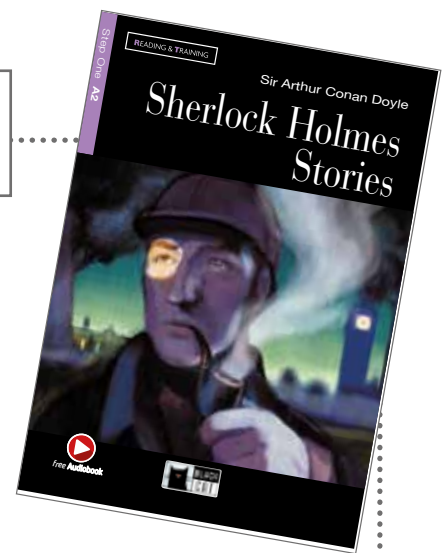


level
A2

READING ACTIVITY 1/6



SHERLOCK HOLMES STORIES

INTRODUCTION

Conan Doyle (1859 – 1930) created the world’s most famous detective, Sherlock Holmes, who was able to solve even the most complex and mysterious cases. *Sherlock Holmes Stories* is a short collection of two of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s most intriguing cases: *The Red-Headed League* and *The Speckled Band*.

What is the terrible secret behind the Red-Headed League? Why is a dark cellar so very important?

How can a young woman be murdered inside her bedroom after she locked the door one night, after uttering her last words: ‘the speckled band’?

READING ACTIVITY

Part 1 - Read the excerpt from *The Red-Headed League* and then do the activities below.

Mr Jabez Wilson is speaking to Sherlock Holmes.

‘About two months ago, Spaulding came into my office with this newspaper in his hand and said, “I’m sorry my hair isn’t red!”

‘I asked him why and he said, ‘Well, with red hair I can get an easy job and make a lot of money. Look at this advertisement! The Red-Headed League is a club for men with red hair and it’s offering a job to men with red hair. You should apply for the job—you have bright red hair!’

I asked him, “What’s the pay?”

‘He said, “Four pounds a week, and you can easily continue working here.”

‘Well, Mr Holmes, two hundred pounds a year is very useful to me. So I asked Spaulding for more information. He showed me the advertisement and said, “I’ve heard that the club’s money came from a rich American, Ezekiah Hopkins. He was a strange man with red hair. He died and left all of his money to the Red-Headed League. The money is used to give easy jobs to men with red hair.”

“But thousands of men have red hair!” I said. “I can never get the job.”

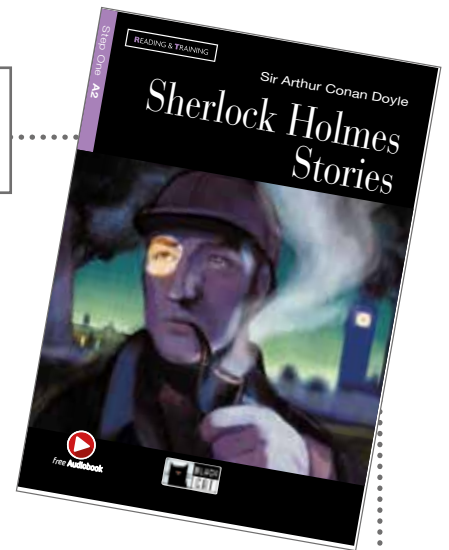
“No, Mr Wilson,” said Spaulding. “The Red-Headed League gives jobs only to people from London. Ezekiah Hopkins was born in London and he loved this city. Also, only men with bright red hair can get these jobs.”

(from Chapter 1)



level
A2

READING ACTIVITY 2/6



1. Circle the correct answer to complete the sentence.

1. Spaulding went to Mr Wilson's *home/office* with a *newspaper/letter* in his hand.
2. The *advertisement/letter* said that the Red Headed League was offering *money/a job* to men with red hair.
3. The pay was *forty/four* pounds a *month/week*.
4. The money of the Red-Headed League came from a rich *British gentleman/American man*.
5. The Red-Headed League gave *jobs/money* only to people from *America/London*.
6. The men must have *short/bright* red hair.

QUICK QUIZ!

2. Watch the video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bXTnkQ15M-w&t=26s>). Then match the words with their definition.

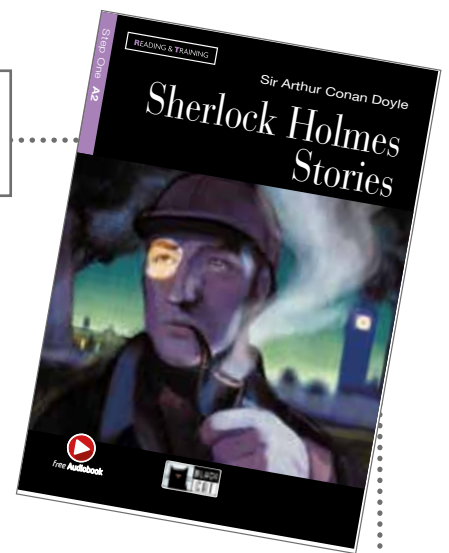
1. eccentric
 2. sharp
 3. curious
 4. honest
 5. knowledgeable
-
- a. this person always tells the truth and does not break the law
 - b. this person knows a lot of things about a certain subject or about the world
 - c. this person behaves in a strange way and has habits that are different from other people
 - d. (here) this person is very clever and very smart; and thinks quickly
 - e. this person wants to understand things and asks a lot of questions



level
A2

READING ACTIVITY

3/6



Part 2 – Read the excerpt from *The Speckled Band*, and then do the activity below.

The narrator is Doctor Watson.

Early one morning in April 1883, I woke up and saw Sherlock Holmes standing by my bed. I was surprised because it was only seven o'clock and Holmes usually got up late.

'I'm very sorry to wake you, Watson,' he said.

'What is it? A fire?' I asked.

'No, we have a visitor—a young lady. she is very unhappy and wants to see me. When young ladies walk around London at this early hour, they usually want to talk about something important. If you want to help me with this case, come and listen to her story.'

'I'll be ready immediately,' I said.

I was always happy to help Holmes with his detective work. He loved his work and was not interested in the money it brought him. He only accepted interesting and unusual cases. I got dressed quickly and followed Holmes down to the living room.

A woman dressed in black clothes was sitting by the window. She got up when we entered the room.

'Good morning, madam. My name is Sherlock Holmes. This is my friend Dr Watson. You can say anything you want to us and we'll keep it a secret. I see you're shaking,¹ please sit close to the fire and I'll get you a cup of hot coffee.'

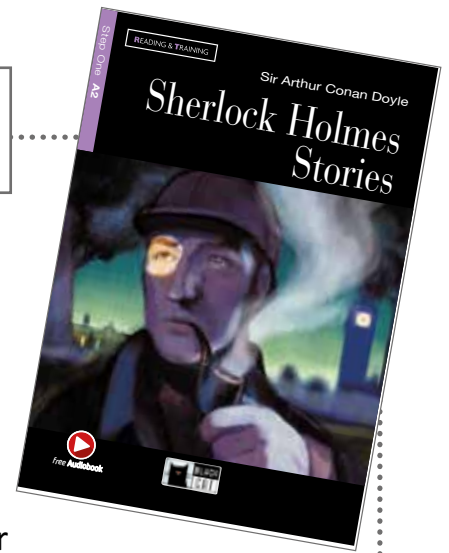
(from Chapter One)

1 **shaking** : the way we move when we are very cold or shocked.



READING ACTIVITY

4/6



ODD ONE OUT!

3A. Choose the word that does not belong to the group.

- | | | | |
|----------------|---------|---------------|--------------|
| 1. surprised | amazed | astonished | calm |
| 2. detective | teacher | police | investigator |
| 3. ordinary | unusual | extraordinary | strange |
| 4. living room | kitchen | bedroom | roof |
| 5. friend | cousin | parent | uncle |

3A. Complete the sentences with the odd words.

1. It was raining in the house because the was broken.
2. They went swimming because the sea was
3. Holmes did not accept cases.
4. Dr Watson was Holmes's
5. The woman was a school

QUICK QUIZ!

4. Complete the sentences with the correct word from the basket below.

• knowledgeable • curious • honest • sharp • eccentric

1. Sherlock Holmes had some strange habits, he was
2. The child asked a lot of questions because she was
3. The professor knew a lot of things about history because he was
4. He always told the truth because he was
5. Sherlock Homes solved difficult cases because he was

