



EduTrend Contents

P4C · REALITY AND IMAGINATION · MIDDLE SCHOOL

Is Sherlock Holmes Real?

Characters, stories and different ways of existing

Ages 11–13

Level: Intermediate

50 minutes

Circle and small groups
· up to 30

Activity 03

Inside: activity at a glance · step-by-step session plan · facilitator notes · 3 student worksheets · assessment checklist

ACTIVITY 03 · AT A GLANCE

Is Sherlock Holmes Real?

Students consider a puzzle: it is true that Sherlock Holmes lived at 221B Baker Street in the stories, but no such detective ever lived. Letters are still sent to him. They sort things with different kinds of existence: characters, numbers, dreams, rainbows, countries and rules. They create questions and enquire into whether there is more than one way to be real.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session students can:

- analyse kinds of existence;
- distinguish fiction and reality;
- reason about truth in stories;
- respect different views.

KEY WORDS

fiction · exist · character · true · story · real

CURRICULUM LINKS

English: fiction and characters.
Maths: do numbers exist? History: myths and legends.

1**STIMULUS**

Share something to think about

2**THINK**

Quiet thinking time

3**QUESTION**

Create and choose a question

4**ENQUIRE**

Reason together

5**BUILD**

Agree, disagree, add

6**REFLECT**

Last words

Materials (per class)

- Sherlock Holmes puzzle card
- Existence cards
- Question and thinking-move cards
- Worksheets 1, 2 and 3

Before the session

- Read the stimulus and note possible concepts.
- Prepare question and thinking-move cards.
- Set out a circle so everyone can see each other.
- Print the worksheets.

SAFETY

Everyone may pass. Discuss ideas, not people, and use the story or invented examples rather than personal situations.

ACTIVITY 03 · SESSION PLAN

Step by step

Stay neutral: ask for reasons, examples and counter-examples rather than giving your own view.

Time	What happens	Say or ask
0–8 min Stimulus	Share the Sherlock Holmes puzzle and existence cards.	<i>"What did you notice?"</i>
8–20 min Questions	Students create questions in pairs and vote on one.	<i>"Which question is most interesting to talk about?"</i>
20–44 min Enquiry	Enquire into the chosen question, building on each other's ideas.	<i>"Is Sherlock Holmes real?"</i>
44–50 min Last words	Each person says one last thought or passes.	<i>"Has your thinking changed?"</i>

CHALLENGE CARD (print or copy onto the board)

Explain whether Sherlock Holmes is real in any sense.

ACTIVITY 03 • FACILITATOR NOTES

The philosophy in brief

Sherlock Holmes is a fictional detective created by Arthur Conan Doyle.

Philosophers debate how statements about fictional characters can be true when the characters do not exist.

Common ideas to listen for

- “Fictional means worthless.” Stories matter.
- “Everything is either real or fake.” There may be kinds of existence.
- “If people send letters, it must be real.” Belief does not make things exist.

Adapting the activity

Support

Sort four cards.

Stretch

Ask: do numbers exist in the same way as rocks?

WORKSHEET 1

Our questions

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Write questions the stimulus makes you wonder about.

Our questions

Question	Who asked	Votes

WORKSHEET 2

Ways of existing

Sort.

Ways of existing

Thing	Real?	What kind of real?

WORKSHEET 3

Last words

Before and after.

Is there more than one way to be real? Before the enquiry I thought... Now I think... because...

FOR THE TEACHER

Assessment checklist

Use during the session. One sheet covers up to eight students; copy as needed.

Student	Asks a philosophical question	Gives reasons and examples	Listens and builds on others

Suggested codes: W = working towards · E = expected · G = greater depth

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

Is Sherlock Holmes Real? is a sample activity from the EduTrend Contents P4C Reality and Imagination programme (middle school, level: intermediate). Every activity in the programme follows the same format: a practical challenge, a clear session plan, facilitator notes and ready-to-print worksheets, so that teachers, club leaders and parents can run it without extra preparation.

Full 15-, 20- and 32-week programmes are available from EduStore at edutrend.org.

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