

Sherlock Holmes Consulting Detective: ELA Lesson Plan

Learning the game: Sherlock Holmes Consulting Detective is a mystery & story-telling game for 1 to 8 people and for ages 13 and up. In Sherlock Holmes Consulting Detective, all the players are working cooperatively to solve a mystery set in Victorian-era London as you cordially compete with Sherlock himself. This world of Sherlock Holmes is supplemented by a map of London, a directory filled with contacts, a short-list of informants, newspapers, and case books with important details and encounters for each adventure. There is no time limit to this game, you only need to keep track of your turns and compare your final score to Sherlock's.

Topics Covered:

- Creative writing
- Literary analysis
- Reading comprehension
- Speaking fluency & communication

Lesson Objectives:

- Grades 6-8: Students will be able to critique Victorian-era literature by comparing a playthrough of Sherlock Holmes with the source material.
- Grades 9-12: Students will be able to formulate a conclusion that is supported by evidence by writing a persuasive essay based on a single case from Sherlock Holmes Consulting Detective.

Academic Language and Vocabulary: Case Book, London, questions, solutions, informants, criminologist, social columnist, medical examiner, pub, square, telegraph, cab, eminence guise, and activist.

Questions/Activities: Complete one or more of the following activities after completing one mystery in Sherlock Holmes Consulting Detective.

- Before beginning the questions phase, write a persuasive essay that argues for who you think committed the crime, what their motive was, and what their method was. In your essay, write your introduction and supporting body paragraphs only. Then complete the questions and answers phases. Afterwards, write your conclusion paragraph to your essay that includes a comparison of your argument with the game's answers to the questions. In your conclusion, discuss correct and incorrect information from your introduction and body paragraphs. When citing your information, be sure to include who, where, and when information was discovered.
- Analyze your gameplay of Sherlock Holmes Consulting Detective and after completing each case answer the following questions:
 - When you were reading aloud, reflect on your speaking voice by responding to the following questions:
 - How well did you project your voice? Were you speaking loud enough so everyone could hear you?
 - Were there any words or phrases that you had difficulty saying? Practice writing and speaking those words and sentences.

- Did you use different voices while reading? Discuss how speaking as different voices and exaggerative speaking add to the immersion of the game. What advantage would there be to being more immersed in the gameplay?
 - Analyze your cooperative play. Did you work in a group together? What did you do well as a group? What could you improve on?
- Select [1 of the 56 original Sherlock Holmes short stories](#), each story can be found through the “Discover Stories Online” section of the selected work. After reading a short story write at least one page on the following topics:
 - Provide a summary of the short story and write a review consisting of what you enjoyed about the story, disliked about the story, and critique the work of literature.
 - What literary devices were present in both Sherlock Holmes Consulting Detective and the story you read? Include use of theme and character development in your answer.
 - If able, write 1 to 2 paragraphs responding to the “Redmon’s Question” section of your specific short story on www.sherlockian.net.
- Select [1 of the original 4 Sherlock Holmes novels](#) and complete one or more of the following activities:
 - Provide a summary of the novel and write a review consisting of what you enjoyed about the story, disliked about the story, and critique the work of literature.
 - What literary devices were present in both Sherlock Holmes Consulting Detective and the story you read? Include use of theme and character development in your answer.
 - Write 2-3 sentence response for each of “Redmon’s Questions” after reading the entire work or defined sections.
 - Could the mystery you completed in Sherlock Holmes Consulting Detective be written as a long narrative like this? Why or Why not. If not, what would have to be added and/or expanded upon to accomplish this?
- After playing a single case, write a short story based on the adventure. Feel free to read one or more of the [56 original Sherlock Holmes short stories](#) for inspiration. You should include the same point of view and themes in which Sir Arthur Conan Doyle used in his stories.

Lesson Modifications:

- Explore other works that are set in the Victorian-era by researching authors and selecting one other work to discuss in a research paper that is at least one page. In your research paper, discuss various themes and archetypes that are shared between Sherlock Holmes and your selected work.
- If you read one of the Sherlock Holmes short stories or novels, examine the explore resources section of your specific story and research further on outside information that supplements this story.
- In two to three paragraphs, discuss the scientific method and its role in Sherlock Holmes stories and the mystery you completed. In your response, define each element of the scientific method and connect it to how it was applied by either you or Sherlock in the mystery you played.
- The character of Sherlock Holmes has been used in many different iterations and types of media. Research a portrayal of Sherlock that is not from literature and write a one-page essay that answers the following questions:
 - What media did you choose and why?
 - How many portrayals of Sherlock exist in the medium that you chose? Do you think this has an impact on your chosen portrayal?
 - What similarities or differences does the portrayal have from Sherlock Holmes Consulting Detective game?

- Were there any similarities in the case you played and the case from the chosen portrayal? This included the case themselves, the methods used to solve, and the characters that were involved in the case.
- Carlton House & Queen’s Park introduces the element of keeping track of time to grow realism of following up on leads through a 3-day case adventure. Choose one or more of the activities to complete while playing this version of the game:
 - After each day, write a 2-3 paragraph description of what happened through the perspective of you as a character in this story. This may be done as a diary entry.
 - After the 3rd day reflect on the mystery. How did the added element of keeping track of time change the gameplay?
 - Did keeping track of time change how you played the game?
 - If you also played the ‘Jack the Ripper’ series of cases from West End Adventures, compare those two different multi-case adventures. Which ones did you prefer and why?
- Jack the Ripper & West End Adventures introduce a longer narrative based in the historical murders surrounding the legend of “Jack the Ripper.” Please note that the game suggests that these cases are not played with children as some of the subject matter in these cases are very mature. Following the completion of the 4 cases review the included historical information about the real-life murders and complete the following activities:
 - Discuss your thoughts on who you believe to be Jack the Ripper after playing the cases. Write a brief persuasive essay that states your reasons and states supporting evidence.
 - Research further into the Jack the Ripper cases by examining the supplemental information in each case book, exploring online and locating primary and secondary resources. Then write at least one page about your findings. In your page include information you discovered that was also in Sherlock Holmes Consulting Detective as well as information that you feel strongly should be included in the game and why. After performing your research, what is your theory on who ‘Jack the Ripper’ was and why?
- The Baker Street Irregulars introduces new mysteries that introduce a tracking system for clues. That means the game “knows” where you have been and can change what you find at an address accordingly, this also allows Sherlock to provide more specific clues when you choose to visit him. After playing one or more of the mysteries complete one or more of the following activities:
 - The Baker Street Irregulars are referenced in the short story [“The Adventure of the Crooked Men”](#) and the novels [A Study in Scarlet](#) and [The Sign of the Four](#). Select one of these works to read and answer the following questions:
 - Analyze what literary devices were present in both Sherlock Holmes Consulting Detective and the story you read? Include use of theme and character development in your answer.
 - In the segment of the three works where the Baker Street Irregulars are mentioned, expand, and retell their side of the adventure from their perspective, either written down in a novelization or presented orally in character. Afterwards, write one paragraph on
 - If able, write 1 to 2 paragraphs responding to “Redmon’s Question” section of your specific short story on www.sherlockian.net.
 - Write the recap of the adventure you played as either a novelization or blog post. In your work, include the steps you took to solve the case and interactions with other characters.
 - In one paragraph, discuss how the sequence of visiting places and asking certain characters at a certain point in the adventure impacted how you solved the case?

Content Background Knowledge:

- [How to teach detective fiction](#)
- [Background information on Sherlock Holmes, another source for background information](#)
- [Tropes and idioms of Sherlock Holmes](#)
- [Components of argumentative essays](#)

Common Core Standards:

- Grades 6-8:
 - W.6-8.9: Draw evidence from literary texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
 - Apply appropriate grade level standards to literature.
 - L.6-8.2: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
 - Explain the function of verbals (gerunds, participles, infinitives) in general and their function in sentences.
 - Form and use verbs in the active and passive voice
 - Form and use verbs in the indicative, imperative, interrogative, conditional, and subjective mood.
 - Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb voice and mood.
- Grades 9-12:
 - L.9-12.3: Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for remaining or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.
 - SL.9-12.4: Present findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or oppose perspectives that are being addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.
 - W.9-12.1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
 - Introduce precise, knowledgeable claim(s), establish the significance of the claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that logically sequences claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
 - Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.
 - Use words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.
 - Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
 - Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.ⁱ



Selected License

Attribution-NonCommercial-
NoDerivatives 4.0 International



This is not a Free Culture License.



ⁱ Christopher Gibbs is currently on track to receive his Master's in Teaching in May of 2020 from Central Connecticut State University. He has been playing tabletop and role-playing games for over 20 years.