

A Scandal in Bohemia by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle Chapter 4

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Level: Intermediate

Age: Young adults / Adults

Time: 45 minutes (60 with optional activity)

Aims: In this lesson, students will:

1. take part in a quiz to review the story so far;
2. listen to order events;
3. study the use of *and*, *as*, *then* and *when* to show the order of events;
4. discuss what has happened to predict the end of the story.

Materials: One copy of the worksheet per student; Track 1 (the whole of Chapter 4) downloaded from onestopenglish; one copy of the full transcript per student

Summary: This is a rare case for Sherlock Holmes; the visit to his Baker Street residence by a worried foreign gentleman heralds the beginning of a mystery in which Holmes, for once, meets his match and fails to outwit an impressive and surprising adversary. In Chapter 4, Holmes puts his plan into action. If all goes well, Mrs Adler, now Mrs Norton, will be tricked into revealing where she has hidden the photograph and the king's worries will be over.

Quiz

Aims: to review what the students know about the story so far; to practise listening to questions

1. Explain that the class is going to do a quiz. Put students in teams of three to five. Ask them to think of a suitable name for their team. Write their team names on the board.
2. Explain that they must 'buzz' if they know an answer. Check that their 'buzzers' work by asking them to press the (imaginary) buzzers on their desks and ensuring that they make a suitable noise. They win a point for a correct answer but lose a point if they give an incorrect answer or fail to give the answer in time. If they get the answer wrong, the question goes to the team to the left, who may confer before giving their answer.
3. Read the first question to the first group and award points as appropriate. Continue by asking the second group the second question and so on.

1. What is the name of the story?
(*'A Scandal in Bohemia'*)

2. What road in London does Sherlock Holmes live on? (*Baker Street*)

3. Who is Holmes's mysterious visitor?
(*the King of Bohemia*)

4. The king is also a duke; the duke of where? (*of Cassel*)

5. Where was the king five years ago?
(*in Warsaw, Poland*)

6. What was Irene's job?
(*opera singer*)

7. What was Irene's surname? (*Adler*)

8. Where does she now live?
(*in London*)

9. What does she have that worries the king?
(*a photograph of the two of them*)

10. How many times have the king's servants tried to steal the photograph?
(*five*)

11. What are the king's future plans?
(*to marry a princess*)

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12. What is the princess's name? (*Clotilde*)
13. How long has Holmes got to get the photo back? (*three days*)
14. What is the name of Irene Adler's house? (*Briony Lodge*)
15. What does Irene Adler always do in the afternoon? (*go out to drive in Regent's Park*)
16. What is Irene Adler now called? (*Irene Norton*)
17. Who was at her wedding to Godfrey Norton? (*Holmes!*)
18. What chapter are we going to listen to today? (*Chapter 4*)
19. What do we know about Holmes's plan? (*Watson is going to help; a smoke bomb is involved.*)

4. Total the points and announce the winning team.

Listening

Aim: to order the events

1. Hand out the worksheet. Put students into pairs and ask them to guess the order of events before they listen. Check they understand the vocabulary (*clergyman* was studied in the previous lesson).
2. Play Track 1. When the chapter is finished, let students compare answers in pairs. Then, hand out the transcript so that they can confirm their answers.
3. Finally, get feedback from the class. If students have read or listened to the first story in the collection, 'The Norwood Builder', ask what similarities there are between the two stories.

Key:

1. *The king's servants try to find and steal the photo.*

2. *Holmes pays some actors to do a job.*
3. *Holmes dresses as a clergyman.*
4. *The actors arrive at Briony Lodge.*
5. *Holmes and Watson arrive at Briony Lodge.*
6. *Mrs Norton arrives at Briony Lodge in her carriage.*
7. *There is a fight outside Mrs Norton's house.*
8. *Holmes is attacked.*
9. *Mrs Norton invites Holmes into her house.*
10. *Mrs Norton gets some water for Holmes.*
11. *Holmes asks a servant to open the window.*
12. *Watson throws a smoke bomb into the room.*
13. *Mrs Norton opens a secret cupboard.*
14. *A stranger speaks to Holmes.*
15. *Holmes sends the king a message.*
16. *Holmes, Watson and the king go to Briony Lodge.*

Language 1 (optional)

Aim: to study the use of *and, as, then* and *when* to show the order of events

1. Put students in pairs. Ask them to read the four sentences from the story, a to d, and to answer the three questions.
2. Go through the answers with the whole class. Use the board to clarify if necessary.

Key:

1. *In sentences b, c and d, the first underlined actions happen first. In sentence a, they happen at the same time.*
2. *a. as; b. when; c. and; d. then*
3. *a and b: He told me his plan as we walked ...; I lay on a sofa in the sitting room when Mrs Norton ...*

Language 2 (optional)

Aim: to study the use of *and, as, then* and *when* to show the order of events

1. Point out the five sentences. Ask students to rewrite them so that they mean the same, using the word in bold.

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2. Let them check in pairs before eliciting the answers.

Key:

1. Holmes reached the house **and** a small carriage approached and stopped in front of it.
2. He quickly fell to the ground, **then** I saw blood on his face.
3. **When** I threw the smoke bomb through the window, I shouted, 'Fire! Fire!' / I shouted, 'Fire! Fire!' **when** I threw the smoke bomb through the window.
4. Holmes joined me ten minutes later **and** he was smiling.
5. We were pleased with our day's work **as** we reached Baker Street. / **As** we reached Baker Street, we were pleased with our day's work.

Speaking

Aims: to check full understanding of the story; to predict what is going to happen in the final chapter

1. Put students in pairs or small groups. Indicate questions 1 to 5 on the worksheet and ask the students to discuss them.
2. Monitor the groups to find out how well they have understood the story.
3. As a whole class, elicit some ideas about the last question: what is going to happen.

Key:

1. Holmes is happy that his plan has worked and he has found out where Mrs Norton has hidden the photo.
2. students' own answers – If they understand that Mrs Norton realized the smoke bomb was not a threat, they may also understand that she is probably aware that she has given her secret away. She may be upset with herself, angry for being tricked and possibly doubly determined not to lose the photo.
3. He will go with the king to Briony Lodge to take the photo from its hiding place.
4. students' own answers
5. students' own answers

Follow-up tasks

- Students make a list of the first five things they would save in the event of a fire. They describe what (or who) they would save and why.
- What is a good place to hide something that you don't want others to find? Have the students ever had to hide something? What was it and why did they have to hide it? Students can discuss and, then, write down their answers.

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Listening

Put the events in the order in which you think they happen.

- A stranger speaks to Holmes.
- Holmes and Watson arrive at Briony Lodge.
- Holmes asks a servant to open the window.
- Holmes dresses as a clergyman.
- Holmes is attacked.
- Holmes pays some actors to do a job.
- Holmes sends the king a message.
- Holmes, Watson and the king go to Briony Lodge.
- Mrs Norton arrives at Briony Lodge in her carriage.
- Mrs Norton gets some water for Holmes.
- Mrs Norton invites Holmes into her house.
- Mrs Norton opens a secret cupboard.
- The actors arrive at Briony Lodge.
- 1 The king's servants try to find and steal the photo.
- There is a fight outside Mrs Norton's house.
- Watson throws a smoke bomb into the room.

Listen to Chapter 4 to check.

Language 1

Read sentences a to d. Answer questions 1 to 3.

1. Which actions happen first, the first underlined actions or the second? In one sentence, they happen at the same time. Which?
 - a. As we walked towards Briony Lodge, he told me his plan.
 - b. When Mrs Norton and her driver got me inside the house, I lay on a sofa in the sitting room.
 - c. Mrs Norton went to get me some water and I asked a servant to open the window.
 - d. 'Goodnight, Mr Sherlock Holmes,' he said quietly. Then he walked quickly away.
2. Which words in each sentence tell you the order of the actions?
3. Which sentences could you reorder so that the second underlined actions come before the first, without changing the words or the meaning?

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Language 2

Rewrite sentences 1 to 5 so that they mean the same. Use the word in bold.

1. As Holmes reached the house, a small carriage approached and stopped in front of it.
and

2. He quickly fell to the ground and I saw blood on his face.
then

3. I threw the smoke bomb through the window and I shouted, 'Fire! Fire!'
when

4. When Holmes joined me ten minutes later, he was smiling.
and

5. We were pleased with our day's work when we reached Baker Street.
as

Speaking

Discuss the questions.

1. How is Holmes feeling at the end of the day?
2. How do you think Irene Norton is feeling?
3. What is Holmes's plan for the next day?
4. Who is the slim young man outside Holmes's apartment on Baker Street?
5. What do you think is going to happen?

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Track 1

Transcript

At a little before seven o'clock that evening, we arrived in the district of St John's Wood. That district of London is not far from Baker Street and we arrived on foot. Holmes was disguised as a clergyman. He could have been a fine actor if he had not become a detective! As we walked towards Briony Lodge, he told me his plan.

'I'm sure that the photograph is hidden in a secret place in the house,' he said. 'It's too large for Irene Adler to carry it with her everywhere. But the king's servants couldn't find it when they broke in. It must be very cleverly hidden. The woman has two reasons to hide it now. She wants to keep it safe so that she can blackmail the king. But she doesn't want her new husband to know about it either.'

'How will you find it, then, Holmes?' I asked. 'She won't tell you where it is, even if she thinks you are an innocent clergyman.'

'It's simple. I'll make her show me where it is, Watson,' he replied.

'But how will you do that?' I said.

'I understand the minds of women like Irene Adler,' he replied. 'If a married woman's house catches fire, the first thing that she will try to save is her baby. If a rich unmarried woman's house catches fire, she will probably try to save her jewels first. But Irene Adler will want to save the thing that gives her power. I believe that the photograph is the first thing that she will try to save if her house catches fire. So we'll make her think that it has caught fire. I'll get into the house, in the way that I've planned. You'll throw the smoke bomb. When your bomb starts to release smoke, shout "Fire! The house is burning!" Then walk quickly to the corner of the street and wait for me. I'll join you there after ten minutes.'

'When you shout, some other people in the street will start to shout too,' Holmes went on. 'I shall be watching Irene Adler carefully. I hope that she will give away her secret. Do you remember Jonas Oldacre, the Norwood Builder, Watson? A fire that we started made him give away his secret, didn't it?'

We stopped about a hundred yards away from Briony Lodge. There were already several men near the house. Holmes said, 'Ah, there are my friends. You must stay here for now, Watson.' And he walked on towards them. Two of the men were soldiers. Two were rich young men in expensive clothes, who were calling to a pretty young woman on the other side of the street. Some other shabby men were doing nothing at all. They were just looking at the sky.

Then, as I watched, something very strange happened. As Holmes reached the house, a small carriage approached and stopped in front of it. A very beautiful woman got out of it. At that moment, a fight broke out between two of the men in the street. Soon all the others joined in and the woman from the carriage was caught in the middle of the fight. But there was something unreal about the scene – I felt as if I was watching a play. And then Holmes tried to interfere in the fight, trying to protect the woman.

In a moment, all the men started to attack Holmes instead of each other. He shouted for help, but I did not interfere. He quickly fell to the ground and I saw blood on his face. Then suddenly all the men ran away. At the same time the woman and her driver went to help Holmes.

'Will you get me some water, please?' Holmes said to the woman, in a weak voice.

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‘Please come into my house,’ she replied. ‘You must lie down until you feel better.’

As they entered the house, I moved carefully towards the left-hand window. Five minutes later, I saw a servant open it. I saw Holmes inside the room. He raised his hand, and then he moved quickly away from the open window. I threw the smoke bomb through the window and I shouted, ‘Fire! Fire! The house is burning!’ As I ran towards the corner, the street filled with people again. They were shouting too.

When Holmes joined me ten minutes later, he was smiling.

‘Well, I know where the photograph is now,’ he said.

‘What happened?’ I asked. ‘Tell me everything, Holmes.’

‘All the men in the street were actors, of course,’ he went on. ‘I paid them earlier this afternoon and told them what to do. The blood on my face came from the theatre too – it wasn’t real. When Mrs Norton and her driver got me inside the house, I lay on a sofa in the sitting room. Mrs Norton went to get me some water and I asked a servant to open the window. You threw the bomb and shouted, and the woman hurried back into the room. She ran to a corner where the wall was made of wooden panels. There’s a secret cupboard behind a wooden panel there, disguised as part of the wall. She opened it and began to take something out. Then she saw the smoke bomb and she quickly put the thing back and closed the panel. She left the room quickly, without speaking, and I left the house. Her driver was watching me so I didn’t steal the photograph.’

As we walked home, Holmes told me the rest of his plan.

‘I’ll send the king a message tonight,’ he said. ‘Tomorrow morning, we’ll call at Briony Lodge with the king. We’ll arrive early, before Mrs Norton has got dressed. The servants will tell us to wait in the sitting room until she is ready to see us. We’ll open the secret panel and take the photograph. I hope we won’t see the lady at all. If we do, we’ll give her a problem. We’ll say that we’ll tell her husband what we know about her if she tries to make trouble.’

It seemed like a good plan. We were pleased with our day’s work when we reached Baker Street. But one strange thing happened that evening. When we arrived at Holmes’s door, a slim young man passed us in the street.

‘Goodnight, Mr Sherlock Holmes,’ he said quietly. Then he walked quickly away.

‘Who was that?’ said Holmes. ‘I’m sure I’ve heard that voice before.’