imagine that they are Sherlock Holmes. They should write a series of questions to ask McFarlane. Each member of the group should write down the questions because they will need a copy of the questions for the next stage. Provide them with a list of sentence stems to prompt them and help them construct their questions:

- *How did you ...?*
- *What were you doing when / after / before ...?*

- *How do you explain ...?*
- *What did you do after ...?*
- *Why did you ...?*

3. Regroup the students so that they are now sitting with classmates from the other groups – for example, students AAAA, BBBB, CCC, DDD → students ABCD, AABCD, ABBCD.

Give them a couple of minutes to share their questions with one another so that they have as many different questions as possible. Tell them to put the questions aside for the time being. Before they listen to the story, they are going to do some vocabulary work. (See the next activity.)

Vocabulary

Aims: to pre-teach vocabulary that is key to understanding Chapter 2; to predict the story before listening

1. Hand out one worksheet for every two or three students to encourage group work and discussion. Ask them to look at the words from the vocabulary activity and, in groups, discuss the meanings with each other and how the words might relate to the story. Give them two or three minutes for this.

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2. Get the class's attention. Invite students to suggest which of the words go together (e.g. *will*, *witness* and *seal*) and why they think they are in the story.

3. Have students complete sentences 1 to 4 with the words from the box.

Key: 1. *express train*; *points*; 2. *on trial*; *proof*; 3. *will*; *witness*; 4. *clerks*; *draft*; *(wax) seal*

Listening 1

Aim: listening for gist

1. Remind the students of the questions they wrote at the beginning of the lesson. Explain that they are going to listen to McFarlane's version of the story. As they listen, they should put a tick next to any questions that are answered. Reassure them that they will get a chance to listen again and that all that they have to do, at this point, is decide whether their questions are answered (they should not write down the answers). Play Track 1.

2. When they have heard the audio, ask individuals which questions they think were answered. Don't confirm these but ask the rest of the class whether they agree.

Listening 2

Aims: to listen for detail

1. Put the students into pairs. Explain that they are going to listen a second time and make a note of the answers to each question. Before they do, they should work together to try to make notes on the answers using what they can remember from their first hearing of Track 1, before they listen again. Give them enough time to write what they can.

2. Play Track 1 again. When it has finished, let them confer again with their partner and share information.

3. For feedback, ask students to volunteer one question and the notes that they made relating to it. Use this as an opportunity to check understanding by probing further. For example, *Has anyone else got more*

information about this question? Does everyone agree with Yukiko here?

4. Hand out the transcript for everyone to check their answers.

Language: pronunciation of -ed (optional)

Aim: to raise awareness of the different pronunciations of the -ed ending and practise saying them

1. Hand out extra worksheets so that every student has one. Point to the language activity. Tell the students that words that end in -ed, such as regular past simple verbs, are pronounced in three different ways. Ask if anyone knows the three ways. Draw a table with three columns on the board and label the columns /d/, /t/ and /ɪd/.

2. Focus their attention on the short extract on the worksheet. Tell them that the -ed endings in the three words in bold are pronounced differently. Get them to say the verbs to themselves to decide which is pronounced /t/, which /d/ and which /ɪd/. Then, play Track 2 at least once. Elicit the correct pronunciations and write the words in the correct column on the board.

Key: /d/ *surprised*; /t/ *finished*; /ɪd/ *wanted*

3. Drill the three words with and without the -ed endings; point out the voiced and voiceless endings of *surprise* and *finish* respectively, and how voiced endings are followed by the voiced /d/ and voiceless endings are followed by the voiceless /t/. Show how words ending in either a /t/ or /d/ (such as *want* and *need*) are followed by an extra syllable: /ɪd/. If you feel that the whole class needs more practice before trying to categorize words on their own, choose three more words from the box on the worksheet to further demonstrate the rules.

4. Ask the students to look at the categorization activity on the worksheet and have them put the words from the story into the correct columns. They can do this in pairs or small groups if you are not

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confident that they have all fully understood the rules. Go around the groups carefully checking their answers, clarifying the rules and, crucially, listening to check whether students are pronouncing the words correctly.

4. Ask one student at a time to come up to the board and write a word into the correct column. Ask the rest of the class if they think the word has been written into the correct column and confirm the correct answer. When all the words are on the board, drill the words chorally and individually, focusing on their pronunciation of *-ed*.

Key:

/d/	/t/	/ɪd/
<i>arrived</i>	<i>asked</i>	<i>decided</i>
<i>happened</i>	<i>finished</i>	<i>executed</i>
<i>owned</i>	<i>helped</i>	<i>reminded</i>
<i>opened</i>	<i>stopped</i>	<i>wanted</i>
<i>killed</i>	<i>talked</i>	
<i>signed</i>		
<i>stayed</i>		
<i>surprised</i>		

Speaking

Aims: to consolidate students' understanding of the plot so far; to get into character; to practise the pronunciation of regular past verbs

1. Explain that they are now going to take on the characters of Inspector Lestrade and John McFarlane, and act out the interrogation back at the police station. Before they start, ask the class:

- whether Lestrade believes McFarlane is innocent or guilty (*guilty*);
- what he wants McFarlane to do during the interview (*confess*);
- to imagine how McFarlane feels about being questioned again.

Remind them of the questions they wrote at the start of the lesson and suggest that they use these questions in the interview.

2. Put the students into pairs and assign each person a role as either Lestrade or McFarlane. Give them five minutes to role-play the interrogation. As they are speaking, monitor their performance, listening for a good understanding of the plot and the details of the crime, and for correct pronunciation of regular past verbs.

3. Stop the interrogations after 5 minutes. Give them some feedback about their performance. Then, tell them to swap roles and do the interview a second time. When they have done this, too, give any feedback and finish the lesson.

Follow-up tasks

- The students record themselves reading Chapter 2, or parts of it, focusing on the pronunciation of *-ed* endings. They listen to the recordings and evaluate their pronunciation using the columns on the worksheet.
- Students write statements as John McFarlane, either a signed confession for the murder of Jonas Oldacre or a statement of innocence. They should do this from memory (rather than copying out the transcript).

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Vocabulary

Look at these words and phrases from Chapter 2. Discuss in groups how you think these words relate to the story.

on trial If you are on trial, the judge and lawyers in a court of law are deciding whether you are guilty or innocent.

will a legal document that explains what you want to happen to your money and possessions after you die

draft something such as a plan or letter that you may change before you finish it

clerk someone whose job is to look after the documents in an office

witness someone who watches you sign an official document and then signs it to state that they have watched you

proof information or evidence that shows that something is definitely true

points a section of a railway where a train can cross from one track to another

express train a train that makes a particular journey more quickly than ordinary trains, usually because it stops at fewer stations

wax seal a special mark that you put on something, for example a document, to show that it is legal or official

Complete the sentences with the words from the box above.

1. The _____ had to slow down when it came to the _____.
2. He's _____ for murder but the prosecuting lawyers have no _____ that he is guilty.
3. You can't sign your _____ on your own. You need a _____ to be there and sign it, too.
4. One of the office _____ wrote the first _____. Then, the lawyer in charge of the case checked it, signed it and put the firm's _____ on the envelope. It's all official.

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Language: pronunciation of **-ed**

Listen carefully to the extract. Which **-ed** word in bold ends with an /ɪd/ sound? Which ends with a /d/ sound? Which ends with a /t/ sound?

But when I'd **finished** reading, I was very **surprised**. Mr Oldacre **wanted** to leave all his money and everything he owned to me!

Put the following words from the story in the correct column.

arrived	asked	decided
executed	finished	helped
killed	happened	owned
reminded	opened	stopped
signed	stayed	wanted
surprised	talked	

/d/	/t/	/ɪd/

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Track 1

Holmes does not think that Lestrade is a very good detective but he is always polite to him. He has often helped Lestrade with cases which have puzzled the Scotland Yard detective.

‘Lestrade, **will you be kind enough to** let Mr McFarlane finish his story before you take him away?’ Holmes asked. ‘Half an hour is all we ask.’

‘Well, you’ve helped me in the past, Mr Holmes,’ the policeman replied. ‘I’d like to help you now. I’ll give you half an hour. But it won’t help Mr McFarlane, you know. The evidence against him is very strong. He’ll soon be **on trial** for murder. And you know what happens to murderers, Mr Holmes. They are executed!’

Lestrade always reminded me of a bulldog. He was short and ugly and he was always ready for a fight. But now, he sat down. He had decided to listen to the young lawyer’s story.

‘Yesterday afternoon, I had a visitor at my office near London Bridge station,’ McFarlane began. ‘The man arrived at about three o’clock. I’d never seen him before. He told me that his name was Jonas Oldacre and that he wanted me to write his **will** for him. He took from his pocket some pieces of paper on which he had written a **draft** of the will. He simply wanted me to write it out again in the correct legal way.’

‘I read through his draft – it wasn’t easy because his writing was very hard to read,’ the young man went on. ‘But when I’d finished reading, I was very surprised. Mr Oldacre wanted to leave all his money and everything he owned to me! Of course, I asked him why he wanted to do that. He didn’t know me and I didn’t know him. He told me that he knew my parents many years ago, and although he no longer saw them, he wanted to please them. He’d asked people who knew me if I was an honest man. He’d heard good things about me, and he had no family of his own, so he thought that I should have his money after his death.’

Track 2

‘What an interesting story,’ said Holmes. ‘Did you agree to write the will?’

‘There was no reason for me to refuse,’ McFarlane replied. ‘I thought that I was a very lucky man. Mr Oldacre asked me to write the will straight away. He signed it and one of the **clerks** in my office was the **witness** and signed it too. He then asked me to visit him at his house in Norwood. He told me that he needed to show me some documents and he asked me to come after nine o’clock last night. He also asked me not to tell my parents about the will yet. He wanted it to be a surprise for them.’

‘Have you got any **proof** of your story, Mr McFarlane?’ Holmes asked.

‘The signed will is at my office, but I’ll show you Mr Oldacre’s draft,’ McFarlane said. He took some pieces of paper from his pocket and gave them to Holmes. Holmes read them quickly and gave them to Lestrade.

‘I agree with you about the writing – it is difficult to read,’ Holmes told the young lawyer. ‘The draft was obviously written on a train. In two places, the writing is clear. I’d guess that those parts were written in stations, when the train wasn’t moving. Then there are places where the writing is worse. Those parts were written when the train was moving. And there are places where the writing is even worse – it’s very bad indeed. Those parts were written when the train was crossing lots of **points** which were close together.’

Then Holmes turned to the inspector. ‘Well, what can we say about this draft, Lestrade?’

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he went on. 'It was obviously written on a train which only stopped twice during the writer's journey. And you only find lots of points close together near the main London stations. So, the draft was written on an **express train** between Norwood and London Bridge Station, which is near this young man's office. So we can say that Mr Oldacre didn't think about his will until he was travelling to Mr McFarlane's office.'

'That's very clever, Mr Holmes,' Lestrade said. 'But it doesn't change the evidence against Mr McFarlane.'

'Well, please continue, Mr McFarlane,' said Holmes.

'When Mr Oldacre had left my office,' the young man said, 'I sent a telegram to my parents in Blackheath. I told them that I was going to meet a client and that I was going to get home very late. I didn't tell them who my client was. Then in the evening, I went to Norwood and I arrived at Mr Oldacre's house at about half-past nine.'

'The old housekeeper opened the door to me,' he went on. 'Mr Oldacre greeted me and he gave me some food. Then he took me into his bedroom because he wanted to talk about some business documents. They were in his safe, which was open. We talked about the documents for a long time and I helped my client seal some of them into envelopes with **wax seals**. After our meeting, I couldn't find my walking stick, but Mr Oldacre said, "You'll soon be here again, my young friend. I'll find it and keep it for you." When I left the house, he was alive and well. It was nearly midnight by then. It was too late for me to get to Blackheath, so I stayed in a hotel in Norwood. This morning, I saw the newspapers and read about the disappearance. As I told you, Mr Holmes, I came straight here.'

'And now you must come with us, Mr McFarlane,' said Lestrade. 'My men will take you to Scotland Yard. I shall return to Norwood and continue my investigation. But we already know what happened, don't we? You found out that Mr Oldacre was going to leave you his money and you couldn't wait for him to die. You killed him and tried to burn his body.'

'You're wrong,' said the young man, 'and Mr Holmes will prove it!'

When McFarlane had left the house with Lestrade's two policemen, Holmes spoke to the inspector.

'I shall probably come to Norwood myself later in the day,' he said. 'But I think I shall go to Blackheath first.'

'Will you? Well, you must do what you want to do, Mr Holmes,' Lestrade said. 'But I think that you're **wasting your time** on this case. McFarlane is guilty. It's obvious.'

He sounded sure about it, but I could tell that he wanted to know what was in Holmes's mind. And Holmes was not going to tell him!

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Glossary

will you be kind enough to used for asking someone to do something in a very polite and formal way

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will a legal document that explains what you want to happen to your money and possessions after you die

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clerk someone whose job is to look after the documents in an office

witness someone who watches you sign an official document and then signs it to state that they have watched you

proof information or evidence that shows that something is definitely true

points a section of a railway where a train can cross from one track to another

express train a train that makes a particular journey more quickly than ordinary trains, usually because it stops at fewer stations

wax seal a special mark that you put on something, for example a document, to show that it is legal or official

waste your time to spend your time doing something that cannot or does not produce results