

The Second Stain

by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Chapter 4

Author: Daniel Barber

Level: Intermediate

Age: Young adults / Adults

Time: 45 minutes

Aims: In this lesson, students will:

1. recap the characters in the story and describe them;
2. practise a prediction technique to help them in listening comprehension;
3. listen for detail;
4. become more aware of, and practise, the past perfect as a narrative tense;
5. rewrite a narrative using different chronological sequences and compare them stylistically.

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: Sherlock Holmes and his assistant, Doctor Watson, are visited by two very important gentlemen: the Prime Minister and the Minister for Europe, Mr Hope. They want Holmes's help in an extremely delicate matter. Hope has lost a document, the existence of which, if made public, could threaten the peace and stability of Britain. In Chapter 4, an inquest into the death of Eduardo Lucas does not interest Holmes, even though the spy's killer is revealed. His job is not to reveal a murderer but to save Europe from war.

Speaking

Aim: to recap the story by thinking of and describing the characters

1. Tell the class that, so far, in chapters 1 to 3, a total of eleven characters have been mentioned. Ask each student to write down, on a piece of paper, as many characters as they can think of in one minute. They must not look in their lesson notes.
2. Then, let them pool their ideas with a partner. Put them in pairs (or, if there are more than 20 students, put them in groups of three or four) and explain that, as well as listing the names, they need to decide who each person is – for example, Watson is Holmes's friend and assistant, and the narrator of the story) and what their significance is in the story. Give them three or four minutes for this.
3. Explain that you are going to play a game. Each pair (or group) will share with

the class one character they have thought of. The pair with the most points will win the game. They get a maximum of two points for the correct name (correct first and last name wins two points; just the first or last name wins one, as does a name containing mistakes), two points for information about the character (who they are and their significance in the story) and one point for every other pair who has not thought of that person.

4. Choose one pair to go first. Get them to relay as much information as they can about the character they chose to talk about. Check how many other pairs have not written this character's name down. Put the pair's total score on the board, as well as the name of the character they chose. Nominate another pair to do the same.

5. When all the pairs have contributed and no one can think of any more characters, reveal the remaining characters (and give yourself lots of points for being the only person to remember them!).

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Key:

Sherlock Holmes – the main character
Dr Watson – Holmes's friend and assistant, and the narrator of the story
Trelawney Hope – the Minister for European Affairs. He has lost the document.
Lord Bellinger – the Prime Minister and Hope's boss. He wants Holmes to retrieve the document.
Oberstein – a spy based in London
La Rothiere – a spy based in London
Eduardo Lucas – a spy based in London, who has been murdered.
Mrs Pringle – Lucas's housekeeper
John Mitton – Lucas's valet
Hilda Hope – Trelawney Hope's wife. She visited Holmes, wanting information.
Inspector Lestrade – the policeman investigating Lucas's death

6. Ask them to choose one of the characters and to visualize them. Tell them to stay silent but to answer these questions in their heads:

- What do they look like?
- What are they wearing?
- Do they have anything in their hands?
- What do they want to happen in the story?

Then, have students describe their characters to each other in their pairs or small groups.

Listening

Aim: to listen for specific information

1. Hand out the worksheet. Explain that the students are now going to listen to the whole of Chapter 4 and should fill in the missing information in sentences 1 to 12 in the listening activity. Ask them to evaluate how difficult the task will be for them on a scale of 1 to 10. Get a rough idea by show of hands how hard the class perceive this activity to be.

2. Tell them that there is a prediction task they can do to assist them in their listening. Tell them to first read the sentences on the worksheet and predict what kind of information might be missing. Do sentence 1 as an example. Elicit that the missing information is probably a person because it is normally people who are guilty of crimes. You could even encourage them to predict who that person might be.

3. Give them a couple of minutes to read the other sentences, making sure that they write down their predictions in the margins next to each sentence. When they have finished, ask the whole class the following questions:

Which sentence is probably missing ...

- ... a number? (7)
- ... a language? (5)
- ... an object? (2)
- ... an action in the infinitive? (11)
- ... an action in the past? (10)
- ... a person? (1, 3, 4, 8)
- ... a place? (6, 9)
- ... a day? (9)

You may even decide to ask students to guess the actual answer before they listen.

4. Ask them to now re-evaluate the difficulty of the task on a scale of 1 to 10. Ask for a show of hands of people who think it will be easier now that they have done this prediction work.

5. Play Track 1. When the track is over, let the students compare their answers in pairs before conducting whole-class feedback.

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Key: 1. John Mitton; 2. gifts / a few things; 3. Lestrade; 4. politicians (in different countries); 5. many languages; 6. Paris; 7. four; 8. Eduardo Lucas; 9. London; Tuesday; 10. killed Lucas; 11. save Europe from war; 12. nothing

6. Finally, ask the students whether they think that the prediction technique for listening tasks helped them at all in this activity. Find out whether they would use it again.

Language: the present perfect

Aim: to raise awareness of, and practise using, the present perfect as a narrative tense

1. Tell the class to look at the extract on the worksheet. Check that they understand *chronological order*, perhaps by illustrating it with typical daily routines from first to last (waking up > having breakfast > going to school, etc). Ask them to put the three actions in chronological order.

Key: First, Lucas had discovered that Mitton was a thief; second, Mitton had killed Lucas; third, Inspector Lestrade arrested John Mitton.

2. Ask them whether this order is the same as the order in which they read about the actions. (No, it isn't.) Ask them how they know, then, that Lucas discovering that Mitton was a thief and being murdered by him happened before the arrest. Elicit that, as well as the context and meaning of the story, the jump back to the past is shown in the use of the past perfect. Check that students can form the past perfect (*had* + past participle) and understand that it is used to indicate that an action happened before another action in the past.

Writing

Aim: to practise rewriting a story in different chronological order

1. Put the students in groups of three. Write on the board the following sequences:

Sequence 1: F>G>B>C>D>E>A>H

Sequence 2: D>E>F>A>B>C>G>H

Sequence 3: B>E>F>G>D>C>H>A

Show them the paragraph on the worksheet and explain that it is Madame Fournaye's story told in chronological order. Tell them that they are going to rewrite it in different ways and decide which is better, and why. Assign each student in each group a sequence: 1, 2 or 3. Explain that this is the order in which they must rewrite the story. Remind them that they should think about using the past for all the verbs unless there is a jump back in time in the narrative (for example, in sequence 1, from G to B), at which point the past perfect may be useful. They may want to make other changes, such as adding in linking words and connecting sentences together.

Note: You should explain that there is some choice as to whether to continue using the past perfect for all the actions in the past, once that back shift has been established, or just to use it once, with the first jump back in time.

2. Set them five minutes to rewrite the passage. Go around the groups checking that everyone knows what to do and how to do it. Pay special attention to the appropriate use of the past perfect to support the time shifts. When they have finished, ask them to read out loud their version of the story to the others in their group. They should decide which version they prefer and discuss why. There is no right answer to this question, of course, but they may say that sequence 3 is effective because it doesn't reveal the motive for the murder until the end, or that sequence 2 has impact because it starts with the murder.

Possible answers:

Sequence 1: Madame Fournaye became mentally ill and started behaving dangerously. She was taken to hospital.

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Fournaye **had travelled** to London on Monday. People who live near Lucas's house **saw/had seen** her in Godolphin Street. She **killed/had killed** Lucas. She then returned to Paris. Eduardo Lucas **had** sometimes **lived** with her in Paris, as her husband. The police decided not to prosecute her for the murder.

Sequence 2: Madame Fournaye killed Eduardo Lucas. When she returned to Paris, she became mentally ill and started behaving dangerously. Lucas **had** sometimes **lived** with her in Paris, as her husband. When Fournaye travelled to London on Monday, people who live near Lucas's house saw her in Godolphin Street. She was taken to hospital and the police decided not to prosecute her for the murder.

Sequence 3: Madame Fournaye travelled to London on Monday. When she returned to Paris, she became mentally ill and started behaving dangerously. She was taken to hospital. She **had killed** Lucas. People who live near Lucas's house **saw/had seen** her in Godolphin Street. The police decided not to prosecute her for the murder. Eduardo Lucas **had** sometimes **lived** with Fournaye in Paris, as her husband.

Follow-up tasks

- The students imagine the scene between Eduardo Lucas and Madame Fournaye. They write a dialogue of their final

conversation, including Lucas's final words before he is killed.

- Hand out the transcript. The students read through and collect phrases and collocations, such as:

an inquest into (a death, etc)

to avoid prosecution

a strong alibi

There's nothing to tell.

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Listening

Read the sentences. What kind of information do you think is missing?
Make notes.

1. Lestrade thought that _____ was guilty of murdering Lucas.
2. Lucas had given _____ to his valet.
3. Holmes has discovered the same information as _____: nothing.
4. Lucas knew many _____.
5. Lucas could speak _____.
6. Lucas used to go to _____ quite often.
7. There is a development in the story after _____ days.
8. Henri Fournaye is another name for _____.
9. Madame Fournaye travelled to _____ on Monday and returned on _____.
10. There, she probably _____.
11. Holmes says that their job is not to discover who killed Lucas but to _____.
12. Holmes says that the most interesting thing that has happened is that _____ has happened.

Now, listen to Chapter 4 and complete the sentences.

Language: the past perfect

Look at the actions in bold in the extract. Put them in chronological order, from first to last.

One day, Inspector Lestrade **arrested** John Mitton, the dead man's valet. He decided that Lucas **had discovered** that Mitton was a thief and that Mitton **had killed** Lucas to avoid prosecution.

Writing

The following passage is written in chronological order (A to H). Rewrite it in a different order. Your teacher will tell you the order.

- (A) Eduardo Lucas sometimes lived with Madame Fournaye in Paris, as her husband.
(B) Fournaye travelled to London on Monday. (C) People who live near Lucas's house saw her in Godolphin Street. (D) She killed Lucas. (E) She returned to Paris.
(F) She became mentally ill and started behaving dangerously. (G) She was taken to hospital. (H) The police decided not to prosecute her for the murder.

Now, read and compare your version with others'. Which is best? Why?

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Track 1

Transcript and glossary

During the next three days, I did not see Holmes often. He went out and came in at strange hours. He sometimes stopped to eat a sandwich and sometimes he played his violin for a few minutes. This always helped him to think, he said. But he told me little. I learnt more from the newspapers than I did from Holmes.

There was an **inquest** into Eduardo Lucas's death. The jury decided that he had been murdered. But that was obvious, and they could not say who the killer was, of course. One day, Inspector Lestrade arrested John Mitton, the dead man's valet. Lestrade had found a few things that had belonged to Lucas in Mitton's room. He decided that Lucas had discovered that Mitton was a thief and that Mitton had killed Lucas to avoid **prosecution**. But the valet explained that the things had been gifts from his employer. The housekeeper knew about these gifts and agreed with Mitton's explanation. And the man's **alibi** for the night of the murder was strong – he had visited friends on the other side of London. The police interviewed his friends and soon Lestrade had to **release** Mitton.

'Watson,' said Holmes on the third day, 'I'm sorry. I haven't told you anything about our case. But that's because there's nothing to tell you. Lestrade has discovered nothing and I haven't done any better.'

'The police are sure that it wasn't a burglar who killed Lucas,' Holmes went on. 'No valuable objects were taken. The police have now read all the papers in the dead man's desk, but that hasn't helped them. The papers prove that Lucas was friendly with many politicians in several different countries and that he was able to speak many languages. They prove that he wrote and received a huge number of letters. But to Lestrade, there's nothing **suspicious** about any of this. He doesn't know that Lucas was a spy and I'm not going to tell him. We must keep our secret.'

The police had discovered something though. They learnt that Lucas spent a lot of time in Paris each year. He sometimes stayed there for several months at a time.

'The only strange thing is that he never took his valet to France with him,' said Holmes. 'Mitton always stayed in London when Lucas was away from home. But that fact doesn't really help us to solve the mystery of his death.'

Then, on the fourth day, everything changed. One of the newspapers published a story about a long telegram which the London police had received from Paris. I showed the story to Holmes as he ate his breakfast.

Our readers know about the mysterious death of Mr Eduardo Lucas at his house in Westminster. Earlier this week, the police arrested and then released the dead man's valet. Now we can tell our readers that Mr Lucas has for many years had a double life. Yesterday, the servants of a woman in Paris reported to the French police that she had become mentally ill and was behaving dangerously. The woman, Madame Fournaye, was taken immediately to a hospital. Last Tuesday, she had returned from a short trip to London in a desperate state. She had also lost her memory.

Her servants told the police that a man sometimes lived with her at her house in Paris. He used the name of Henri Fournaye, and the servants believed that he was her husband. But photographs have proved that this man was the same man who was known in

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London as Eduardo Lucas. Madame Fournaye's servants also told the police that she has always been an angry and jealous person. It seems that she travelled to London on Monday. Perhaps she went to **confront** Mr Lucas about his double life. Perhaps she killed him because she was jealous. Perhaps she then lost her memory because of the shock of her crime, or perhaps she was already mentally ill when she killed the man.

A photograph of this woman has been shown to people who live near Mr Lucas's house in Westminster. Several of them have told the police that a woman who looked like Madame Fournaye was in Godolphin Street on Monday. She was there for several hours and she seemed to be watching Mr Lucas's house. The French doctors do not believe that she will ever recover her memory. They believe she will have to remain in hospital for the rest of her life. She will not be prosecuted for the murder of Eduardo Lucas.

'Well, this doesn't help us much,' Holmes said when he had finished reading.

'But Holmes, it explains Lucas's death,' I said.

'Ah, Watson, the man's death is not important,' Holmes replied. 'It's just a detail. Our job is to save Europe from war, not to discover who killed Eduardo Lucas. Only one important thing has happened in the last few days and that is that nothing has happened.'

'What do you mean, Holmes?' I asked.

'Well, I get news from the government almost every hour,' Holmes replied. 'If there were any signs of trouble beginning in any European country, I'd know about it. And there are no signs of that happening. So the letter hasn't reached anyone who could make trouble by publishing it. But we still need to know who has it.'

At that moment, a boy entered the room with a telegram for Holmes.

'It's from Lestrade, Watson,' Holmes said when he had read it. 'He wants me to go to Godolphin Street. Perhaps he needs our help.'

Glossary

inquest an official attempt by a court to find the cause of someone's death

jury a group of people, usually twelve, who judge a court case. Members of a jury are ordinary members of the public.

prosecution the process or act of accusing someone of a crime and asking a court of law to judge them. If you accuse someone of a crime and ask a court of law to judge them, you prosecute them.

alibi evidence that someone was somewhere else when a crime was committed

release to let someone leave a place where they have been kept

suspicious making you believe that something is wrong, dangerous or illegal

confront to speak to someone in a very direct way because you disagree with them and you want them to explain their opinions or behaviour