



HOLMES: The Art of Deduction

Study Guide and Bibliography

The Baker Street

A Case of Identity

The Baker Street
Irregulars

The Baker Street
Irregulars

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October 1 & 2 • 10:00 am

Valborg Theatre

Department of Theatre and Dance

APPALACHIAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Teacher Study Guide

Holmes: The Art of Deduction

Play Synopsis

A new play, written by Appalachian State University Department of Theatre and Dance faculty member, Derek Davidson, ***Holmes: The Art of Deduction*** is a new twist on a “classic” favorite – Sherlock Holmes. This witty, exciting and surprising take on the adventures of Sherlock Homes –in particular, the stories “Scandal in Bohemia” and “The Red-Headed League—while keeping true to the originals, updates the manner of conveying the story in a way that underscores the fluid nature of storytelling generally. In this most recent adaptation, Holmes and Watson solve mysteries with the help of some very unlikely—but pretty hip—assistants, who act as emissaries for the audience, helping to show how cool and accessible these “classic” stories can be.

Director’s Note **by Teresa Lee**

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle wrote the first story of his famous detective duo, Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson, in 1886. When he was commissioned to write additional stories for popular magazines, he did so with some hesitation. Doyle wanted to write “weightier” material. Material that the more mainstream literary community would respect...in other words, he wanted to write a “classic.” At the time, Conan Doyle himself had no idea that he *was* writing classic stories that would be around for so many generations to come. He was surprised at the popularity of his Sherlock Holmes character. In an attempt to free himself from the literary shackles of Sherlock’s adventures, Doyle famously “killed off” the beloved Holmes. Sherlock Holmes stories had become so imbedded in the popular culture of the day, his readers would not hear of it. Public demand for more adventures of the quirky consulting detective prevailed. Doyle brought Holmes back to life ten years later. In our modern popular culture, once again, another generation of readers (and TV and film fans) has become captivated by contemporary retellings of the classic *Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. As modern society reinvents itself time and again, it is remarkable to observe how Doyle’s characters adapt and survive. Witness the recent BBC series starring Benedict Cumberbatch!

In our production of *Holmes*, part of what is being interrogated is the question “what exactly makes a classic a *classic*?” Why do classics endure? Do classics have to be boring? I think many of us would agree with the play’s character, Billy, when she proclaims, “when I hear the word, “classic,” I hear the word class...” It is true that classics are often subject to becoming merely *subjects*, something to be studied with an analytical eye, not works of literary art that have the potential to live in the imagination of the reader. The dictionary defines the word classic as “an author or a literary work of the first rank, especially one of demonstrably enduring quality.” Clearly the stories of our friends Sherlock Holmes and John Watson fall into the category of “demonstrably enduring quality.” And whether he thought so or not, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle did create “a literary work of the first rank.” But he did something else. He created characters and stories that make us think about thinking. Through Sherlock, he teaches us to observe the world around us—to use the “art of deduction” to solve mysteries and see what others may not see. That is what has intrigued countless readers for generations. We hope you enjoy the classic stories of Sherlock Holmes and our not-so-classic, “totally cool” retelling of these classic stories through the medium of live theatre.

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About the Playwright

Derek Davidson teaches Playwriting, Theatre History, and Script Analysis at Appalachian State University. Before ASU, Derek taught Dramaturgy at Carnegie Mellon University for one year, and had worked at The Barter Theatre in Virginia as a Resident Company Member and Coordinator for the Appalachian Festival of Plays and Playwrights. Directing credits include *As You Like It*, *Mother Courage and her Children*, *The Goat*, or *Who is Sylvia?* and the premiere production of *Man of Constant Sorrow: The Story of the Stanley Brothers*. He is also a playwright; his plays *The Road Where It Curves Away* and *Holmes* have been performed at Barter and in theatres in Ohio. His film *This is Not the South* (which he wrote and directed,) has shown at festivals and conferences throughout the southeast.

The Birth of Sherlock Holmes



The original Sherlock Holmes books were written by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. He was a Scottish born author who was inspired by Dr. Joseph Bell to create Sherlock Holmes. Bell was one of the author's medical professors while he was studying to become an ophthalmologist. Doyle was struck by Bell's ability to diagnose patients by mere observation. Doyle wrote a letter to Bell in 1892, after Sherlock Holmes went viral.

"It is most certainly to you that I owe Sherlock Holmes, and though in the stories I have the advantage of being able to place [the detective] in all sorts of dramatic positions, I do not think that his analytical work is in the least an exaggeration of some effects which I have seen you produce in the outpatient ward."



Portrait of Sherlock Holmes by Sidney Paget



Dr. Joseph Bell

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Literary Inspirations

The writings of Edgar Allen Poe.

The New Arabian Knights (1882): Inspired Doyle to create a fantastical and surreal atmosphere in one of Sherlock Holmes's story called *The Sign of the Four*, which also includes Indian overtones.

The Dynamiters (1885): A sequence in *A Study in Scarlet* contains a Mormon flashback sequence which bears resemblance to Stevenson's novel.

The Mystery of the Hansom Cab (1886): This novel is an example of the urban, late-Victorian crime novel.

About the Place and Time

The Sherlock Holmes stories in our play are set in London, England in 1890's, late in the period known as the Victorian Era. Conan Doyle described the city of London at the time in *A Study in Scarlet*: "a dun-coloured veil hung over the house tops, looking like the reflections of the mud-coloured streets beneath." It was a time of tremendous growth in population and industry. The city was crowded with the hustle and bustle of people, horses pulling carriages and a new railway system. With the explosion of London's population came the need for an increase in the Metropolitan Police force to help maintain law and order. In 1890 the Metropolitan Police moved from their original location that backed onto a street called Great Scotland Yard to a new location, renamed New Scotland Yard. Since then, that branch of law enforcement has been called Scotland Yard. The fictional character of Sherlock Holmes is a crime consultant who aided Scotland Yard in their investigations.

Read more: <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/sherlock-holmes-london>



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Activities Before/After the Performance

(Select topics appropriate for your grade level)

Discussion and Activities Before the Show

- Discuss the difference between television, movies and a live theatre performance. During a live performance it is important to remember the actors on stage can hear the audience. Discuss proper audience etiquette.
- Theatre is a collaborative art. Discuss the roles of the various people involved with the creation of the play. Specifically, discuss the roles of the playwright, director, designer, stage manager and actor.
- The title of our play is *Holmes: the Art of Deduction*. Discuss the meaning of “deduction” or “deductive thinking.” In logic, it is a process of reasoning in which a conclusion follows necessarily from the premises presented, so that the conclusion cannot be false if the premises are true. Example: “All men are mortal. Socrates was a man. Therefore, Socrates was mortal.”
- The play is based on the mystery stories of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. What are the elements of a mystery in terms of literature?
- The character of Sherlock Holmes is a detective. What is the job of a detective? What do they do? What are some of the tools of their trade?
- What can you tell about a person’s body language and facial expressions? Can you pick up on what type of mood they’re in depending on their body language and expressions?
- Can you tell what kind of job someone works depending on their clothing or appearance? For example, what kind of clothing and shoes would a construction man wear?
- Have your class discuss times when they may have picked up on a clue to solve a problem. What kind of hints and clues did you pick up on?
- How can you benefit by being aware of what’s going on around you?
- A rose is an important prop in the play. What does a rose symbolize?
- In the play, the characters debate the way we approach a “classic” story. What is your definition of the word “classic?” What makes a piece of literature a classic?
- Have your students’ research the time period of London in the 1890’s. What would a day in the life of a person their age be like? What kind of clothes would they wear? What would school be like? What kind of music would they listen to? Would they even be able to watch TV?

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Discussion and Activities After the Show

1. Discuss the play itself. Who were the characters in the play? Which character did your students most identify with? Who was the protagonist? Who was the antagonist? What was the crisis that occurred? What was the climax of the play? What was the resolution? Did you solve the mysteries before the play gave you the answers?
2. Discuss how the students responded to the production. What elements of the play made it fun to watch? Do they feel as if they were changed by the production? Did it make them think of something they had never thought of before? Ask your students if they are interested in reading the Sherlock Holmes stories after seeing the play.
3. Will the students try to be more aware of their surroundings? Are they going to try to pick up on little clues in the way Sherlock Holmes does?
4. Have your students interview each other by asking questions about their favorite character. However, students aren't allowed to use their favorite characters name. They have to provide descriptions to the other student. The other student has to solve the mystery and add up all the clues to figure out who their favorite character is.
5. In the play, the character of Wiggins carries around books to find answers the character of Billy asks. Do you remember the information in the books you carry? Have your students pair up and quiz each other on a particular topic related to the play. Encourage them to research their answers.
6. Have you ever accidentally sent something like a mean message, embarrassing or inappropriate photo in a text, e-mail, or Facebook message and then later regretted it? How did you feel when you realized that you shouldn't have sent it? What did you do to fix the problem?
7. Have your students write a short mystery story of their own. Discuss the elements of a mystery in order to prepare them.
8. Write a letter to the actors! The actors would love to hear from your students. What was their favorite part of the production? Did attending the show inspire them? If so, how? Send letters to:

Attention: Teresa Lee, Department of Theatre & Dance
Appalachian State University
Boone, NC 28608

Vocabulary

Baritsu: A martial art and self-defense method developed in England in the late 1800's; actually called "bartitsu" at the time.

Bohemia: Historical Country of central Europe, occupying the western two-thirds of the traditional Czech lands.

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Vocabulary continued

Burrowing: To dig a hole or tunnel in the ground.

Deduction: a process of reasoning in which a conclusion follows necessarily from the premises presented, so that the conclusion cannot be false if the premises are true. A process of reasoning that moves from the general to the specific.

Deerstalker: A type of double-brimmed hat. Holmes was never actually described as wearing a deerstalker; most notably in "The Adventures of the Silver blaze," Watson, describes him as wearing "his ear-flapped traveling cap", and in "The Bascombe Valley Mystery", as wearing a "close-fitting cloth cap."

Ennui: A feeling of listlessness and dissatisfaction arising from a lack of occupation or excitement.

Freemason: Local fraternities of stonemasons; they retain the three grades of medieval craft guilds, those of Apprentice, journeyman or fellow, and Master mason.

Monographs: a detailed written study of a single specialized subject or an aspect of it.

Scotland Yard: Headquarters of the Metropolitan area of London.

Internet Resources

Here are some links that we used to prepare this study guide. If you wish, you may visit them to find out more information relevant to *Holmes: The Art of Deduction*, and Sherlock Holmes.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle:

<http://www.sherlockholmesonline.org/biography/index.htm>

Sherlock Holmes:

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/269523/Sherlock-Holmes>

Dr. Joseph Bell:

<http://www.sherlockian-sherlock.com/dr-joseph-bell-the-real-sherlock-holmes.php>

Further Reading

Duncan, Alistair (2009). *Close to Holmes: A Look at the Connections Between Historical London, Sherlock Holmes and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle*. London: MX Publishing.

Radford, John (1999). *The Intelligence of Sherlock Holmes and Other Three-pipe Problems*. Sigma Forlag.

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Holmes: The Art of Deduction

Holmes: The Art of Deduction
by Derek Davidson

Directed by Teresa Lee

Set and Props Design by Mike Helms
Costume Design by Sue Williams
Lighting Design by John Marty
Sound Design by Mike Helms
Stage Managed by Emily Siegal
Assistant Costume Design by Emily Candelario
Stage Combat Choreography by Teresa Lee and Jake Dailey

Cast in Order of Appearance

Holmes	Jake Dailey
Watson #1/ Bobby/Jones.....	Philip Henderson
Billy.....	Frazer Cornette
Stage Manager/Horse Groom 2.....	Jesslyn Wilson
Wiggins	Kimmy Fiorentino
B.S.I.'s	Brionna Knight, Lauren Pavlacka, Jenna Tonsor, Rachel Bammel
Irene Adler	Katelyn Sabet
Mrs. Turner	Katie Kahut
Watson #2	Preston Perrin
Wilson/ Horse Groom 1	Sloane Hickson
Clay/ Norton.....	Aaron Scotch
Secretary/ The Duke.....	Grayson Reith
Merryweather/ Clergyman	Ian Lawrence
Pedestrians and Street vendors.....	Various cast members

Setting: In and around the town of London, England.

Time: 1890's

This study guide was prepared by Teresa Lee, Rachel Bammel and Derek Davidson.

Instructional Materials Center APPlause! Resources



Holmes: The Art of Deduction (One Act)

IMC RESOURCES

MORE INFO

Elementary

Detective Blue by Steve Metzger • illustrated by Tedd Arnold (ASU IMC Stacks 741.5973 M596de)

Detective Small in the Amazing Banana Caper by Wong Herbert Yee (ASU IMC Stacks E Y425de)

Encyclopedia Brown Series by Donald Dobol (ASU IMC Stacks Fic S677)

The Fall of the Amazing Zalindas: Sherlock Holmes and the Baker Street Irregulars by Tracy Mack and Michael Citrin (ASU IMC Stacks Fic M1526fa)

Middle & Secondary

The Boy Sherlock Holmes Series by Shane Peacock (ASU IMC Stacks Fic P3563)

Case Closed: The Real Scoop on Detective Work by Milton Meltzer (ASU IMC Stacks 362.25 M528ca)

Crime Through Time Series by Bill H. Doyle (ASU IMC Stacks Fic D7541sw)

The Raven League series by Alex Simmons and Bill McCay (ASU IMC Stacks Fic S592ra)

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle Resources

The Hound of Baskervilles by Arthur Conan Doyle • illustrated by Nicollet (ASU IMC Stacks Fic D754ho)

The Mysterious Case of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (biography) by Cynthia Adams (ASU IMC Stacks 92 D754ad)

The Mysteries of Sherlock Holmes by Arthur Conan Doyle • illustrated by Paul Bachem (ASU IMC Stacks Fic D754my)

Cross-Curricular Connections

Crime Scene Science: 20 Projects and Experiments About Clues, Crimes, Criminals, and Other Mysterious Things by Karen Romano Young • illustrations by David Goldin (ASU IMC Stacks 363.25 Y73cr)

Blood and DNA: Crime Solving Science Experiments by Kenneth G. Rainis (ASU IMC Stacks 363.2562 R157bl)

Fingerprints: Crime Solving Science Experiments by Kenneth G. Rainis (ASU IMC Stacks 363.258 R157fi)

Partners in Crime: Integrating Language Arts and Forensic Science by E.K. Hein (ASU IMC Stacks 363.25 H468pa)



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Local teachers are eligible to sign up for a free Teacher Borrower Card, which enables them to use the Idea Factory and to borrow library materials.