

Teacher's Guide

# **The Casebook of Sherlock Holmes**

## **Case 1: The Mystery of the Missing Manuscript**

An Interactive Detective Game for Students

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Grades 6–12 (recommended) | ELA / Critical Thinking | 45–75 minutes

## 1. Product Overview

*The Casebook of Sherlock Holmes — Case 1: The Mystery of the Missing Manuscript* is a browser-based, single-file interactive narrative game. Students play alongside Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson as they investigate the theft of a priceless medieval manuscript from Lord Blackwood's private library at Ravenscroft Manor during a dinner party.

The game combines visual novel-style dialogue, point-and-click investigation, witness interviews, an evidence case file, cross-examination mechanics, and a scored accusation phase. No accounts, downloads, or plugins are required beyond a modern web browser and the HTML file provided.

## 2. Learning Objectives

- Read closely for key details in dialogue and written evidence.
- Draw inferences from testimony, physical clues, and timeline data.
- Evaluate which evidence supports or contradicts a suspect's statements.
- Distinguish relevant from irrelevant information when solving a problem.
- Practice logical reasoning: opportunity, knowledge, and motive.
- Reflect on how bias and first impressions can mislead an investigation.
- Collaborate to justify conclusions using textual evidence (in group settings).

## 3. Grade Level Recommendations

| Grade Band | Recommendation                                                                   |
|------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 6–8        | Strong fit with teacher scaffolding; pair or small-group play recommended.       |
| 9–10       | Independent or collaborative play; excellent for inference and argument writing. |
| 11–12      | Independent play; extend with formal detective reports or mock trial activities. |

## 4. How to Use in the Classroom

**Individual play:** Assign on devices; students work at their own pace. Ask them to screenshot or note their final detective rating and evidence used.

**Pairs:** One student reads aloud; partner tracks the Case File and proposes theories before each interview.

**Small groups (3–4):** Rotate roles: lead detective, note-taker, evidence presenter, skeptic who challenges theories.

**Whole-class projection:** Teacher narrates choices; class votes on interview order, suspect theories, and evidence to present during cross-examination. Excellent for modeling close reading.

## 5. Story Synopsis (Spoiler-Free Setup)

Holmes and Watson receive an urgent letter from Lord Edmund Blackwood. During a dinner party at Ravenscroft Manor, *The Chronicle of Kings* — a medieval manuscript of immense value — was stolen from a locked library. Several guests and staff were observed near the east wing that evening. Students must examine the crime scene, interview witnesses, build a case file, and identify the thief.

## 6. Gameplay Walkthrough for Teachers

**Phase 1 — Introduction (221B Baker Street):** Watson reads Lord Blackwood's letter. Students receive the first evidence card: *Lord Blackwood's Letter*.

**Phase 2 — Arrival at Ravenscroft:** Lord Blackwood explains the spare library key and names persons of interest near the east wing.

**Phase 3 — Investigation (student-directed order):**

- **Examine the Library** — Discover soil trail, torn blue-ink letter, stopped clock (9:22 PM), globe hiding place.
- **Interview Mrs. Porter** — Kitchen witness; saw gentleman near east wing wall from corridor window.
- **Interview Lady Ashford** — Terrace timeline; Finch stayed outside ~20 minutes.
- **Interview Thomas Briggs** — Former footman at garden gate; saw figure hide item in guest carriage.
- **Interview Mr. Finch** — Collector who denies leaving dinner; Holmes notices blue ink on his fingers.

**Phase 4 — Accusation (scored):** Students choose a suspect. Wrong accusations cost 25 points and provide teaching feedback. Correct path: accuse Mr. Finch.

**Phase 5 — Cross-Examination:** Three statements by Finch. Students may *Ask More* or *Present Evidence* from the Case File. Wrong evidence costs 10 points. Correct pairings: Statement 1 → Lady Ashford's Account; Statement 2 → Mrs. Porter's Account; Statement 3 → Torn Letter (Blue Ink).

**Phase 6 — Final Accusation & Recovery:** Holmes reconstructs the crime. Students choose where the manuscript was hidden (correct: guest carriage on east drive). Inspector Lestrade arrives; ending tier based on score (Master Detective / Capable Investigator / Bumbling but Determined).

## 7. Discussion Questions

### Before playing:

- What makes a good detective? What habits help you notice important details?
- What is the difference between a fact and an inference?
- Why might witnesses in the same house tell different stories?

### During play (pause points):

- After the library scene: What does the soil trail suggest about the thief's movements?
- After interviews: Who had opportunity? Who had knowledge of the hiding place? Who had motive?
- Before cross-examination: Which two pieces of evidence contradict Finch's claims?

### After playing:

- Which red herring misled you (Briggs? Lady Ashford?)? Why?
- How did the torn letter narrow the list of suspects?
- What would you do differently on a second playthrough?

## 8. Extension Activities

- **Detective report:** Write a one-page case summary citing at least four evidence items.
- **Timeline map:** Create a visual timeline from 8:00 PM to 9:30 PM using witness statements.
- **Mock cross-examination:** Students role-play Finch vs. Holmes using scripted evidence cards.
- **Alternate ending:** Write Watson's newspaper article announcing the solved case.
- **Design Case 2:** Outline a new mystery with three suspects and three clue types.
- **Primary source tie-in:** Compare Conan Doyle's detective methods to Holmes's approach in-game.

## 9. Answer Key — Culprit & Evidence Chain

### ■ SPOILER — FOR TEACHER USE ONLY

**Culprit:** Mr. Reginald Finch, manuscript collector and dinner guest.

### Why Finch — evidence chain:

- **Motive:** Torn letter (blue ink) shows obsession and three refused purchase offers; Finch is a collector.
- **Opportunity:** Lady Ashford's testimony — Finch left the table ~9:00, stayed out ~20 min while she returned inside.
- **Location lie exposed:** Mrs. Porter saw a tall gentleman in a dark coat at the east wing wall (~9:15), not on the terrace.
- **Means:** Finch knew spare key (blue vase); soil trail shows thief entered from garden via oak door.
- **Timeline:** Stopped clock at 9:22 matches theft moment at the globe.
- **Physical link:** Blue ink on Finch's fingernails matches torn letter; Holmes identifies this after interview.

- **Disposal:** Briggs saw figure stash item in guest carriage on east drive; manuscript found under Finch's carriage seat.

**Why other suspects are eliminated:**

- **Lord Blackwood** — Never left dinner table (confirmed by Ashford and Finch).
- **Lady Ashford** — Torn letter author is a collector making purchase offers; family would not need to buy.
- **Mrs. Porter** — Reported the suspicious man voluntarily; letter profile is collector, not servant.
- **Thomas Briggs** — Letter profile is collector; Porter's 'gentleman' description doesn't match servant; no library access that night.

**Cross-examination answer key:**

- Finch: 'Never left my seat' → Present *Lady Ashford's Account*.
- Finch: 'Stayed on terrace' → Present *Mrs. Porter's Account*.
- Finch: 'Only casual interest' → Present *Torn Letter (Blue Ink)*.
- Manuscript location → *In a guest carriage on the east drive*.

## 10. Differentiation Ideas

- **Support:** Provide a graphic organizer (Opportunity / Knowledge / Motive) to complete during interviews.
- **Support:** Pause after each evidence card; summarize aloud before continuing.
- **Challenge:** Play without using 'Ask More' during cross-examination.
- **Challenge:** Achieve 'Master Detective' rating (80+ points) with no wrong accusations.
- **ELL:** Pre-teach vocabulary: manuscript, collector, terrace, cross-examination, inference.
- **Accessibility:** Use Dialogue Log feature; increase browser zoom; read text aloud in pairs.

## 11. Standards Alignment Suggestions (CCSS ELA)

Alignments depend on grade level and accompanying tasks. Common connections:

- **RL.6-12.1** — Cite textual evidence to support analysis.
- **RL.6-12.3** — Analyze how characters interact and advance plot.
- **RI.6-12.1 / RI.6-12.3** — Analyze how individuals, events, and ideas develop (when writing case reports).
- **SL.6-12.1** — Collaborative discussions with prepared evidence.
- **W.6-12.1** — Write arguments using valid reasoning and relevant evidence (extension reports).

## 12. Time Estimate

- **First playthrough:** 45–60 minutes (investigation + cross-exam + ending).
- **With pre/post discussion:** 60–75 minutes (single class period).
- **With extension writing:** 90–120 minutes (spread across two sessions).
- **Replay for higher score:** 20–30 minutes (students familiar with story).

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