

Year 8 – Sherlock Holmes – English Knowledge Organiser

Expectations and content

What is this unit about and why do we teach it?

This unit consists of three stories from 'The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes' (1892): 'A Scandal in Bohemia', 'The Red-Headed League' and 'The Blue Carbuncle'.

Ever since the first Sherlock Holmes story was published in 1887 the series has remained one of the most iconic in detective fiction, English literature, and even in the world of crime-solving itself. Each story is an entertaining mixture of intrigue, mystery, humour and suspense.

Key Vocabulary taught:

- Deduction
- Scandal
- Periodical / Serial
- Introspective
- Dual nature
- Fallible

Key terminology taught:

- Characterisation
- Rhetoric
- Irony
- Suspense
- Metaphor
- Analyse
- Comparison
- Inference
- Synthesising

If your child needs support

- Reread the stories with your child – discuss the characters and the main events with them as you read.
- Draw up a storyboard / comic-strip of the main events with them to develop an understanding of the sequence of events.
- Sketch pictures of the main characters and surround them with descriptive adjectives to help them to understand characterisation.
- Research the Victorian era and in particular the London backdrop where the books are set to give a greater understanding of the setting.
- Use a dictionary to draw up a glossary of the key words and terms from the stories to make them easier to understand and to expand vocabulary.

If your child needs extension

Questions to discuss with your child:

- What makes a good detective?
- Why is the character of Sherlock Holmes still popular today?
- Do the best stories all contain a mystery which needs to be solved?

Challenging activities to complete:

- Research Conan Doyle and his life. Consider why he decided to write the Sherlock Holmes stories.
- Research crime in Victorian London. Consider why this might have made Sherlock Holmes so popular at the time.
- Have a go at writing or storyboarding your own detective story.

Suggested further reading:

- 'The Vile Victorians' – Terry Deary
- 'Victorians' – DK
- 'The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes' – Conan Doyle
- 'Death Cloud' (Young Sherlock Holmes bk1) – Andrew Lane
- 'The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time' – Mark Haddon