

THE ADVENTURE OF THE SPECKLED BAND

Note: The transactional processes suggested in CISCE curriculum are highlighted in grey.

Learning Outcomes

- To inculcate the importance of “conscience” and its effect on one’s actions
- To understand and appreciate the value of observation and deduction
- To identify an adventurous and imaginative detective story

Pre-reading



This section focuses on *assessment for learning* as it informs the reader that the text that follows is Sherlock Holmes episode and is about solving a mystery.

Write the title on the board.

Ask students:

- *What kind of story do you think this is?*
(Write answers on the board)
- *What are some qualities that good detectives should have?*

Group Work

Inference

Preparation: Prior to the class cut out pictures from a newspaper / magazine (e.g.: *a happy family, an elderly couple in the park* – an example is given below)



Give each group few pictures and ask them to infer all they can from the pictures. Give them time to discuss. Allow groups to share with the class.

Example: He is in pain because ...

his leg is sore because he has walked for a long distance / he has been walking without shoes / he has cut his leg / he has been bitten by some creature in the water.

READING

Students predict, scan, map out the plot of the story

Put students in pairs, and tell them they are going to analyse the story as detectives.

Now tell them that they will have to map out the story based on the text that they will be listening to.

Play the audio track from the Smart Book.

- *It was early in April... He sent for medical aid from the village but all efforts were in vain.*

How did Ms Stoner come to live in manor house at Stoke Moran? What change took over her stepfather? What led to the death of Julia? Describe the night Julia died.

How does the setting add to the tension of this hour?

(Ans: The howling wind and the beating rain make the scene suitable for something exciting and perhaps even dangerous or terrible to happen.)

- “Two years have passed since then... if you are ready, we shall proceed to Stoke Moran.”

Why did Ms Stoner have to move into the room where her sister died? Why did she experience a feeling of terror? What information did Holmes get about the will?



What is suggested by the information Holmes found?

This section focuses on *assessment for learning*. The reader understands that Dr Roylott has a strong motive to commit crime. The episode now takes direction towards solving the mystery.

(Ans: The information suggests that Dr Roylott would not want the sisters to get married.)

Have them write a witness report based on the information and facts shared.

Witness Report

- *It was a perfect sunny day... to weigh very heavily on my conscience.”*

What oddity did Holmes find in the room? What instructions does home give Miss Stoner? What does he tell Dr Watson?

Which three things does Holmes name as essential? Why do you think he insists on them?

(Ans: Holmes says that it is essential to not make any sound, to sit without a light and to not fall asleep. He may be insisting on these to remain quiet, not alert whoever was trying to make mischief and to remain safe themselves.)

Why was there a horrible cry? How was it all over? Explain what happened. What was the motive behind the crime?

Read the last line. Why does Holmes say this? Do you agree with him?

(Ans: Holmes says this because Roylott himself had killed Julia and had tried to kill Helen. *Free response*)

Ask students to write an investigation report based on the information and facts the shared. (Tell them to only report facts at this stage)

Investigation Report

Tell the pairs that based on all the clues and inferences they have, they are going to now solve the case.

Mystery Solved – Own conclusion

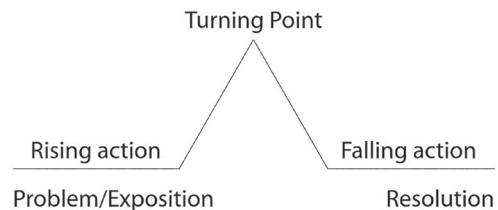
Brainstorm various solutions with the class and put up answers on the board. Continue playing the audio till the end. Ask students to check if they succeeded in solving the case.

Post-reading

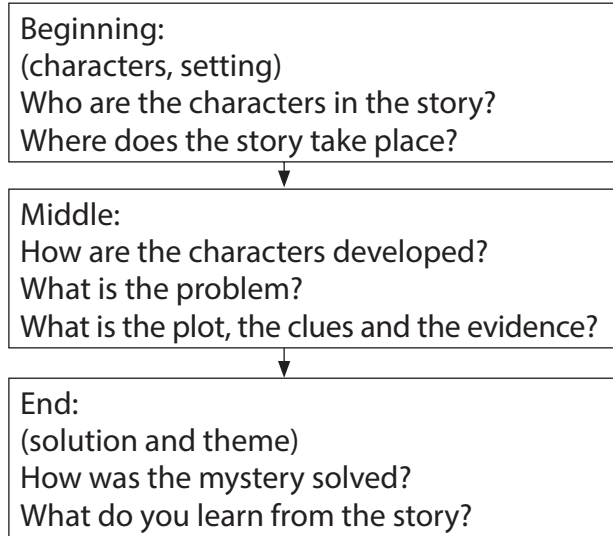
Group work

A. Ask students to create a mystery chart based on this story.

1. Plot diagram:



2. Beginning, Middle and End of the story:



B. Discuss and answer:

What is the moral of the story? What was Dr. Roylott's motive? List out some steps by which we can keep our motives in check and our conscience clean in our daily lives, in order to be good people and good citizens in our community.

GRAMMAR	Sentence conversion—simple to complex																					
Complex Sentences																						
<i>Activity</i>																						
This activity will help to convert simple sentences to complex sentences.																						
Material needed: Strips of paper with independent clauses written on one colour (e.g. on yellow paper) and subordinate clauses written on another colour (on blue paper), one for each student.																						
Instructions:																						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Give each student a strip of prepared paper. ● Play some music and ask them to walk around the room. Tell them to stop when the music stops, find the person closest to them with a different colour paper and stand together. ● Have a few students read their independent and subordinate clauses and join them to form a sentence. Start the music and repeat the activity a few more times. ● Now tell students to discuss with a partner what the difference between the strips is. ● Discuss as a class that one set is a complete sentence and one is not. ● Explain: A complex sentence contains two clauses: a main clause and a subordinate clause. It is easy to spot the subordinate clause because it begins with a subordinating conjunction. 																						
Provide students with this list of subordinating conjunctions:																						
<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td><i>after</i></td> <td><i>since</i></td> <td><i>although</i></td> <td><i>so that</i></td> <td><i>as though</i></td> <td><i>as if</i></td> <td><i>where</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>if</i></td> <td><i>wherever</i></td> <td><i>once</i></td> <td><i>while</i></td> <td><i>till</i></td> <td><i>provided</i></td> <td><i>when</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>whenever</i></td> <td><i>until</i></td> <td><i>because</i></td> <td><i>unless</i></td> <td><i>before</i></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		<i>after</i>	<i>since</i>	<i>although</i>	<i>so that</i>	<i>as though</i>	<i>as if</i>	<i>where</i>	<i>if</i>	<i>wherever</i>	<i>once</i>	<i>while</i>	<i>till</i>	<i>provided</i>	<i>when</i>	<i>whenever</i>	<i>until</i>	<i>because</i>	<i>unless</i>	<i>before</i>		
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Explain: A subordinate clause begins with a subordinating conjunction. (One of the most common mistakes is putting a comma in front of the subordinator. A complex sentence only requires a comma when the first clause is subordinate.)																						

VOCABULARY

Expressions in dialogue

Follow the input given in the Reader.

LISTENING

Post listening — conversation

Tell students to listen to the conversation between Sherlock Holmes and Dr, Watson at a meeting. Allow them time to read the questions before hearing the audio. Ask students to take down notes as they listen. Play the recording.

Play the recording a second time and ask them to fill in the details they had missed out the first time.

Check their answers.

SPEAKING

Warning

This task can be used for *assessment as learning*. Students take responsibility for learning by distinguishing between strong and weak warnings and communicating using the right vocabulary and expressions. They discuss the topics given with their partners and role-play the situations offered in the Reader.

Brainstorm with the class some examples of warning phrases (*Do not cross the road when the pedestrian light is red*), advice phrases (*I wouldn't go there if I were you*) and public warning notices (*Caution: Wet Floor*). Elicit more phrases from the class.

Activity: Warning and Advice phrases around the house

Divide students into groups and tell them to brainstorm warning and advice phrases around the house, going room by room. Example: In the kitchen: *Do not play with matches*.

Now tell students to share their lists with the class.

WRITING

Newspaper Report

Pair work

Bring newspapers to class. Hand out a page from the paper to each pair. Ask them why reading a newspaper is important. Go through the *Before-During-After* reading strategies for understanding and getting the most out of a newspaper report.

Before: a. Preview the text b. Read captions c. Look at subtitles d. Predict what the story might be about

During: a. Look at the bold print words b. Look up unfamiliar words in a dictionary
c. Clarify information by rereading text

After: a. Summarise the text b. Create a visual image c. Think of prior knowledge
d. Connect new information with prior knowledge e. Share new information with someone



Have students now practice these strategies with their newspapers and then share what they have learned. Have pairs explain their article to the class.

Format

Note: Guide students through every step.

Include the following:

- a. **Headline:** It should catch the reader's attention and sum up the story. (Check if the report is related to the headline.)
- b. **Byline:** Your name, the time, date and location
- c. **Lead:** The opening section
- d. **Body:** Details – Answer *How, What, When* and *Where* questions
- e. **Quotes:** Reactions of people in the report

Tell the pairs to spot these 5 things in their article and underline them. Now have them write their reports.

STUDENTS' BOOK ANSWER KEY

The Adventure of the Speckled Band

Pre-Reading

Free response

Comprehension

- A.**
1. Helen Stoner was a young lady who came to visit Sherlock Homes in April. She was shivering, and she said it was out of fear, not cold. Her face was drawn and grey, and her eyes were restless and frightened.
 2. Julia was Helen's twin sister. She had died two years ago. She had been about to get married. But one night a few days before her wedding, Julia screamed and then appeared at Helen's door. She said something about a speckled band, pointed to their stepfather's room and fell down dead. At that time, Helen had heard a low whistle. Julia had also heard the whistle a few times before she died. Recently, Helen had to move to Julia's room, and she had heard the same low whistle again. She had been terribly scared and in the morning had come to visit Holmes for help.
 3. After Holmes inspected the rooms at Stoke Moran, he found that there had not been any great need for repairs at Helen's room. In fact, Helen said that it must have been an excuse to move her from that room to Julia's. Then Holmes saw Julia's room and noticed a thick bell-rope which hung down beside the bed. It looked newer than the other things. Holmes found that it was a dummy fastened to a hook just above the ventilator. The ventilator itself was strange, because it opened into another room, when it could and should have opened out to the fresh air. He also noticed that the bed was clamped to the floor—it could not be moved. Dr Roylott's chamber was larger than that of his stepdaughter's. Holmes discovered a small saucer of milk under his bed.

4. That night, Holmes and Watson sat inside Julia's room without a light, silently awake. Suddenly, they could hear a very gentle sound. Holmes sprang from the bed, struck a match, and lashed furiously with his cane at the bell-pull. Soon after that, the two of them heard a horrible cry. They went to Dr Roylott's room and found him seated on a wooden chair. His eyes were fixed in a dreadful stare at the ceiling. Bound tightly round his head was a peculiar yellow band, with brownish speckles—the speckled band. As Watson stepped forward, the band began to move and from Roylott's hair rose the head and neck of a deadly snake. They managed to put it away and informed the police.
5. The speckled band was actually a swamp adder—a deadly snake from India with a squat, diamond-shaped head and a puffed neck. It was yellow in colour with brownish speckles, which made it look like a speckled band. Dr Roylott must have got it from India and kept it as a dangerous pet, hidden from everyone else. He had trained it using milk. He whistled to make it move. Roylott made the snake slide through the ventilator and down the false bell-rope to the fixed bed and kill Julia. He had tried to kill Helen the same way so that he would not lose money when the girls got married.

- B.**
1.
 - a. Sherlock Holmes said this to Helen Stoner.
 - b. The listener, Helen, had just said that a terrible event had killed her sister Julia.
 - c. The speaker, Holmes, wanted precise details so that he could understand exactly what had happened and find out the truth.
 2.
 - a. Julia said this to Helen. In answer, Helen said that she had never heard such a sound.
 - b. Yes, Helen did hear the whistle later—first, when Julia was dying, and then one night two years later, when Julia was dead, and Helen herself was staying temporarily in Julia's room. She became so scared that the very next morning, she came to Sherlock Holmes to ask him to help her.
 - c. It had actually been Dr Roylott who had been whistling. He had trained his pet snake to move through the ventilator and down the false bell-rope to sting the sleeping girl, but he had to bring it back before anyone discovered it. He whistled when he wanted to bring the snake back to his room.
 3.
 - a. The speaker, Helen, was referring to the repairs that had begun in her own room. She thought they were only an excuse to move her from that room to Julia's.
 - b. Yes, it was really an excuse made by Roylott. The real reason for moving Helen from her room was to bring her to Julia's room, which was next door to Roylott's. It had a ventilator on the middle wall, a false bell-rope and a fixed bed, all of which Roylott could use to send his snake to bite Helen.
 4.
 - a. Helen Stoner said this to Sherlock Holmes.
 - b. The listener, Holmes, had asked if there was a cat in the house, especially in Dr Roylott's room.
 - c. Holmes had had that idea because he had discovered a small saucer of milk under Roylott's bed. Actually it was for the snake.
- C.**
1.

a. i. India	ii. animals	iii. snake
b. i. the sisters	ii. Julia	iii. took her money iv. her wedding
c. kill her		

- d. the snake had come from there
- e. Roylott could carry out his plan as before
- f. i. ventilator and false bell-rope ii. the snake could reach it
- g. killed Roylott

2. *Free response; suggested hints:* He would be able to use technology and the internet to find information more easily and quickly; he could communicate with others more easily too, through phones or emails. However, he would still examine places with the same care and thoroughness and use his intelligence the same way to understand the meaning of different facts and reach the correct conclusions.

Grammar

- A.**
1. The little girl chose a doll which wore a blue dress.
 2. The students hope that they will hear the results by evening.
 3. Masha laughed when she saw her childhood photo.
 4. The girl who is sitting next to Peter is his sister.
 5. My father is the man who can solve this problem. / The man who can solve this problem is my father.
 6. The waiter served a curry which smelled delicious.

B. *Sample answers:*

Drawing has always been my favourite hobby. (simple sentence)

When I was ten, I used to copy pictures from storybooks. (complex sentence)

Although my drawings were not always very good, my parents encouraged me. (complex sentence)

They asked me whether I want to join drawing classes. (complex sentence)

I preferred to learn on my own. (simple sentence)

I like working with pastel as well as water colours. (simple sentence)

My aunt gave me a colouring box which has thirty tubes of water colour. (complex sentence)

I will paint a beautiful landscape with those colours. (simple sentence)

Vocabulary

1. With your permission
2. As it happens
3. why do you ask?
4. imagine my
5. sooner or later
6. in the first place
7. No doubt
8. You can see

Listening

Listening text:

Stamford: Dr Watson, meet Mr Sherlock Holmes.

Holmes: Hello! How are you? You have been in Afghanistan, I see.

Watson: How on earth did you know that!

Holmes: Never mind.

Stamford: My friend Watson here wants to take rooms, and as you were complaining that no one would share a flat with you, I thought that I would introduce the two of you.

Holmes: Excellent! I have my eye on a flat in Baker Street which would suit us very well. You don't mind the smell of strong tobacco, I hope?

Watson: No. I am a smoker myself.

Holmes: I generally have chemicals about, and occasionally do experiments. Would that annoy you?

Watson: By no means.

Holmes: Let me see—what are my other faults? I become quite depressed at times, and don't open my mouth for days on end. You must not think I am sulking when I do that. Just let me alone, and I'll soon be right. What have you to confess now? It's just as well for two fellows to know the worst of one another before they begin to live together.

Watson (laughing): I object to quarrelling because my nerves are shaken. I get up at strange hours each day and I am extremely lazy.

Holmes: Oh, that's all right. I think we may consider the thing as settled—that is, if the rooms are agreeable to you.

Watson: When shall we see them? But I wonder how you knew about Afghanistan.

Holmes (laughs): Come here at noon tomorrow, and we'll go together and settle everything.

Watson: But...

Holmes: Goodbye.

Watson: All right—noon exactly. Goodbye.

Answers:

1. b

2. b

3. Holmes: a, b and e; Dr Watson: a, c and d

4. a

Writing

Free response

Punctuation

This is an excerpt from The Hound of the Baskervilles, first published in The Strand Magazine (1901–1902).

Sherlock Holmes was seated at the breakfast table. I picked up the stick which our visitor had left behind him the night before. It was just the sort of stick that the old-fashioned family practitioner used to carry—dignified, solid and reassuring.

“Well, Watson, what do you make of it?”

Holmes was sitting with his back to me and I had given him no sign of my occupation.

“How did you know what I was doing? I believe you have eyes in the back of your head./!”

“I have a well-polished, silver-plated coffee pot in front of me,” said he.

ANSWER KEY TO WORKSHEET 10

- A.**
1. Everyone knows that Goa has beautiful beaches.
 2. We will have the meeting after we have had lunch.
 3. Rajesh worked hard so that he could pass the exam.
 4. Central Maidan is the place where the book fair used to be held.
 5. Tourists flocked to the hill station although it was overcrowded.
 6. When the thief saw the police, he ran away.
- B. Sample answers:**
1. Are you sure this is the way to the library?
 2. It's all very well to say, 'eat healthy', but it's not always easy to do.
 3. Now that we are all gathered here, let us begin the discussion.
 4. Of course I will help you to finish the assignment.
 5. Tell me Suraj, are the roads always in such a bad state in this locality?
 6. What do you say to having lunch before touring the gardens?
- C.**
1.
 - a. the process of reaching a conclusion from available information
 - b. laughing quietly
 - c. remove; get rid of
 2.
 - a. Holmes could understand that Watson had been to the Wigmore Street Post-Office that morning and had dispatched a telegram there.
 - b. Just opposite the Wigmore Street Post-Office, the pavement had been dug up. Some red earth, which could be found only in that neighbourhood, was lying there in such a way that it was difficult to avoid stepping on it while entering the post-office. Hence some of the red earth was sticking to Watson's shoe.
 - c. Holmes knew that Watson had sent a telegram because they had sat opposite each other the whole morning and he had not seen Watson write a letter. Watson also had plenty of stamps and postcards on his desk, so he could not have gone to the post-office to buy any of those.
 3. *Sample answer:* Sherlock Holmes could notice little things (Watson's activities, his desk, the earth on his shoe), remember them and draw the correct conclusions from them. He did it so cleverly that it seemed puzzling at first to think how he could have known something that he had not witnessed or heard.
 4. *Free response*

QUESTION BANK

The Adventure of the Speckled Band

A. Answer in brief.

What was Miss Stoner terrorised about?

Ans: Miss Stoner was living with her stepfather. Miss Stoner suspected that her stepfather had a role to play in her sister's death. She was now terrorised that even her life was in danger as something similar to what happened to her sister before her death was happening to her also.

B. Answer in detail.

What role did the snake play in the story?

Ans: Dr. Roylott had a passion for Indian animals and had a cheetah and baboon as his pets. What no one knew was that he also had a deadly Indian snake which, apparently, was his tool to commit the crime against the sisters. Julia came out of the room shrieking 'the Speckled Band!' and then fresh convulsions seized her, and choked her to death. The speckled band was the snake which bit Julia and led to her death. As the title of the story suggests it was the snake that played a major role in the story and in the end the suspect himself became the victim of its deadly bite.

C. Choose the correct answer.

"But within a fortnight of the day which had been fixed for the wedding, a terrible event occurred which has deprived me of my only companion." How was the speaker deprived of her only companion?

- Miss Stoner's sister Julia got married and went away from the house.
- Miss Stoner's stepfather went away to India on vacation and left her alone.
- Miss Stoner's sister Julia succumbed to a sudden, terrible, mysterious death.

Ans: c

D. Read the lines and answer the questions.

"There isn't a cat in here, is there?" he asked at length.

- Who asks this question? To whom?
- Why does he ask so?
- How does that information help the speaker?

Ans: a. The speaker is Mr. Holmes. He asks this question to Miss Stoner.

- He sees a saucer of milk under the bed which made the speaker suspect the presence of a cat.
- When he was told there was no cat there Mr. Holmes deduced that there must be some other animal which was fed with milk in that house.

E. Answer in brief. (Think and Answer)

Why do you think a change came over Miss Stoner's stepfather after they moved into the old manor house at Stoke Moran?

Ans: Miss Stoner's stepfather was fine with both daughters till their mother's death. After that there came a change in his behaviour. This could be because he was aware of the contents of the will which would leave him with very little money if his stepdaughters got married. This probably was the onset of his plan to get rid of them permanently.

F. Answer in detail. (Think and Answer)

Usually, in the beginning of mystery stories, there is a tendency to suspect someone who turns out to be innocent in the end. Did you expect something similar in this story? Discuss.

Free response *Suggested Answer:* Yes, I agree with the statement. I felt the mystery was a bit too easy for Mr. Holmes to solve. So I thought that maybe Dr. Roylott was not the culprit. I was a bit disappointed when Dr. Roylott really turned out to be the culprit. The suspense factor associated with mystery stories was not there in this story and it made the story a bit uninteresting towards the end. I agree that being an intelligent detective, Mr. Holmes could solve the case in no time. What I enjoyed most in the story was Mr. Holmes' ability to observe everything very closely and logically deduce from his observations so that he could catch the culprit without any doubt. It is a detective story and not a suspense thriller.