



The Ghostly Happenings At Farrell Mansion

Author **David Fernández Sifres** / Illustrations **Albertoyos** / 176 pages / Book Series **Avante**

Objectives

- To present an adventure story with a **cast of familiar characters and a mystery to be solved**.
- To give a role model for **team work and collaborative discovery**.
- To build students' confidence in **understanding stories** written in English.
- To provide students with **new lexical items** within the context of the story.

Word bank

Key vocabulary

Inventions and gadgets: wind-up torch, lid, lever, handle

Actions: wink, wander, stroke, shrug your shoulders, scratch, hug, bury

Idiomatic expressions: catch someone red-handed, sack someone

Key structures

Conditionals: Various structures and patterns using "if": "If they find us here, it will be difficult to explain."

Modals of deduction: "This must be the dining room, but ..."; "There must be an automatic mechanism and we're going to find it"; "...it can't be a coincidence."

Tips and ideas

Before reading

- Ask your students if they like mysteries. Have they ever seen a film or TV series which showed a detective trying to solve clues? Hold a class discussion based on a preliminary Think-Pair-Share stage.
- Introduce the title of the book and get pairs to whisper to each other two or three words they think of when they read it. Share these with another pair. Brainstorm some "ghostly" words and related topics and draw a mind map on the board which you could add to during the reading.
- Show the class the front cover of the book and ask them what elements they can identify. What do they imagine the link between the title and the illustration might be? Using simple cues (maybe... perhaps...) and modal stems (It might be... there could be...), give examples of suggested predictions.

During reading

- Gather the clues as they appear and get the students to classify them into can't be / could or might be / must be. Draw a table on the board to keep a tally of the clues as the characters come across them.

- Get students to share their deductions in small groups and to suggest their ideas and answers. Where possible this is done in English, but the most important thing here is to spark curiosity and check comprehension.
- As a class, draw a Storyboard / Timeline and add events and discoveries as the story progresses.
- As each chapter concludes, ask different groups to add their deductions and observations to the Clue Classification and Storyboard.

After reading

- What have the readers found out about the different characters in the story? Share out the characters among the groups in your class and give them 7/10 minutes to pool their ideas. Ask them to team-write a profile for their character.
- Focus on the importance of Zinca's reflections. She stops at various points in the story to gather her ideas and their discoveries. Elicit from the students why this might be a good strategy.
- Can the students transfer this skill of repeated reflection to their own lives? - in school and outside in the real world?

Teacher support activities

Great Games: 40/40

- This traditional playground game is best played outside, or in an open space with places the players can conceal themselves.
- Choose who is going to be "It" (for example, the last person to come in from break-time) and get them to stand by a central point, "Home" (a tree, a bin or a lamppost). "It" covers their eyes and counts out loud from 1 to 40, and meanwhile the rest of the children run and hide.
- When "It" shouts out "40/40. Coming! Ready or not!", they try to find the others - and when they see someone, for example, Julie, they have to run back, touch "Home" and shout out "40/40. I see Julie!" and Julie becomes a prisoner, standing by the "Home".
- If Julie gets Home first, she can touch it and shout "40/40. For me!" and save herself, or "40/40. For us!" and saves herself and all her friends imprisoned at Home. The game finishes when everyone is in prison, or the last player free manages to get Home before It and saves everyone.

CLIL Link: Literature and History – Jules Verne

In this novel we discover the importance of this French novelist for the Avante School of Detectives, and that Helena is a great fan of his life and work. Brainstorm the students' knowledge of the great writer: Have they heard of him? Have they read any of his books? Have they seen a comic or a film based on his work? Do they remember any of his inventions?

- Divide up the class into groups and give each a theme to investigate: Verne's Life / Verne's Work / Verne's Legacy. These categories may well overlap, but could

include anecdotes and facts about his childhood, first adventure, travels and education; *Around the World in 80 Days*, *Journey to the Center of the Earth*, *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*; sci-fi literature, inventions – helicopters, submarines, TV, space ships, faith in progress.

- Allow the class 24 hours to gather as much information as possible from at least 3 different sources, then give them paper and pencils and ask them to prepare their discoveries to present to the class.

English Theatre: "In the Library. Farrell Mansion"

Ask your students to go back to the final scene in the book where Nautilus recall the conversation they had with Baroness Farrell in the library of the mansion.

From the line "Before leaving the mansion, Nautilus had asked to speak with the baroness alone" onwards, direct different groups of students to note down the dialogues (e.g. "What did you want to tell me, my dear detectives?", etc.), stage directions (e.g. the lady...started to shake; she whispered; the girl nodded, etc.) and props (e.g. the wheelchair, the medallion, etc.).

In small groups (including the 6 characters of Nautilus and the baroness, a director and producer – who don't have to act, but do have the final word about what their troupe do!), give the class 20/25 minutes to decide on the dialogue they want to use (taken straight from the book or adapted if they wish) and the actions they will need, and to rehearse their play.

Either get groups to perform their versions in front of the class or film them and post them on the class blog. Ask for and give constructive feedback on every version.