

The Hound of the Baskervilles

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

Retold by
Pieter Koster

Level B1.2



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Mr. Sherlock Holmes

Preview Questions

1. Have you ever seen a movie or read a book about Sherlock Holmes? Did you like it?
2. Would you like to be a detective or police officer? Why or why not?
3. How much information can you find out about a person just by looking at his walking stick?

Mr. Sherlock Holmes was seated at the breakfast table as I stood behind him on the rug and picked up the walking stick which our visitor had left behind the night before. It was a very fine piece of wood with an **inscription** on a silver band near the top, which read, “To James Mortimer, MRCS, from his friends of the CCH, 1884.”

“Well, Watson, what do you make of it?”

“How did you know what I was doing? I sometimes think you have eyes in the back of your head!”

“I don’t, but I do have a very well polished silver coffeepot in front of me! What do you think about our visitor’s stick? It’s a shame we weren’t home last night because now we don’t know the purpose of his visit. Can you tell anything by looking at his stick?”

“I think,” I said, trying to follow my friend’s methods, “that Dr. Mortimer is a successful elderly doctor who lives in the country and does most of his visiting on foot. I say that because the stick is very well used, so he has done a lot of walking with it. The CCH is probably some kind of Hunt Club where he lives and

whose members he has helped.”

“Excellent, Watson, well done!” I was very pleased that he had complimented me, and I gave him the stick.

He looked at it carefully for a moment and then got his **magnifying glass** and looked at it again. “It’s very interesting, and we should be able to make several **deductions**. I’m afraid, however, that most of your conclusions were wrong after all.” Seeing my disappointment, he added, “You were right to deduce that the man is a country doctor who walks a great deal.”

“Is that all?”

“Well, you see, dear Watson, a presentation to a doctor is more likely to come from a hospital than a hunt, and if you put the letters CC in front of Hospital, you automatically think of Charing Cross.”

“All right, so he worked in the city before he went to the country.”

“I think we can do better than that,” said Holmes. “We can be quite certain the stick was given to him when he left the hospital, but he was probably not a member of the staff since members of staff at Charing Cross Hospital would be very unlikely to leave and go to the country. He must have been a student or a house surgeon, and as the stick was given to him only five years ago, he must still be under thirty years old and not be the elderly doctor you suggested.” I opened my mouth to speak, but Holmes went on. “He is friendly, **unambitious**, absent-minded, and the owner of a dog.”

“We can check some of that,” I said, going to the bookcase. I got down the Medical Directory and looked up Dr. Mortimer. There were several but only one that could be our visitor, and I read it out to Holmes. “It says ‘Mortimer, James. MRCS, 1882, Grimpen, Dartmoor, Devon. House Surgeon 1882-4 at Charing

Cross Hospital.’ He must be a clever man because he has won several prizes and he published a few journal articles, and he is now the Medical Officer for Grimpen, Thornsley, and High Barrow.”

5 “There is no mention of the hunt club, Watson,” said Holmes, with a wicked smile, “but you were right to deduce that he was a country doctor!”

“There’s no mention of him being friendly, unambitious, and **absent-minded**, either,” I remarked.

10 “But we do not need the book to tell us that,” replied Holmes, “because we have his stick. Only friendly men receive gifts such as that when they leave a place, only unambitious men would leave the city to go to the country for a career, and only an absent-minded man would leave his walking stick behind without leaving
15 a visiting card.”

“And the dog?”

“The dog sometimes carries the stick for its master, and you can see its teeth marks in the middle of it. The space between the marks is too wide for a terrier and not wide enough for a **mastiff**.
20 I’m sure it is a curly-haired spaniel.” He had been walking around the room as he spoke and now stopped by the window.

“How can you be so sure about the type of dog?”

“I can see it through the window, for its owner has just arrived on our doorstep!”

25 The doorbell rang, and it was not long before Dr. James Mortimer was shown into the room. He was a very tall, thin man with a long nose that shot out from between his two grey eyes, which sparkled behind his gold-framed glasses. As soon as he saw his walking stick, he picked it up. “I would not like to
30 lose that stick,” he said, “as it was a gift on the occasion of my wedding.”

N E W W O R D S

Chapter 1

inscription *n.* a piece of writing

magnifying glass *n.* glass that makes things look bigger

deduction *n.* result of logical thinking

unambitious *adj.* not greedy for success

absent-minded *adj.* forgetful

mastiff *n.* a large hunting and fighting dog

tobacco *n.* dried plant used to make cigars and cigarettes

unsurpassed *adj.* best

Chapter 2

mare *n.* a female horse

gallop *v.* to run like a horse

blaze *v.* to burn

inquest *n.* official enquiry in a court

depression *n.* illness where a person is sad

moor *n.* open land with poor soil and no farms

post mortem *n.* examination of a dead body

heir *n.* a person who inherits something when a relative dies

naturalist *n.* a person who studies plants and animals

Chapter 3

reluctant *adj.* not wanting to do something

flee *v.* to run away in fear

eagerly *adv.* enthusiastically

contradiction *n.* two opposites that can't agree

Chapter 4

punctually *adv.* at exactly the correct time

sturdily *adv.* strongly

glance *v.* to look quickly or briefly

disguise *v.* to make something or someone look like something else

porter *n.* a person who works at a hotel

shilling *n.* a coin used in Great Britain

Chapter 5

focus *v.* to think about something without thinking about anything else

gallery *n.* a place where people go to see art

invalid *adj.* disabled

flushed *adj.* red-faced

baronet *n.* an inherited title

trivial *adj.* unimportant

incompetence *n.* inability to do a job well

acquaintance *n.* a person that you know

at stake *phr.* at risk

Chapter 6

triumph *n.* victory

dead-end *n.* a road that stops

contrary *adj.* opposite

chuckle *v.* to laugh quietly to yourself

cheeky *adj.* rude but funny

Chapter 7

groom *n.* a person who looks after horses

swift *adj.* fast

jagged *adj.* rough; dangerous-looking



News Hour: A Radio Play

Cast

Newsreader 1	Newsreader 2
Lestrade	Mrs. Barrymore
Mrs. Stapleton	Dr. Watson
Sherlock Holmes	Laura Lyons
Stapleton	

- Newsreader 1:** We begin this programme with a report on the arrest of Rodger Baskerville, better known as Jack Stapleton, the naturalist, or Vanderleur, the teacher. Three years ago, he was suspected of causing the death of his uncle, Sir Charles Baskerville, and of the attempted murder of his cousin, Sir Henry Baskerville. Wendy Stanton is in Grimpen and has the details.
- Newsreader 2:** Thanks, Andrew. The famous detective, Sherlock Holmes, prevented the murder of Sir Henry, the new heir of Baskerville Hall. At the time, it was thought that Rodger Baskerville had died in one of the bog holes of Grimpen Mire. Here are Police Officer Lestrade and the widow of Sir Henry's butler, Mrs. Barrymore.
- Lestrade:** It was a very foggy night. I can still see the fog rolling in over the moor, and everybody said that no man could find his way across the mire in that fog.

Mrs. Barrymore: It's a terrible place, that moor! It took my brother three years ago, and last year it took my husband. He knew the mire as well as anyone, but one false step, and he was gone. I'm sure nobody could have escaped from it on that foggy night when Sherlock Holmes killed the hound.

Newsreader 2: And yet, Andrew, that seems to be precisely what has happened. Mrs. Stapleton, as she prefers to be known, has lived at Merripit House through the generosity of her husband's cousin, Sir Henry, ever since her husband disappeared. This is what she had to say when I spoke to her today.

Mrs. Stapleton: I am as surprised as anybody to hear this news. I knew that he had a secret trail marked out over the mire, and I was quite sure that he had missed his step and sunk in a bog hole. However, I sometimes wondered whether he had a second trail that he kept secret even from me. His body was never found, so perhaps he did escape somehow. How did they find him?

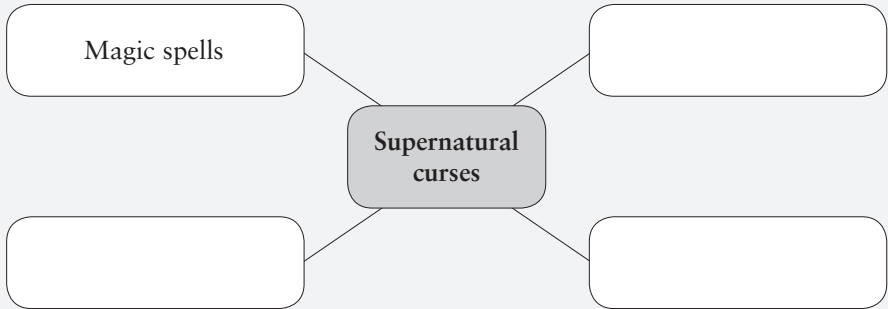
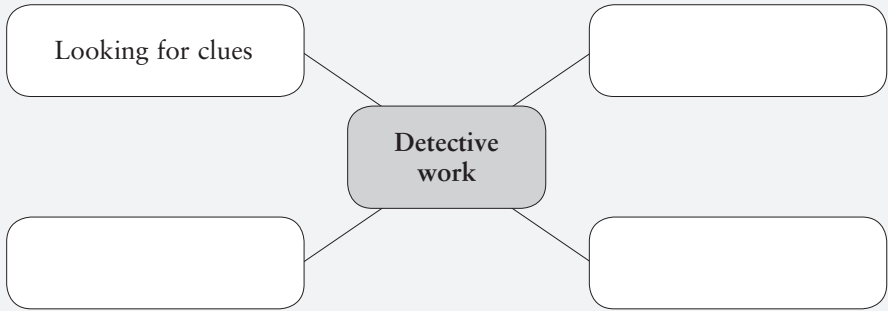
Newsreader 2: That is the question on everybody's lips here, Andrew, but I believe you can throw some light on it.

Newsreader 1: That's right, Wendy, because here in the studio I have with me Dr. Watson, Sherlock Holmes's close friend and working partner. Good evening, Dr. Watson.

Dr. Watson: Good evening. I don't think that Holmes would appreciate that description of my position, young man. I am honoured to be considered a friend, that's true, but I'm sure that he does not believe me to be a working partner. I would prefer to be called an observer and occasional assistant.

Before You Read

I. Work with your classmates. What do you know about the following?



II. Scan through the book and answer the following.

1. Match each person in the story with the correct description.

- (1) Sherlock Holmes _____ (2) Dr. Watson _____
(3) Dr. James Mortimer _____ (4) Sir Henry Baskerville _____
(5) Mr. Stapleton _____ (6) Sir Charles Baskerville _____

- a. the new owner of Baskerville Hall
- b. the person who brought the case to the detective's attention
- c. a naturalist who studies plants and insects
- d. a famous detective
- e. a victim of a mysterious murder
- f. a detective's assistant

2. Write the chapter title that matches each clue.

- a. Preparing to catch the criminal

- b. The cursed family's home

- c. The story's main character

- d. Clues that do not lead anywhere

- e. The neighbours and where they live

- f. Remembering the past

- g. Children looking like their parents

- h. An outdoor murder

Mr. Sherlock Holmes

I. Put the sentences in order from 1 (first) to 5 (last).

- _____ Dr. Mortimer rolled a cigarette while Holmes and Watson waited.
- _____ Sherlock Holmes guessed at the type of dog Dr. Mortimer owned.
- _____ Watson looked up Dr. Mortimer in the Medical Directory to learn more about him.
- _____ Sherlock Holmes saw what Watson was doing in the reflection on a shiny coffee pot.
- _____ Dr. Mortimer insulted Sherlock Holmes.

II. Choose the best answer.

1. How did Holmes and Watson try to find answers to their questions?
 - a. By reading the newspaper
 - b. By studying and discussing the clues available to them
 - c. By using a magnifying glass
 - d. By speaking to an expert
2. What had Dr. Mortimer accidentally left behind at Holmes's place?
 - a. An inscription
 - b. His curly-haired spaniel
 - c. His wooden walking stick
 - d. A single leather boot
3. Who did Mortimer say was the second-best crime expert in Europe?
 - a. Dr. Watson
 - b. Sherlock Holmes
 - c. Himself, Dr. Mortimer
 - d. Monsieur Bertillon
4. Why did Holmes say it was terrible that Mortimer was married?
 - a. It meant that some of Holmes's guesses about Mortimer were wrong.
 - b. It meant that Mortimer would have no time to speak with him.
 - c. Being married was very expensive in England.
 - d. Holmes was jealous because he wished he was also married.

III. Write the correct word or phrase in each blank.

inscription magnifying glass deductions unambitious clever
absent-minded mastiff tobacco unsurpassed combine

1. She was _____, often forgetting her keys.
2. The doctor rolled _____ to make his own cigarettes.
3. Sherlock Holmes's _____ led him closer and closer to the truth.
4. He was able to _____ more than one type of thinking when he worked on a problem.
5. Holmes was _____ in his field.
6. The detective inspected the fingerprints with a(n) _____.
7. The walking stick had a silver plate with a(n) _____.
8. Holmes was very _____ when it came to solving puzzles.
9. His wife complained that he was _____ and not doing well in his job.
10. A fierce-looking _____ is guarding the house.

IV. Write a summary by answering the questions.

1. What was the first mystery that Holmes and Watson tried to solve?
2. Were their conclusions correct?
3. What can be known about the relationship between Holmes and Watson after their first conversation?
4. Why did Dr. Mortimer come to see them?

Summary: _____

