

LESSON PLAN

3/4

CLASSIC DETECTIVE STORIES

Worksheet

Part One – The Five Orange Pips

The young man who needs Sherlock Holmes's advice and help is called John Openshaw. He tells Holmes and Dr Watson something about the history of his family. His grandfather had two sons—his father Joseph and his Uncle Elias. John's father had a bicycle factory in Coventry and he became rich and successful.



1. Before you read – Match the words (1-6) from the text to their definition (a-f).

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|----------------|--|
| 1. plantation | a. board game for two people |
| 2. Confederate | b. large piece of land where cotton and sugar are grown |
| 3. brandy | c. the top room of the house under the roof |
| 4. draughts | d. the Confederates were the Southern States in the American Civil War (1861 – 1865). They fought to defend slavery and were defeated. |
| 5. attic | e. strong alcoholic drink |
| 6. orange pips | f. tiny seeds inside an orange |

2. Read the first part of the extract.

'My Uncle Elias went to America when he was a young man. He, too, became a successful man. He owned a plantation in Florida. He fought for the South in the American Civil War. He became a Colonel in the Confederate army. He did not want black people in America to have the vote. When the South was defeated, my Uncle Elias returned to his plantation in Florida for three or four years. Then he came back to England.

'He bought a house in Horsham. He was a strange man. He was not very friendly and he lived by himself. His neighbours sometimes saw him in the garden, but he usually stayed in the house. He drank a lot of brandy and he never had any visitors. He did not want to see his brother.

'He seemed fond of me, however,' Mr Openshaw continued. 'He asked my father if I could live with him. I first went to his house when I was about twelve years old. He was kind, in his own way. When he wasn't drinking he played draughts with me, and he put me in charge of the servants in the house. By the time I was sixteen, I was master of the house. I had all the keys of the house and I could do what I wanted.'



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3. Read the second part of the extract.

'There was only one place I couldn't go into,' Mr Openshaw said. 'There was a room in the attic that my uncle kept locked all the time. He didn't allow anyone to go in there. I looked through the keyhole of that room when I was a boy, but it wasn't very interesting. I could only see pieces of old luggage and boxes of papers.

'One day in March 1883 my uncle received a letter. It was unusual for him to receive letters because he didn't have any friends. He looked carefully at the foreign stamp on the envelope. "From India! What can it be?" he said. He looked at the postmark on the envelope. "From Pondicherry," he said. He opened the letter quickly. Five orange pips fell out of it onto the table. My uncle went very pale. He looked terrified. KKK!" he cried.

"What is it, Uncle?" I cried.

"Death," he said. "That's what this letter means. I have done bad things in the past – and now I'm going to die!" He got up from the table and went into his room. He was still very pale.

4. Look at this sentence: *'I have done bad things in the past – and now I'm going to die!'*

In pairs or small groups, comment on this sentence.

What bad things could Uncle Elias have done in the past? Why did he leave his plantation in Florida after the American Civil War? What secrets does the attic hold?

5. What do you think will happen next?

What could possibly be in the attic that no one must see? Will John Openshaw try to enter the attic? Will someone try to kill Uncle Elias? Will Sherlock Holmes be able to help John Openshaw?

