

Founding Editor: John Milne

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### Level Control

Information, structure and vocabulary are controlled to suit the students' ability at each level.

### The number of words at each level:

Starter	about 300 basic words
Beginner	about 600 basic words
Elementary	about 1100 basic words
Pre-intermediate	about 1400 basic words
Intermediate	about 1600 basic words
Upper	about 2200 basic words

### Vocabulary

Some difficult words and phrases in this book are important for understanding the story. Some of these words are explained in the story, some are shown in the pictures and others are marked with a number like this: ...<sup>3</sup>. Phrases are marked with <sup>P</sup>. Words with a number are explained in the *Glossary* at the end of the book and phrases are explained on the *Useful Phrases* pages.

### Answer Keys

Answer Keys for the *Points For Understanding* and *Exercises* sections can be found at [www.macmillanenglish.com/readers](http://www.macmillanenglish.com/readers).

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## A Note About The Author

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Arthur Ignatius Conan Doyle was born in Edinburgh, the capital city of Scotland. He was born on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1859 and he was the third of his parents' nine children. His father, Charles Doyle, was a government official who was also quite a successful artist. But Charles became seriously ill and life at home was difficult for the children. Because of this, young Arthur lived at his school for most of each year.

As he grew up, young Arthur decided to become a doctor. He studied medicine at Edinburgh University, where one of his teachers was Dr Joseph Bell. Arthur greatly admired Bell and his methods for finding out what people's problems really were.

When he left university, Conan Doyle moved to England. In 1882, he began to work as a family doctor in Southsea, on the south coast. In 1885, he married Louise Hawkins, the daughter of one of his patients. Conan Doyle did not really enjoy working as a family doctor and he soon moved to London with his family. Conan Doyle was especially interested in eyes and their problems, and he wanted to work in that area of medicine. But he had also begun to write fiction in his spare time. At first he wrote ghost stories and historical novels – stories about the past – but he did not have much success with these. Then in 1887 he published<sup>1</sup> a novel set in his own time. The novel was called *A Study in Scarlet*, and it was about a detective called Sherlock Holmes. Holmes was a man with no emotions<sup>2</sup> but with a very logical<sup>3</sup> mind. Holmes's methods for solving<sup>4</sup> problems were based<sup>5</sup> on Conan Doyle's memories of his university teacher, Dr Bell.

The novel was a great success, and Conan Doyle stopped working as a doctor in 1888. He concentrated on writing about Sherlock Holmes. There was another novel-length story – *The Sign of Four*, published in 1889 – but most of the detective's

adventures appeared as short stories. These stories were first published in a popular monthly magazine, *The Strand Magazine*. When Conan Doyle had written enough of these short stories, they were republished as collections in books. The first two collections were *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (1892) and *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes* (1894).

In 1894, Conan Doyle decided that he preferred to write his historical novels. In the last story of *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*, it seemed that the detective had been killed in Switzerland. Conan Doyle wrote no more Holmes stories for about ten years and he tried to forget about his detective. But his readers wanted to read more about Holmes, and in 1903 Conan Doyle published a further Holmes novel, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. This story is about an earlier adventure of Holmes's, before his death. Conan Doyle still thought that he had killed his detective, but his readers were not happy about this. So, in 1905, Conan Doyle published a new short-story collection, *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*. Holmes had not died in Switzerland. He was alive and still solving problems.

Conan Doyle had been given a knighthood in 1902 – he became Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. In 1906 Conan Doyle's wife, Louise, died after being ill for many years, and in 1907 he married again. His second wife, Jean Leckie, had been his friend for a long time. He lived with her for the rest of his life in a large country house. Conan Doyle had a daughter and a son from his first marriage, and he had two sons and a daughter with Jean.

Conan Doyle went on writing his historical stories in these years, as well as some non-fiction books about the histories of various wars. He also wrote several science-fiction stories about a scientist called Professor Challenger. In the first of these – a novel called *The Lost World* (1912) – Challenger and his friends discover a place where dinosaurs still live. There are three Challenger novels and two short stories about him.

Conan Doyle also published more collections of Holmes short stories, as well as a fourth Holmes novel. The novel was *The Valley of Fear* (1915). The short stories appeared in *His Last Bow* (1917) and *The Casebook of Sherlock Holmes* (1927).

After a busy life, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle died on 7<sup>th</sup> July 1930. His body was buried in the garden of his country house, although<sup>6</sup> many years later it was moved to a churchyard.

Since Conan Doyle's death, several other writers have written stories about Sherlock Holmes. There have also been many films made from the Holmes stories. A famous series of Holmes films in the 1940s starred Basil Rathbone. Much more recently, Robert Downey Junior has appeared as the detective in two films directed by Guy Ritchie.

Other Sherlock Holmes books in the Macmillan Readers series include: *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, *The Sign of Four*, *Silver Blaze and Other Stories*, and *The Speckled Band and Other Stories*. *The Lost World* is also available. Visit the Macmillan Readers website at [www.macmillanenglish.com/readers](http://www.macmillanenglish.com/readers) for more details.

## A Note About The Stories

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The four stories in this book are taken from three different collections of Sherlock Holmes stories. *The Norwood Builder* and *The Second Stain* were published in *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*; *The Stockbroker's Clerk* was published in *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*; and *A Scandal in Bohemia* was published in *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle wrote the Sherlock Holmes stories in the voice of Holmes's friend and helper, Dr John H. Watson – he is the narrator. Watson tells us that the cases<sup>7</sup> he is publishing are only a small percentage of the hundreds of cases that Holmes has investigated<sup>8</sup> with his help. The stories do not appear in date order within the collections. Each book contains stories from different times in Holmes's career. Some stories are set as early as the 1880s, and one of the later stories happens during World War I (1914–18). In some stories, Watson is an unmarried man who shares an apartment at 221b Baker Street, London, with Holmes. In other stories, Watson is a married man, living in his own house, who helps his friend from time to time. In later stories, Watson's wife has died and he is living with Holmes again. Watson is obviously<sup>9</sup> not as clever as Holmes – Conan Doyle makes this clear. In each investigation, the narrator is given the same information as Holmes, but he can never understand what it really means. But Watson is strong and fearless. Holmes likes him and needs him as a helper.

The middle of the nineteenth century was a great period for railway building in Britain. At the time that the earliest Holmes stories take place, it was easy to get from one town to another by train. But there were no cars at that time, and Holmes and Watson often have to use cabs to move around central London. These two-wheeled cabs were pulled by

horses, and so were the four-wheeled carriages which rich people often used.

There were also no telephones at the time of the earlier stories, but it was easy to send telegrams. As the railways were built, telegraph wires were put up beside the railway tracks. You could write a message and take it to a post office. There, the message was changed into a code<sup>10</sup> which was sent along the telegraph wires electronically. Very quickly, the coded message arrived at a post office near the home of the person you wanted to contact. Then it was changed back into a written form and was delivered to the home of the person that it was addressed to. The written message was usually delivered by a boy, on foot or on a bicycle. Telegrams arrived much sooner than letters sent by post. Holmes receives several telegrams in these stories, and he receives them very soon after they are sent.

People sent letters too. At the time of these stories, it was very common for letters, as well as legal<sup>11</sup> papers, to be sealed<sup>12</sup> with wax. Wax is a solid substance which melts when it is heated. If you wanted to seal a letter, you melted some sealing wax on the envelope. You used the flame of a candle to melt the wax, which quickly became solid again on the envelope. Then no one could open the envelope without breaking the piece of wax, and showing that the letter had been opened and read. People often pressed a finger-ring into the wax. The ring would have a design in it which would leave an impression in the wax. Each person could have their own design – perhaps their initials – on their ring, so the person receiving the letter knew who it was from. Sealing wax is used in one of the stories in this book to mislead the police.

Another dishonest use for wax is described in this book too – key copying. If you wanted to copy a key to open a lock that you should not open, you could make an impression of the key in wax. You needed only to borrow the key secretly for a few seconds. Then a special metalworker called a locksmith could

pour liquid metal into the impression. When the metal was solid again, you would have a new key.

At the time of these stories, and for many years after, there were very hard punishments for crimes. The death penalty was the usual punishment for murder in Britain. Murderers who were sentenced to death were executed – they were killed in a prison.

## Dr Watson's Introduction

My name is John Watson and I am a doctor. For many years I was a doctor in the British Army, but one day I was shot in the shoulder and badly hurt. After that, I left the army. It was then that I met a man named Mr Sherlock Holmes. Holmes and I quickly became friends and for several years we shared a flat in Baker Street, near Regent's Park in London.

Holmes is an extraordinary man. He has a very logical mind. And this mind is like a great book of knowledge – an encyclopaedia. Holmes knows about hundreds of different things. He is a scientist – he has published many articles about science. He is also a musician – he plays the violin well and he has published articles on music too. But above all, he knows about crime and criminals. Holmes is a consulting<sup>13</sup> detective and all kinds of people consult him. Sometimes the cases he investigates are crimes. Sometimes they are personal problems. Holmes is an independent detective – he does not work for the police. Sometimes the detectives at Scotland Yard – the London police headquarters – consult him themselves, and then he works *with* them. But sometimes he works for people the police have arrested<sup>14</sup>. Then he works *against* the police.

Holmes investigates any case that he finds really interesting. The more difficult the puzzle<sup>15</sup>, the more Holmes enjoys it. As I said, Holmes is an extraordinary man, and for a number of years I have been this extraordinary man's assistant. I will not say that my mind is like Holmes's mind, but I always try to understand his methods. I have worked with him on many cases, and I have always written about these cases when we have finished our investigations. From time to time, I publish these records, and this book contains four of them.

## THE NORWOOD BUILDER

1

### The Most Unhappy Man

The case which I call 'The Norwood Builder' began for us in a very dramatic way. Holmes and I had just finished a late breakfast one morning, and we were talking in our sitting room in Baker Street. Holmes was about to open his morning newspaper, when we heard a lot of noise outside. A moment later, someone was knocking at the door, very hard. Then the door opened and a young man rushed<sup>16</sup> in. His face was pale and his fair hair and his clothes were untidy. His blue eyes were frightened. He had obviously been running, and he was breathing heavily.

'You've got to help me, Mr Holmes,' he said desperately<sup>17</sup>. 'The police are following me! Oh, the scandal<sup>18</sup> will break my poor mother's heart<sup>19</sup>.'

'Sit down, please,' Holmes said. 'This is my friend and helper, Dr Watson. Please tell us who *you* are.'

'I'm that most unhappy man, John Hector McFarlane,' he replied. He obviously thought that we would recognize the name, but we did not.

'Mr Holmes, if the police arrive, please make them wait,' the young man went on. 'Don't let them arrest me until I've told you my story.'

'Why do they want to arrest you?' asked Holmes in surprise. 'What crime will they charge<sup>19</sup> you with?'

'They'll charge me with murder, Mr Holmes, but I haven't killed anyone,' he replied. 'But I will be happy to go to prison if I know that Sherlock Holmes is investigating my case!'

Holmes is a tall, thin man with long fingers and a long

neck. His eyes are like a fierce<sup>20</sup> bird's eyes. Now he looked very carefully at our visitor.

'I know that you're not married and that you're a lawyer,' said Holmes. 'I know that your lungs<sup>21</sup> are not good. But I know nothing else about you, and I do *not* recognize your name.'

I knew my friend's methods, and I could understand what he was thinking. The man's clothes were untidy, so he was probably unmarried. We could see that there were legal papers in his pockets, so he was certainly a lawyer. We could hear his heavy breathing, so it was obvious that he had an illness of the lungs. Everything that Holmes had said was obvious, but the young man seemed surprised.

'That's amazing,' he said. 'But if you'd opened your newspaper this morning, you would have recognized my name.'

The man opened the newspaper which Holmes had put on the table and pointed dramatically to a headline. Then he held the paper up so we could both see it.

**MYSTERIOUS CRIME COMMITTED IN  
NORWOOD! A WELL-KNOWN BUILDER IS  
MISSING. THE POLICE THINK THAT HE HAS  
BEEN MURDERED AND THEY ARE  
SEARCHING<sup>22</sup> FOR A SUSPECT<sup>23</sup>.**

'And I *am* the suspect,' our visitor said.

'Your case sounds interesting,' said Holmes, looking very pleased. 'Watson, please read the newspaper article.'

I read what was in front of me.

Mr Jonas Oldacre, from the district<sup>24</sup> of Norwood, has disappeared. The police suspect that he has been murdered. Mr Oldacre is a man in his fifties who has lived in Norwood, on the southern edge of London, for many years. He owns a building firm<sup>25</sup> there. Recently he seems to have stopped working as a builder and he rarely meets anyone. Mr Oldacre lives alone except for<sup>26</sup>

an elderly woman who is his housekeeper<sup>27</sup>. Yesterday evening, he was visited at home by Mr John Hector McFarlane, a lawyer who works in central London. Then, very early this morning, a fire was discovered in a timber store<sup>28</sup> behind Mr Oldacre's house. All the wood in the store was burnt. But when the firemen had put out the flames, no one could find Mr Oldacre. He had not slept in his bed, and a safe<sup>29</sup> which he kept in his bedroom had been opened. The police found some blood in the bedroom and they also found a heavy walking stick, which belongs to Mr McFarlane. There was some blood on the walking stick too.

A door leading from Mr Oldacre's bedroom to the garden was open. There were some marks<sup>30</sup> on the ground outside it which led towards the timber store. The police think that something heavy was pulled across the garden towards the store. This morning, some strange pieces of burnt flesh<sup>31</sup> were found among the burnt wood. The police do not know if the flesh is human, but they fear the worst<sup>p</sup>. They are searching for Mr McFarlane. They believe that he killed Mr Oldacre and started the fire to burn his body. Inspector Lestrade of Scotland Yard is the policeman investigating the case.

'I'm surprised that you haven't been arrested already, Mr McFarlane,' said Holmes, when I had finished reading.

'I haven't been to my office this morning,' our visitor replied. 'And I haven't been to my home. It was very late when I left Mr Oldacre last night. I live in Blackheath, on the eastern edge of London, with my parents. I wasn't able to get back there, so I stayed at a hotel in Norwood. This morning, I saw the newspaper and I read about Mr Oldacre's disappearance. And I read that the police were searching for me. I decided to come straight here to consult you. I think that the police were following me when I turned into Baker Street.'