

The Second Stain

by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle
Chapters 6 and 7 (Part 2)

Author: Daniel Barber

Level: Intermediate

Age: Young adults / Adults

Time: 45 minutes (60 with optional activity)

Aims: In this lesson, students will:

1. play a game and practise word stress in words from the story dialogue;
2. rehearse and perform a sketch of the last two chapters of the story;
3. listen to each other's performances;
4. hold an awards ceremony for best actor, etc.

Materials: One copy of the board game *Sherlock!* for every three or four students; a dice for every three or four students; one copy of the play script for Chapter 7 per student (they should already have their copies of the play script for Chapter 6 from the previous lesson) downloaded from onestopenglish

Summary: Sherlock Holmes and his assistant, Doctor Watson, are visited by two very important gentlemen: the Prime Minister and the Minister for Europe, Mr Hope. They want Holmes's help in an extremely delicate matter. Hope has lost a document, the existence of which, if made public, could threaten the peace and stability of Britain. In the final chapters, Holmes and Watson go to Whitehall Terrace, the home of Trelawney Hope and his wife, Lady Hilda, and the scene of the other crime, where the unhappy criminal is waiting for them.

Language (optional)

Aims: to ensure the correct pronunciation of certain words from the play; to practise word stress; to warm the class up before acting

1. Explain that, by the end of today's lesson, the students will have performed in a play in English! The play is a dramatization of the last two chapters of *The Second Stain*. Tell them that, to begin with, the class are going to practise the pronunciation of some of the more difficult words with a game.

2. Draw a table with five columns on the board. Write the following stress patterns as the headings to the five columns:

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

Drill the stress patterns without words, pointing to each stress pattern so that the students understand what they represent: 'DAH-dah', 'dah-DAH', 'DAH-dah-dah', etc.

3. Use the following words from the story to test whether they can match words to their stress patterns:

- burglary (● ● ●)
- despair (● ● ●)
- accusation (● ● ● ●)
- detective (● ● ● ●)
- murder (● ● ●)

Write the words under each stress pattern on the board. Drill the words again.

4. Show the class the game board but don't hand it out yet. Explain that this game, called *Sherlock!*, is similar to ludo or parchis (use the name of the game in their L1 if you can) but that they need to be detectives to play it. It is a dice game (show them the dice) but, if you roll a '1', it doesn't necessarily mean you move one space.

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Indicate the key underneath the board and point out that a '1' corresponds to the first stress pattern listed: ●●. Starting where it says 'START' and moving in a clockwise direction, the player must look for the first word with that stress pattern and, then, move their counter to that place.

Slowly read out the words to the class and ask them to say 'Stop!' when they hear a word with that pattern. They should identify *published* as the word. Emphasize that they rolled a '1' but moved five places.

They will need a counter each; a coin or eraser will do. They shouldn't help one another; if someone incorrectly identifies a word, they return to where they started from and miss a turn. The first person to complete two laps of the board is the winner.

5. Put the students in groups of three or four. Hand out a board and dice to each group. Make sure they are all sitting around the board so that they can see it. Make sure they all have counters. Give them ten minutes to play the game. As they are playing, check that they understand how to play and adjudicate where there is disagreement.

6. When the games have finished, congratulate the winners of each game. If time is limited, you can always cut the games short and announce the player who has gone the farthest as the winner. Round up the game by having students come to the board to write words from the game under each stress pattern on the board. You could drill them together.

●●	●●	●●●	●●●	●●●●
<i>published</i>	<i>career</i>	<i>certainly</i>	<i>recovered</i>	<i>diplomatic</i>
<i>nonsense</i>	<i>returned</i>	<i>politics</i>	<i>insulted</i>	<i>reputation</i>
<i>ruined</i>	<i>mistake</i>	<i>document</i>	<i>magician</i>	<i>disappearance</i>
<i>luncheon</i>	<i>believe</i>	<i>probably</i>	<i>decided</i>	
<i>finished</i>		<i>recognized</i>	<i>policeman</i>	
		<i>Bellinger</i>		

Speaking

Aim: to rehearse the mini-play

1. Explain that the class is going to work in groups to re-enact the last two chapters as a play. Elicit the characters in these chapters (Holmes, Watson, Lady Hilda, the butler, Mr Hope and Lord Bellinger) and the setting for the sketch (all the action takes place in the Hopes' living room).

2. Put the class into groups of six or, if this is not possible, groups of four, five or seven. Have them assign roles: Holmes, Watson, the butler, Lady Hilda, Trelawney Hope and Lord Bellinger. Also have them assign one member of the cast as the director. This should be a more assertive member of the group.

Note: In groups of four, the same actor can play the butler and Lord Bellinger, and Watson's character can be omitted, his lines cut from the script. In groups of five, the same actor can play the butler and Lord Bellinger. In groups of six or smaller, the director doubles up as an actor of one of the lesser parts. In groups of seven, the extra person can be the director.

3. Hand out the play script for Chapter 7 and check that they all have their copies of the play script for Chapter 6 from the last lesson. Explain that they need to do a read through. The aim of this is to think about:

- props (e.g. the letter, keys);
- the scene (e.g. the writing desk, the bell for the butler);
- where people are and what they are doing (it is preferable to read standing up so that the director can move actors around the 'stage');
- the pronunciation of difficult words and which words need special stress.

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Once they have completed the read through, they should start the rehearsals properly. Ideally, try to find other spaces for them to rehearse in so that they do not disturb each other: a spare classroom, the playground, the hall, etc.

4. Leave them to rehearse but circulate to check that the rehearsals are going smoothly. Make sure that the directors are encouraging an emotional performance, that lines are being delivered clearly and that they are not getting distracted! Warn them when they have five minutes left.

Speaking

Aims: to watch the mini-plays being performed; to conclude the classroom experience of *The Second Stain*

1. Gather the groups together. Invite each to come to the front and act out the scene. When all the groups have played the scene, hold an awards ceremony for best actor, best actress, best director, best special effects, funniest play, and so on.

Follow-up tasks

- The students find an adaptation of *The Second Stain* online. (At the time of publication of this lesson plan, there were at least three versions: a TV adaptation, as well as radio adaptations of the original version). They watch or listen to their chosen adaptation and compare it with the story they have listened to. What plot differences were there? How easy was it to follow the original version now that they know the story?
- Students write a full review of the story, outlining the plot, the characters and their general appreciation of the story.

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Game board

politics	ruined	reputation	returned →	luncheon	document	mistake
magician						decided
nonsense						disappearance
certainly	<i>Sherlock!</i>					finished
published						probably
insulted						policeman
recovered	diplomatic	career	START ←	Bellinger	recognized	believe

Key

-  - Move to the next ●●
-  - Move to the next ●●●
-  - Move to the next ●●●●
-  - Move to the next ●●●●●
-  - Move to the next ●●●●●●
-  - Move 1 space ☹️

Two laps and ... **YOU WIN!**

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Act VII: In the Hope family living room (Chapter 7)

[The Hope family sitting room. Sherlock Holmes and Doctor Watson are alone waiting for Lady Hilda.]

WATSON: Well done, Holmes! You've saved Britain from war ... and Mr Hope's career.

HOLMES: Yes, but have I saved Lady Hilda's reputation?

[Lady Hilda returns. Just then we hear the front door open. Trelawney Hope and Lord Bellinger enter the room.]

HOPE: Have you got good news for us, Mr Holmes?

HOLMES: Yes. I no longer believe that this country is in danger.

HOPE: That is certainly good news. [to his wife] Will you leave us for a few minutes, my dear? We need to talk about politics. We will join you soon for lunch.

HOLMES: Mr Hope, I believe that you have made a mistake. I don't believe that the missing letter ever left this house. If it had, someone would have published it by now. I don't believe that it ever left your dispatch box. I think it has probably become mixed up with the other papers in the box. Will you search the box again, please?

HOPE: [angrily] This is not the time to joke. I'm quite sure that the letter is not in the dispatch box.

LORD BELLINGER: We can easily decide who is right. Send for the box, Hope, and we will search it here.

[Hope rings the bell for the butler.]

HOPE: Yes, Jeeves, bring the dispatch box from my bedroom, please. [The Butler leaves.] You will see Holmes that I have searched the box and there is no possibility that the letter is still there.

[The Butler returns with the box. Hope takes a small key from his pocket and opens it. He starts to search through the papers.]

HOPE: As you can see, Mr Holmes, the letter is not— [He stops suddenly and holds up the envelope, surprised.] Good heavens! You were right, it was here. [relieved] And I'm very happy to see it. You must be a magician, Mr Holmes. How did you know it was in the box, after all?

HOLMES: [smiling] I knew it was there because I knew that it was nowhere else.

HOPE: I must go and tell my wife. She will be as happy as I am. She has been so worried about the disappearance. [He quickly leaves.]

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LORD BELLINGER: [**looking carefully at Holmes; quietly**] How did the letter really get back into the box, Mr Holmes?

HOLMES: [**mysteriously**] Ah. We also have our diplomatic secrets!

[**Holmes, Watson and Lord Bellinger laugh.**]

– CURTAIN –