

Worksheet 11: Reading Comprehension 1

Name: _____ Class: _____ Roll No.: _____ Date: _____

Read the following passage and answer that questions that follow.

Sherlock Holmes, the famous logical detective, created by Arthur Conan Doyle till date remains one of the most vivid and enduring characters in English fiction. Sherlock Holmes is introduced to us as a private detective who has keen powers of observation. He notices things that others simply don't and then he arrives at accurate conclusions about what he sees. He plays the violin and is given to mood swings. But above all, he is a master of deductive reasoning.

Doctor Watson, the companion to Holmes, is important to the Sherlock Holmes stories. He provides the narration to the stories of Sherlock Holmes through detailed written accounts of Sherlock's adventures. Doctor Watson also simply does not have the skills that Holmes has and he is often questioning Holmes as to how he comes to his brilliant conclusions. This is a perfect writing tool for Sir Arthur Conan Doyle; Sherlock must always explain his discoveries to Watson. This is actually the author explaining them to the reader.

Conan Doyle made Holmes a man of science and an innovator of forensic methods. In several instances Conan Doyle depicted Holmes using methods years before they were adopted by official police forces in both Britain and America.

The first case in which fingerprints are mentioned is *The Sign of the Four* (1890). Scotland Yard did not begin to use fingerprints until 1901. Holmes is able to detect the gender and to make deductions about the character of the writer from handwritten documents. Another forensic tool used by Holmes is footprint analysis. His first use of footprints occurs in the first story (1887), and he is still using such prints as late as the 57th story, *The Adventure of the Lion's Mane* (1926). *The Boscombe Valley Mystery* (1891) is solved almost totally by footprint analysis.

Holmes also solves a variety of ciphers. In *The Adventure of the Gloria Scott* (1893), he deduces that only every third word in the message that frightens old Trevor conveys the message to be read. A similar system was used in the American Civil War. In *The Valley of Fear* (1914–15), Holmes receives an encoded message. He must first figure out the book on which the cipher is based. After deducing which book it is, he is able to retrieve the message.

Holmes was also an early user of dogs to solve crimes. The most famous line in all 60 stories, spoken by Inspector Gregory in *The Adventure of Silver Blaze* (1892), "The dog did nothing in the night-time," was directly in response to Sherlock's reference to "the curious incident of the dog." Gregory is puzzled by this enigmatic clue. Only Holmes seems to realise that the dog's inaction is the clue; the dog should have done something.

The canon of the Holmes tales have been rated numerous times by various groups, and nearly every time the early stories receive the highest ratings. This is no surprise because the early stories contain the most forensic science, fascinatingly laid out by the compelling Holmes.

A. Complete the sentences with words from the text.

1. Sherlock Holmes till date remains one of the most _____ and _____ characters in English fiction.
2. Holmes notices things that others simply _____ and then he draws _____ about what he sees.
3. Doctor Watson provides the _____ to the stories of Sherlock Holmes through detailed _____.
4. The first case in which fingerprints are mentioned is _____.
5. *The Boscombe Valley Mystery* is solved almost totally by _____.

B. Answer the following questions.

1. How is Sherlock Holmes introduced to us?

2. Why is the character of Doctor Watson important?

3. What system of messaging was used in the American Civil War?

4. Why does Holmes feel that the dog's inaction is the clue?

C. Cite instances from the passage that reveals:

1. Doyle was far ahead of Scotland Yard in his understanding of forensics.

2. Holmes was artistic and moody, too.
