

READING: SHERLOCK HOLMES

What do you know about Sherlock Holmes? Join Wendy in London as she searches for clues about the famous detective.

Do the preparation task first. Then read the text and do the exercises to check your understanding.

Preparation

Match the vocabulary with the correct definition and write a–h next to the numbers 1–8.

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|--------|---------------------|----|--|
| 1..... | ruthless | a. | a small, wheeled vehicle, often pulled by a horse |
| 2..... | flawed | b. | full of a weather condition that makes the air cloudy and grey with small particles of water |
| 3..... | a blockbuster | c. | go in or visit for a short time |
| 4..... | out of your mind | d. | a film that is very popular and makes a lot of money |
| 5..... | a cart | e. | be the person who has secretly organised something |
| 6..... | foggy | f. | to become crazy or confused |
| 7..... | be behind something | g. | cruel and having no compassion |
| 8..... | pop in | h. | not perfect |



Read the text and do the exercises

Wendy: The streets of London are full of history. But not all the famous characters associated with this city were real. More than a hundred years ago when people travelled by horse and cart and the foggy streets were lit by gaslight, one famous detective was leading the fight against crime. It was Victorian London, the time of Sherlock Holmes.

The fictional character of Sherlock Holmes has been popular ever since he was created by author Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in the late 1800s. Since then, Holmes has appeared in many films ...

Roland Carstairs: Mr Holmes?

Sherlock Holmes (Basil Rathbone): Hello.

Wendy: ... from black-and-white classics to Hollywood blockbusters and TV dramas.

Even though Sherlock Holmes wasn't a real person, you can find evidence of him all over London. There is a statue of Sherlock Holmes near Baker Street. Just around the corner, you can find his famous address, 221B. Ah, look! More evidence of Sherlock Holmes, a pub named after him. Let's pop in.

There are lots of Sherlock-related things inside the pub. The pub even has its own room which is supposed to look like Sherlock Holmes's study with his famous pipe and laboratory instruments for his forensic or scientific approach to solving crimes. You can just imagine Sherlock Holmes and his assistant Doctor Watson discussing how to solve crimes here.

Dr Watson (Nigel Bruce): Well, whoever's behind all this thing must be out of his mind.

Sherlock Holmes (Basil Rathbone): On the contrary, my dear fellow. If my assumptions are correct, this little scheme has behind it the most brilliant and ruthless intellect the world has ever known.

Wendy: Roger Johnson is from the Sherlock Holmes Society of London.

What makes Sherlock Holmes so interesting?

Roger: He's a hero, but he's a flawed hero in a way. He doesn't have superpowers in the way that, say, Superman does or the Marvel Avengers. He's a real human being and you can feel with Sherlock Holmes, as you can't do with Superman, "Yeah, I could be like that."

Wendy: Why is he still so popular?

Roger: The main reason is that the original stories are so good. They're very well written and they're tremendous fun to read.

Wendy: The Metropolitan Police Heritage Museum shows the history of policing in London. Holmes was famous for his use of forensic or scientific techniques to solve crimes. His creator, Conan Doyle, visited police museums to gain inspiration for his stories. Alan Moss is a former policeman and historian.

Do you think it was useful for Conan Doyle to visit places like this?

Alan: He was really interested in real-life crimes, but actually making those crimes into a really good story.

Wendy: Police methods and crime-solving techniques have changed since the time of Sherlock Holmes. New technology means the scientific or forensic method is even more important.

So there's evidence of Sherlock Holmes all across London. It looks like he's going to continue being a popular fictional character for many more years to come. I wonder what Sherlock would make of today's forensic work and policing techniques. I guess we'll never know.



1. Check your understanding: true or false

Circle *True* or *False* for these sentences.

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|----|--|-------------|--------------|
| 1. | Sherlock Holmes was a real person. | <i>True</i> | <i>False</i> |
| 2. | The books were written in the late 1800s. | <i>True</i> | <i>False</i> |
| 3. | The author of the books lived at 221B Baker Street. | <i>True</i> | <i>False</i> |
| 4. | You can visit a pub with a room set up like Sherlock Holmes's study. | <i>True</i> | <i>False</i> |
| 5. | Roger Johnson thinks the character of Sherlock Holmes is a perfect human. | <i>True</i> | <i>False</i> |
| 6. | The original stories are very well written. | <i>True</i> | <i>False</i> |
| 7. | Conan Doyle took his inspiration from real-life crimes. | <i>True</i> | <i>False</i> |
| 8. | Scientific or forensic policing is now even more important than in Sherlock Holmes's time. | <i>True</i> | <i>False</i> |

2. Check your vocabulary: gap fill – prepositions

Write the words to fill the gaps.

- The streets of London are full _____ history.
- Since the 1800s, Holmes has appeared _____ many films.
- You can find evidence of Sherlock Homes all _____ London.
- Ah look! A pub named after Sherlock Holmes. Let's pop _____.
- You can just imagine Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson discussing how _____ solve crimes here.
- 'Whoever's behind this thing must be _____ of his mind.'
- He's a flawed hero. He doesn't have superpowers _____ the way that, say, Superman does.
- Holmes was famous _____ his use of forensic or scientific approaches to solve crimes.

