

Introduction

Sherlock Holmes is a detective who is very good at solving crimes. Holmes, along with his assistant, Dr Watson, are characters in the mystery stories by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Sherlock Holmes is one of the most popular and enduring characters in English fiction. He first appeared in *A Study in Scarlet* in 1887, but he is still well known around the world today. The area and the house that the character lived in, 221b Baker Street in London, is famous — there is even a Sherlock Holmes Museum there!

It is said that Holmes is in many ways similar to Dr Joseph Bell, one of the professors that taught Conan Doyle at the medical school of the University of Edinburgh. The doctor had a strong influence upon the young Conan Doyle. Bell was an expert at using reasoning to say what an illness is. Similarly, Conan Doyle gives his detective logical thinking skills that he uses to solve crimes.

In *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, you will read about a couple who are troubled by some strange messages, the crime of the seen examination paper, the detective and the mysterious illness, and a strange club which offers red-headed men good money for very easy work.

Read on and see if you can solve the crimes before Sherlock Holmes!

About Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was born in Edinburgh, Scotland in 1859. He studied to be a doctor at the

University of Edinburgh before becoming a writer. His knowledge of medicine helped him create his character Sherlock Holmes.

Besides *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, the detective also appears in such novels as *The Sign of Four*, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, and *The Valley of Fear*. You can read more stories about Holmes in *Further Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* and *The Hound of the Baskervilles* in Level 3 of this series. He is also famous on both stage and screen, as the stories have been made into numerous films and plays.

1

The Dancing Men: Part One

A simple problem

Holmes sat quietly for a long time, studying something in a glass bottle.

‘So, Watson,’ he said suddenly, ‘you are not going to buy any land in South Africa?’

I was very surprised by his question.

‘How do you know that?’ I asked.

He turned around on his chair, holding a magnifying glass in his hand. He had a little smile on his lips.

‘Are you very surprised, Watson?’

‘I am.’

‘I should make you write that down on a piece of paper.’

‘Why?’

‘Because in five minutes you will say that it is very simple.’

‘I am sure I will not.’

‘You see, my dear Watson,’ — he put the magnifying glass back on the table and began to talk like a teacher talking to his class — ‘it is very easy to arrive at an idea, step by step from a number of other ideas. Each one takes

