

The Norwood Builder by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle Chapter 3

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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. do a quiz about the story so far;
2. listen for gist and detail;
3. become more aware of, and practise, contrastive stress;
4. predict the final part of the story.

Materials: One copy of the worksheet per student; Track 1 (full audio) and Tracks 2 to 5 (four short extracts from Chapter 3) downloaded from onestopenglish; one copy of the 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 Mr Jonas Oldacre, a successful builder from Norwood, near London. He claims he did not commit the crime. Holmes is interested and takes on his case. In Chapter 3, Holmes is unhappy and confused after visiting McFarlane's parents and Oldacre's house in Norwood. Then, a telegram arrives from Inspector Lestrade, and Holmes and his faithful Watson hurry back to the scene of the crime, where fresh evidence makes both detectives believe they are right. What does Holmes know that Lestrade doesn't?

Speaking

Aims: to review the story so far; to check the students' understanding of the first two chapters; to prepare the students for listening to Chapter 3

1. Put the students into teams of between two and five, depending on class size. Explain that they are going to take part in a quiz about the story and they must invent a name for their teams. Give them a minute for this; then, write their team names on the board at the top of columns.

2. Ask each team to draw a circle on a piece of paper. Do the same for you. Show them how your 'buzzer' works by pressing the circle and making a loud noise such as 'buzz' as if it was a TV game show. Ask them to 'test' their buzzers now and go around the class making sure they all make a noise when they press their buzzers. What noise they make is their choice!

3. Explain that you are going to ask questions about the story. The first team to buzz gets to answer first. A correct answer wins a point. If they answer incorrectly, you will nominate another team at random to answer ('random'

nomination allows you to include weaker teams and give them a chance to score some points!). Shouting out the answer before they buzz loses points. They must not look at their notes from previous lessons.

4. Read out the questions in the following order. Read them clearly but quickly and expect quick answers. Treat this as a warmer to get the students thinking actively and be strict with time, rules and so on.

- What is the name of the story? (*The Norwood Builder*)
- Who is the hero of the story? (*Sherlock Holmes*)
- Who narrates (tells) the story? (*Dr Watson*)
- Where are Holmes and Watson at the beginning of the story? (*at Holmes's flat in Baker Street*)
- Who comes in? (*John McFarlane*)
- What is McFarlane's middle name? – 2 points! (*Hector*)
- What colour are his eyes? – 2 points! (*blue*)
- Why doesn't Holmes recognize the man's name? (*He hasn't yet read today's newspaper.*)

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- Who is chasing McFarlane? (*the police*)
- What is McFarlane's job? (*lawyer*)
- What is the next word in the newspaper headline? – "MYSTERIOUS CRIME COMMITTED IN _____" (*Norwood*)
- What is the name of the victim? (*Mr Jonas Oldacre*)
- What is his job? (*builder*)
- How old is he? (*He's in his 50s.*)
- Who does he live with? (*his housekeeper*)
- What happened behind Oldacre's house? (*There was a fire (in the timber store).*)
- What did the police notice in Oldacre's bedroom? (*The bed had not been slept in and/or the safe was open.*)
- What did they notice about the body? (*Nothing – it has not been found yet.*)
- What is the name of the police inspector? (*Inspector Lestrade*)
- According to McFarlane, what happened yesterday at 3 o'clock? (*Oldacre came to McFarlane's office.*)
- What did he want McFarlane to do? (*to write up his will, which gives the lawyer everything he owns*)
- What does Holmes notice about Oldacre's draft of his will? (*that it was messy / was written on the train*)
- What did McFarlane say he did the night before? (*He went to Norwood (to see some of Oldacre's documents).*)
- What did McFarlane leave at Oldacre's house? (*his walking stick*)
- What does Holmes plan to do before he goes to Norwood? (*visit McFarlane's parents in Blackheath*)

5. At the end of the quiz, tot up the scores and congratulate the winner.

Listening

Aims: to pre-teach some key vocabulary; to listen for gist and detail

1. Put the students into pairs. Hand out the worksheet and direct the class's attention to the listening activity. Ask them to read the true-or-false statements and find:

- a phrase that means ... [mime angrily taking off an engagement ring and throwing it on the ground] (*broke off the*

engagement);

- a word that means *about money* (*financial*);
- a word that is the name for the thing you leave when you press your finger onto something [mime leaving a fingerprint] (*fingerprint*);
- a word that means *to walk with regular steps because you are measuring something or because you are worried or impatient* [mime it] (*pace*).

As they find the vocabulary, write it on the board to ensure everyone understands it.

2. Make sure the students understand the listening task. Play Track 1. When they have finished listening, have them compare their answers in pairs. Hand out the transcript so that they can check their answers. Finally, get the attention of the whole class and nominate for answers.

Key: 1. F (*He goes to Blackheath, then Norwood and then he comes home.*); 2. F (*He says it is a 'puzzle'.*); 3. T (*She agreed to marry him and they became engaged.*); 4. F (*She broke it off.*); 5. T (*He sent her a photograph of her with knife cuts in it.*); 6. F (*He does have a motive – Oldacre behaved badly towards his mother.*); 7. T (*He saw his bank records.*); 8. F (*He is worried and unhappy.*); 9. F (*Lestrade sends him a message: a telegram.*); 10. T; 11. T (*It is blood-stained.*); 12. T (*Holmes agrees with Lestrade about that.*); 13. F (*They pace up and down in the garden.*); 14. F (*He knows that the fingerprint was not there the day before.*)

Language: contrastive stress (optional)

Aims: to raise awareness of contrastive stress; to practise making contrastive stress

1. Ask the students to look at the language activity on the worksheet. Point them towards the diagram illustrating stress in the first extract. Check the students can explain what 'it' is in the second part of the extract. ('It' is the idea that Holmes is wasting his time, which Lestrade *told* him before but is now not just *telling* him – he can *prove* it.) Play Track 2 and have them discuss the way that *prove* is said. They

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should notice that there is stress on *prove* as well as on *told*. Get them to practise saying the sentences, stressing the words in bold correctly.

2. Let students work in pairs. Ask them to identify the words in Tracks 3 to 5 that contrast with the words in bold. If they are not sure of the word, tell them that, if they take turns saying the sentences with stress on the word in bold, they may be able to hear which word in the second parts of the extracts should be stressed. After a minute, ask for volunteers to try saying the sentences without telling the class which word they think it is. Their classmates should be able to hear which word they chose. Don't give the answer away at this stage. Instead, play Tracks 3 to 5 for them to check. Confirm the correct answers.

Key: 2. *wrong*; 3. *now*; 4. *I* (the first instance)

3. Still in their pairs, have students read out the spoken parts of the boxed section of the transcript, taking turns at being either Sherlock Holmes or Lestrade and Watson, and focusing on the contrastive stress in the speech. Point out that Lestrade speaks first, saying 'I told you ...'

Note: There is also an instance of emphatic stress in the section, where Holmes affirms Lestrade's claim, saying 'I'm sure that you will'. *Will* is stressed to emphasize his agreement.

Speaking

Aim: to predict the final part of the story

1. Elicit from the students the following words and phrases and write them on the board. Ask them for the characters and the pieces of evidence.

characters	evidence
McFarlane, a lawyer, the suspect	the will the safe
Oldacre, a builder, the victim	Oldacre's payments to 'Mr Cornelius'
Oldacre's housekeeper	marks on the ground in the garden
Mrs McFarlane, the suspect's mother	the fire in the timber store the burnt flesh blood on McFarlane's walking stick the missing body the fingerprint

Teacher's notes

2. Put the class into groups of three or four. Tell them to invent a possible ending for the story. It should explain the elements above as much as possible. They also need to think about the motive of the criminal. Visit the groups and listen to their theories about the ending, prompting and encouraging where necessary.

3. After a few minutes, get the class's attention and ask them to write a plot summary. They should use exactly 50 words. Give them 5 to 10 minutes for this. Ask them to put their names on the top of the piece of paper. At the end of the lesson, take in their summaries, explaining that they will get a chance to read them all at the beginning of the next lesson.

Follow-up tasks

- The students write an extended story ending of their own.
- The students write a letter confessing the crime, either from McFarlane if they believe him to be guilty or from another character if they have other ideas!

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Listening

Listen to Chapter 3. Decide whether the statements are true or false.

1. Holmes goes to Blackheath and, then, comes home.
2. Holmes already thinks he knows why Oldacre drafted his will on the train.
3. Jonas Oldacre was the ex-boyfriend of McFarlane's mother.
4. Oldacre broke off the engagement.
5. Oldacre sent Mrs McFarlane something on her wedding day.
6. McFarlane doesn't have a reason to kill Oldacre.
7. Holmes was able to discover financial information about Oldacre.
8. At the end of the day, Holmes feels much better about the case.
9. The next day, Holmes sends Lestrade a message.
10. The police have found a fingerprint near the kitchen.
11. The fingerprint is red.
12. Lestrade and Holmes both believe that the fingerprint is McFarlane's.
13. Holmes and Watson pace up and down along the corridor.
14. Holmes is surprised that the police didn't find the fingerprint the day before.

Read the transcript and check your answers.

Language: contrastive stress

In the first extract, notice how *prove* contrasts with *told*. Listen to the way the two words are said. What do you notice?

1.

'I **told** you that you were wasting your time on this case, Mr Holmes,' he said.

'Now I can **prove** it.'

In the following extracts, which word in the second box contrasts with the word in bold?

2.

'This time I was **right** ...

... and you were wrong.'

3.

'They didn't search this corridor,' Lestrade replied. 'It didn't seem important **then**.'

Holmes, who had looked serious and unhappy all morning, laughed suddenly. 'It's certainly important now,' he said.

4.

'**Lestrade's men** didn't search that corridor yesterday,' he told me as he paced up and down ...

... 'But I searched it. I searched it very carefully.'

Listen to check. Act out the conversation between Lestrade, Holmes and Watson, paying particular attention to stress.

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Track 1

Transcript and glossary

‘Will you go to Norwood yourself, Holmes?’ I asked, when Lestrade had gone.

‘Yes, Watson,’ he replied. ‘But as I told Lestrade, I shall first go to Blackheath. This is a very strange case. Why would someone do something really important – something like drafting a will – when he was sitting on a moving train? We have to ask ourselves that question. Why wasn’t Oldacre more careful about drafting his will? Is it because he didn’t expect Mr McFarlane ever to get his money? It’s a puzzle, isn’t it?’

And soon after that, he went out.

It was evening when Holmes returned. I could see at once that he was not happy.

‘Perhaps Lestrade is right after all, Watson,’ he said. ‘I went to Blackheath and I talked to McFarlane’s mother. She told me that she’d known Jonas Oldacre long ago. “He was a terrible man and I’m pleased that he’s dead,” she said. She told me that Oldacre had wanted to marry her when she was a young woman. She didn’t know him well, but he was a rich man and she agreed to marry him – they became engaged. But then she found out that he was wicked. She **broke off the engagement** and told him that she never wanted to see him again. “After that, I married John’s father. He was a poorer man but he was a better man,” she told me. She showed me a photograph of herself which she’d given Oldacre when they were engaged. It had knife-cuts all over it. Oldacre had sent it back to her on the day she married Mr McFarlane’s father. He’d told her that he’d hate her forever.

‘Mrs McFarlane is quite sure that her son is not guilty of the murder,’ said Holmes. ‘But she certainly hated Mr Oldacre. Perhaps her son hated him too.’

‘So you think that Mr McFarlane killed Oldacre because he’d behaved badly to his mother,’ I said. ‘Is that the truth of the case, Holmes?’

‘I’m sure that Lestrade will decide that it’s the truth when he’s talked to Mrs McFarlane,’ Holmes replied. ‘The evidence says that it might be the truth, but I can’t believe it. I feel sure that someone else must have killed Oldacre. At the moment, I *can’t* prove it. And Lestrade wants that young man to be executed.

‘But I *have* discovered something strange,’ he went on. ‘I went to Norwood after I’d been to Blackheath. I saw McFarlane’s walking stick with the blood on it, and the blood in the bedroom. I saw the marks which led to the timber store. It was all as the newspaper article said. But I also saw Oldacre’s bank records in the house. For the last year he’s been paying a large amount of money every month to someone called Mr Cornelius. I wonder who *he* is? I also talked to Oldacre’s housekeeper. I’m sure that she knows more about the case than she has told the police. And I’m sure that she lied to me.’

Holmes played his violin for hours that evening. It helped him to think. He was trying to find answers to all the questions that he had about the case. But I could see that he was worried and unhappy. And he was even more worried the next morning when a telegram arrived:

DON’T WASTE ANY MORE TIME ON THE MCFARLANE CASE. NEW EVIDENCE SHOWS THAT HE MUST BE GUILTY. LESTRADE.

‘We must go to Norwood at once, Watson,’ said Holmes.

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When we arrived at Norwood, Lestrade was there with two other policemen. He was obviously feeling pleased with himself. 'I told you that you were wasting your time on this case, Mr Holmes,' he said. 'Now I can prove it. Come with me.' He took us to a corridor which led from the sitting room to the kitchen. There, high on the wall, he showed us a red mark – a **bloodstain**. It was a **fingerprint**, a very clear fingerprint.

Track 2

'Well, Mr Holmes, you can't always be right,' Lestrade said. 'This time I was right and you were wrong. You know all about fingerprints and you know that every person has different fingerprints. I will prove that that is McFarlane's fingerprint.'

Track 3

'I'm sure that you will,' Holmes replied calmly.

For a moment, Lestrade looked surprised. 'Well, McFarlane had Mr Oldacre's blood on his hand when he left this print,' he continued. 'The case is finished, Mr Holmes.'

'Is it? I wonder why your men didn't find the fingerprint yesterday, Lestrade,' Holmes said.

'They didn't search this corridor,' Lestrade replied. 'It didn't seem important then.'

Track 4

Holmes, who had looked serious and unhappy all morning, laughed suddenly. 'It's certainly important now,' he said. 'Watson and I are going to walk in the garden for a few minutes. And then we'll look carefully at the upper floor of the house. We'll see you later, Inspector.'

When we were walking in the garden I asked why Holmes was suddenly feeling happier.

'Lestrade's men didn't search that corridor yesterday,' he told me as he **paced** up and down. 'But I searched it. I searched it very carefully. The fingerprint wasn't there yesterday. It arrived during the night, while Mr McFarlane was in prison! I think that I understand what has happened now. Poor Lestrade will be angry.'

Track 5

Glossary

break off an engagement to end an agreement to get married

bloodstain A stain is a mark left accidentally on clothes or surfaces. A bloodstain is a mark made accidentally by blood.

fingerprint a mark that you leave on something when you touch it, showing the pattern of lines on the skin of your fingers

pace (up and down) to walk with regular steps because you are measuring something or because you are worried or impatient