

CLASS NOTES

Class: VIII

PLAY – THE RED-HEADED LEAGUE

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Subject: ENGLISH

Reading comprehension

A. *Answer these questions within 20 words each.*

1. Who is Watson?

Answer. Mr Watson is Sherlock Holmes' friend and associate and has been his helper and partner in solving many successful cases.

2. What does Holmes say about Mr Wilson?

Answer. Holmes says that Mr Wilson has at some time done manual labour, has been in China and he has done a considerable amount of writing lately.

3. Summarise the content of the advertisement.

Answer. According to the bequest of the late Ezekiah Hopkins, a vacancy is open for an eligible red-headed man above the age of 21. Interested men can apply in person on Monday to Mr Duncan Ross at 7, Pope's Court, Fleet Street.

4. According to Mr Wilson, what is Vincent Spaulding's only fault?

Answer. Vincent Spaulding keeps taking pictures with his camera and then diving down into the cellar to develop his pictures when he ought to be improving his mind.

5. What is Mr Wilson's job at the office of the Red-headed league?

Answer. Mr Wilson's job is to copy out the Encyclopaedia Britannica and bring his own ink, pens and blotting paper.

6. Who is Mr Merryweather?

Answer. Mr Merryweather is the chairman of directors of the city branch of one of the principal London banks.

B. *Answer these questions in 30 to 40 words each.*

1. Why does Mr Wilson come to Holmes?

Answer. Mr Wilson was taken aback when his job with the Red-Headed League suddenly came to an end with the notice that the Red-Headed League is dissolved. He came to know that Duncan Ross was actually William Morris and feeling something was fishy, he came to Holmes.

2. What does Holmes ask about Mr Wilson's assistant?

Answer. Holmes asks Mr William Wilson how long his assistant had been with him, how he came to work with him, why Mr Wilson picked him and what he was like. He wants to know if Mr Wilson had observed whether his ears had been pierced for earrings.

3. What happens when Holmes and Watson visit the pawn shop?

Answer. When Holmes and Watson visit the pawn shop, the door is opened by a bright-looking, clean shaven young fellow. When Holmes asked him the way to the Strand, he replies 3rd right, 4th left and closes the door promptly.

4. Summarise the conversation between Jones and Holmes regarding their suspicion.

Answer. Peter Jones says that he wants to get hold of John Clay, the murderer, thief, smasher and forger. His grandfather was a Royal Duke and Clay himself had been to Eton and Oxford but he had not yet seen him. Holmes says that he may be introduced to him that night and says that John Clay was at the head of his profession.

C. **Answer these questions in 80-100 words each.**

1. Comment on Holmes' power of observation and deduction with reference from the text.

Answer. Holmes has a keen power of observation and he takes into account every detail of the person he meets. He is able to deduce that Mr Wilson has done manual labour because his right hand is larger than his left. He has worked with it and therefore, the muscles are more developed. He cleverly concludes that he has been in China because the fish which was tattooed immediately above his wrist could only have been done in China and he could also see a Chinese coin hanging from his watch chain. When he meets Vincent Spaulding at the pawn shop for a few seconds and

notices that his trousers are frayed at the knees, he has the mystery of the Red-Headed League solved. He concludes that the assistant is the 4th smartest man in London and is at the head of his profession. He also surmised that the only reason for the advertisement and for giving Mr Wilson the job was to get the pawnbroker out of the shop for a few hours every day until the work of digging a path to the cellar of the bank was completed.

2. Write a character sketch off John Clay.

Answer. John Clay was not an ordinary criminal. He had royal blood in him as his grandfather was a Royal Duke and John Clay himself had been well educated at Eton and Oxford. He was small, stout, very quick in his ways and had a white mark from an acid splash on his forehead. He was smart enough to judge that Mr Wilson was not bright and could be deceived easily. So, he took up a job as his assistant at meagre wages and came up with the ingenious plan of the Red-Headed League. As he had anticipated, Wilson fell into the trap and John Clay was successful in digging the tunnel to reach the cellar of the bank but he had not foreseen Holmes' clever solving of the mystery. He was vexed when he was nabbed by Peter Jones but went with the police, asking Holmes to address him as 'Sir' and say 'please' as he had royal blood in his veins.

3. When John Clay is caught, he has a strange interaction with Holmes. Why do you think he responds to home in such a way?

Answer. When John Clay is caught, he does not utter bitter words or indulge in any kind of verbal battle with Holmes. He just says very coolly that he has done the thing very completely. He compliments the detective on solving the case. When Holmes says that his Red-Headed League idea was both very new and effective, he just corrects his manner of addressing him. He tells Holmes that he may not be aware that he has royal blood in his veins. So, he must have the manners to always address him saying 'Sir' and 'please'. He seems to be very dignified, as if to prove that he was royalty and would not stoop to ranting and raving on being apprehended by the police.

D. ***Read this sentences and answer the questions that follow.***

1. **'And did you take his advice?'**

a. Who says this and to who?

Answer. The detective Sherlock Holmes says this to Mr Wilson.

b. What was the advice?

Answer. The advice was that Mr Wilson should consider applying for the position advertised in the paper by the Red-Headed League as he had a good chance of getting it.

c. How does the listener respond?

Answer. Mr Wilson says that he took his assistant's advice.

2. **'Please be quiet for we do not want to alert the criminals.'**

a. Who says this and to whom?

Answer Mr Holmes says this to Mr Merryweather, Mr Watson and Mr Jones.

b. Who are the criminals?

Answer. The criminals are John clay and his companion.

c. What are the criminals after?

Answer. The criminals are after the French gold which is still lying in the cellar of the bank.

Values and life skills

We have read that honesty is the best policy. In this play, we see how the dishonest and wicked are punished in the end.

1. Do you agree that honesty is truly the best policy at all times?

2. Is it easy to be honest? Why/why not?

Students will write this answer on their own

CONTENT PREPARED AT HOME.

