9.3 The real Sherlock?

Grammar relative clauses

Can do take part in a discussion about crime and punishment

Reading

1 **a** Work in small groups and discuss the questions.

1. What do you know about Sherlock Holmes?
2. Was he a real person?
3. Why and when was he famous?

b Check your ideas with the article.

Was Sherlock Holmes a real person?

Not exactly, but Dr Joseph Bell, the man who inspired the character of Sherlock Holmes, shared many qualities with the famous detective. Arthur Conan Doyle, the writer and creator of Holmes, met Dr Bell in 1877 at the University of Edinburgh Medical School. Conan Doyle was studying to be a doctor and Bell was one of his professors.

Bell was 39 years old when Conan Doyle first attended one of his lectures. He is said to have walked with great energy. His nose and chin were angular and his eyes twinkled with intelligent humour. Bell, who was a brilliant doctor, liked writing poetry, playing sport and bird-watching.

By the end of Conan Doyle's second year, Bell had selected him to serve as his assistant. Being on a ward with Bell, where he had plenty of opportunity to observe, only increased Conan Doyle's admiration for the great doctor. Amongst other things he was able to witness Dr Bell's remarkable ability to quickly deduce a great deal about the patient.

Dr Bell observed the way a person moved. The walk of a sailor, who had spent many years at sea, varied greatly from that of a soldier. If he identified a person as a sailor, he would look for any tattoos that might assist him in knowing where their travels had taken them. He trained himself to listen for small differences in his patients' accents to help him identify where they were from. Bell studied the hands of his patients because calluses or other marks could help him determine their occupation.

Conan Doyle published the first Holmes story in 1887. His innovation in creating a character that would appear over and over in a series of self-contained stories meant that Holmes's popularity grew with each instalment. Perhaps the most famous story was *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, which has been made into several films. Soon the character was so beloved that people refused to believe he wasn't a real person; letters addressed to 'Sherlock Holmes, Consulting Detective' arrived daily at Baker Street and Scotland Yard, each begging him to take on a real case.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

2 Complete the notes. Read the article again if necessary.

Person who Sherlock Holmes was based on: *Dr Joseph Bell*

Relationship to Conan Doyle:
(1) _____

Where/When met Conan Doyle:
(2) _____ , (3) _____

Dr Bell's hobbies: poetry, (4) _____ , (5) _____

Things Dr Bell observed about patients: the way they moved, (6) _____ , their accents, (7) _____

Date first Holmes story published:
(8) _____

Letters for Sherlock Holmes sent to:
(9) _____

3 Read the article again and find words that mean ...

1 good at understanding ideas and thinking clearly (adj – para. 2)

2 a feeling of great respect and liking for someone or something (noun – para. 3)

3 unusual or surprising and therefore deserving of attention or praise (adj – para. 3)

4 new idea, method, etc. that is used for the first time (noun – para. 5)

5 when a lot of people like someone or something (noun – para. 5)

LIVEWORKSHEETS