

## 2. Meeting Holmes

### Sherlock Holmes Reading Worksheet (B2)

The chemical laboratory had high walls lined with countless bottles. The low wide tables were crowded with **test-tubes**, and little Bunsen lamps, with their blue flickering flames.

There was only one student in the room. He was bending over a table absorbed in his work. At the sound of our steps he glanced round and jumped to his feet with a cry of pleasure.

"I've found it! I've found it," he shouted to my companion, running towards us with a test-tube in his hand. "I have found the correct **formula!**"

"This is Mr. Sherlock Holmes, Doctor Watson" said Stamford, introducing us.

"How are you?" he said, gripping my hand strongly. "You have been in Afghanistan, I see."

"How on earth did you know that?" I asked in astonishment.

"Never mind," said he, laughing to himself. "I must show you my discovery."

He described a system for **identifying** a blood stain. It sounded very complex.

"It is interesting, chemically, no doubt," I said, "but does it have a practical use?"

"Don't you see that it gives us an **infallible** test for blood stains? Come over here now!", Seizing me by the coat-sleeve, he drew me over to his work table.

"Let us have some fresh blood," he said, pricking his finger with a scalpel. "Now, I add this tiny quantity of blood to a litre of water. You can see that it still appearance of pure water? But watch what happens."

He then added a few white crystals, and some drops of a transparent fluid. In an instant, the liquid turned a mahogany colour. A brownish dust formed at the bottom of the glass jar.

"Ha! ha!" he cried, clapping his hands. He was delighted, like a child with a new toy. "Beautiful! beautiful! The test they use now is clumsy and uncertain. So is the microscopic examination for blood corpuscles. That doesn't work if the **stains** are a few hours old. This whether the blood is old or new. What do you think of that?"

"It could be useful," I said

"More than useful!" said Holmes. "Think of the crimes it could solve. Criminal cases are often decided by proof of the presence of blood."

His eyes shone as he spoke. Putting his hand over his heart, he **bowed** as if to some applauding crowd.



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"I have to be careful," said Holmes, sticking a small piece of plaster over his finger. He turned to me with a smile, "for I work with poisons a good deal."

Sherlock Holmes held out his hand as he spoke. I noticed that it was covered with similar pieces of plaster.

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"My friend here is looking for accommodation," said Stamford, sitting down on a high three-legged stool.

Sherlock Holmes nodded. "I have found rooms in Baker Street we could share," he said. "But I generally have chemicals about, and occasionally do experiments. Would that annoy you?"

"By no means."

"Let me see--what are my other **shortcomings**? I am quiet at times, and don't open my mouth for days on end. Just let me alone, and I'll soon be right. What about you?"

I laughed. "I don't like arguments," I said, "because my nerves are shaken. I get up at all sorts of strange hours, and I am extremely lazy."

"Perfect," said Holmes, and shook my hand.

*From [A Study in Scarlet](#) (1887) by Arthur Conan Doyle. Adapted by Kieran McGovern*

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### Quick Check: True or false?

1. There is scientific equipment in the laboratory.
2. Holmes is angry about the visit of Stamford and Watson.
3. Holmes has developed a new test to show when blood is present.
4. His work sometimes involves poisons.
5. Watson says he works very hard.

### Vocabulary: Find the word in bold to match these definitions

1. Faults
2. Marks on clothes etc e.g. from orange juice
3. Glass containers
4. To lower your head to someone
5. Correct combination of chemicals to achieve a result.

**Extension Activity: Summary:** Describe what Sherlock Holmes has been doing in the laboratory. Mention at least three different scientific instruments he uses