



 Prestwick House

Activity Pack

THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES

BY SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE



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Written by Michael Fisher

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter 1**Theme
Characterization**

Objective: Understanding central themes
 Recognizing major characteristics and skills of the main character

Activity

The first chapter, entitled “Mr. Sherlock Holmes,” serves to introduce the detective, his assistant Dr. Watson, and Sherlock Holmes’ problem-solving strategies. Before readers learn about the main plot of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, they can observe how Sherlock Holmes works collecting clues and drawing conclusions:

An unknown visitor leaves a walking stick in Holmes’ apartment, and both Dr. Watson and Sherlock Holmes attempt to unravel the identity of the stick’s owner by interpreting a few clues. Although both gentlemen have the same clues to work with, they draw different conclusions about the stick owner’s identity. By demonstrating how Sherlock Holmes’s detective work is superior to that of his assistant Dr. Watson, readers can understand why Sherlock Holmes, within the context of the story, is known as the most famous detective in England.

Study the clues Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson gather about the owner of the walking stick and compare how Watson and Holmes deduce different conclusions from the same hints. Add your findings to the following **Clues and Conclusions Chart**. Why do you think Dr. Watson and Sherlock Holmes draw different conclusions from the same clues?

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter 3

Resumé Writing Characterization

Objective: Creating resumé for different characters

Activity

Dr. Mortimer approaches Sherlock Holmes with the mysterious case of the death of Sir Charles Baskerville. Imagine that Dr. Mortimer is interviewing several detectives before deciding whom he will hire as the leading detective to solve the case. Dr. Mortimer asks Sherlock Holmes as well as Dr. Watson for a resumé so he can learn more about their qualifications and experience. On the following page is a sample resumé. Notice that the resumé includes career objectives, prior work experience, skills, personal interests, and references. Also keep in mind that a resumé should target a specific job. Feel free to be creative and come up with some more specific details (you may have to be creative in inserting specific dates, etc.) You can use the blank resumé provided to you, or you may use a resumé wizard on your computer.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters 1-6**Writing a Last Will and Testament**

Objective: Understanding character motivations
 Writing about thematic concerns of the text

Activity

As Sir Henry Baskerville and Dr. Watson set out for Baskerville Hall, Sherlock Holmes warns them:

“I beg, Sir Henry, that you will not go about alone. Some great misfortune will befall you if you do.” (Pg. 54)

Imagine that you are Sir Henry Baskerville. You are eager to take up your residence at Baskerville Hall, yet you are frightened and intimidated by the mysterious deaths of your ancestors and the legend of the hound of the Baskervilles. In order to ensure that your property is taken care of in case “some great misfortune” cannot be prevented and you will fall victim to the Baskerville curse and die, you decide to write your last will and testament.

Assume the identity of Sir Henry and write your last will and testament. Review chapters 1-6 and use the information provided to imagine what wishes and concerns Sir Henry would express in his last will and testament. Keep the following hints in mind as you write:

- Sir Henry has inherited a vast fortune – money and property.
- Sir Henry fears that his ancestor has died through foul play.
- Sherlock Holmes explains that the rightful heir in case of Sir Henry's death is an elderly gentleman named Mr. James Desmond.
- Sir Henry remembers that his uncle, Sir Charles Baskerville, was a generous, charitable man.
- Sir Henry has no immediate family himself – no wife or children.
- Sir Henry does not want his property to get into the wrong hands.
- A number of servants live at Baskerville Hall. Some of them have served his uncle for many years.
- The Last Will and Testament must be signed by Sir Henry and witnessed in the presence of an attorney.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter 9

Creating a Poster

Objective: Creating a “Wanted” poster for a character
 Depicting character traits in a creative collage

Activity

After learning about the identity of the escaped convict, Dr. Watson and Sir Henry set out to hunt down the criminal who has been on the run for days.

Policemen have been looking for Selden all over the Grimpen Mire. Dr. Watson and Sir Henry fail to catch the criminal, but they manage to get a good look at his facial features:

“Wait here. He must be near his light. Let us see if we can get a glimpse of him.”

The words were hardly out of my mouth when we both saw him. Over the rocks, in the crevice of which the candle burned, there was thrust out an evil yellow face, a terrible animal face, all seamed and scored with vile passions. Foul with mire, with a bristling beard, and hung with matted hair, it might well have belonged to one of those old savages who dwelt in the burrows on the hillsides. The light beneath him was reflected in his small, cunning eyes which peered fiercely to right and left through the darkness, like a crafty and savage animal who has heard the steps of the hunters.” (Pg. 91)

Create a “Wanted” poster that police can put up throughout the neighborhood in order to warn the neighbors about the escaped convict in hopes of receiving hints that may lead to his capture. You can draw or sketch and use newspaper or magazine clippings in order to create the poster. The “Wanted” poster should include the following information, plus any additional information you deem necessary. The information is available in chapter 9 or in previous chapters:

- the escaped convict’s name
- the name of the prison he escaped from
- the nature of the crime he was imprisoned for
- a physical description or a sketch of his face
- a reward
- a warning for neighbors about the danger he poses

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters 9-10**Theme
Characterization**

Objective: Evaluating character motivations and actions
Taking a classroom poll

Activity

Sir Henry Baskerville and Dr. Watson have finally solved the mystery of Mr. Barrymore's nightly wanderings to the open window: Mr. and Mrs. Barrymore have confessed their connection with the escaped convict – they have revealed to Watson and Sir Henry that the convict is, in fact, Mrs. Barrymore's brother, and that they have secretly been supplying him with food. Every time the Barrymores leave food for the convict, Mr. Barrymore approaches the open window at night with his candle in order to signal to the convict across the moor that food has been left in the designated hiding place.

After learning the truth about Barrymore's nightly activities, Dr. Watson and Sir Henry set out to capture the escaped criminal:

When they were gone we looked out of the window again. Sir Henry had flung it open, and the cold night wind beat upon our faces. Far away in the black distance there still glowed that one tiny point of yellow light.

"I wonder he dares," said Sir Henry.

"It may be so placed as to be only visible from here."

"Very likely. How far do you think it is?"

"Out by the Cleft Tor, I think."

"Not more than a mile or two off."

"Hardly that."

"Well, it cannot be far if Barrymore had to carry out the food to it. And he is waiting, this villain, beside that candle. By thunder, Watson, I am going out to take that man!"

The same thought had crossed my own mind. It was not as if the Barrymores had taken us into their confidence. Their secret had been forced from them. The man was a danger to the community, an unmitigated scoundrel for whom there was neither pity nor excuse. We were only doing our duty in taking this chance of putting him back where he could do no harm. With his brutal and violent nature, others would have to pay the price if we held our hands. Any night, for example, our neighbors the Stapletons might be attacked by him, and it may have been the thought of this which made Sir Henry so keen upon the adventure. (Pgs. 88-89)

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter 12**Theme
Interpretation**

Objective: Understanding events in the text
 Considering characters and their actions

Activity

Each group should select one of the following topics and prepare a five- to ten- minute speech to be presented in front of the class. The contents of the speech should be based on the information provided in the text. Since the topics are open-ended, students should take the following into consideration:

1. Take a clear position on the subject and state it clearly early on in the speech. You can agree or disagree with each statement.
2. Support your decision to agree or disagree with your statement with information from the text.
3. Propose a solution, alternative point of view, alternative course of action, or conclusion.

Topics

1. Sherlock Holmes should not have kept his presence in the hut a secret from Dr. Watson.
2. Dr. Watson's investigation is unnecessary for Sherlock Holmes. Holmes could solve the entire crime on his own.
3. Sherlock Holmes is taking advantage of Dr. Watson.
4. Miss Stapleton is a liar, because she did not reveal her identity to Dr. Watson or to Sir Henry.
5. Dr. Watson has risked Sir Henry's life by leaving him alone in order to visit Laura Lyons.
6. Sherlock Holmes has endangered both Sir Henry and Dr. Watson by keeping his discoveries about the Stapletons a secret.
7. Dr. Watson is more likeable than Sherlock Holmes.
8. Sherlock Holmes has risked his life by staying in the hut on the moor. Secrecy is a characteristic necessary in a great detective.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters 14-15**Characterization
Theme and Plot****Objective:** Setting up and enacting a mock trial**Activity**

After pretending to leave for London, Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson set the trap that eventually reveals Mr. Stapleton as the murderer of Sir Charles Baskerville. Moreover, Holmes and Watson manage to trick Stapleton and successfully prevent the murder of Sir Henry.

Imagine that Mr. Stapleton will be put on trial for the crimes he committed and the crimes he plotted. Hold a mock trial determining the extent of Mr. Stapleton's crimes and his punishment.

Each student should elect to play one of the following characters:

- member of the jury
- witness (witnesses needed include Mrs. Laura Lyons, Miss Stapleton, Sir Henry Baskerville, Dr. Watson, the Barrymores, Sherlock Holmes, possibly other neighbors)
- the judge
- the defending attorney
- the prosecuting attorney
- the defendant, Mr. Stapleton

In preparation for the trial, review the history of Mr. Stapleton and prepare note cards or index cards to access your notes quickly.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Wrap-Up

Theme and Plot

Objective: Relating literature to life
 Identifying thematic ideas

Imagine the following fantasy scenario: You live in the 1800s, and Sherlock Holmes has just solved the mysterious case of the hound of the Baskervilles. Television talk shows are very common in London in the late 1800s.

You and your classmates participate in a television talk show dealing with the case of the hound of the Baskervilles. The show is dedicated to helping viewers understand what exactly happened in Devonshire and how Sherlock Holmes and his assistant Dr. Watson were able to solve the crime.

The following characters must be represented in the television show broadcast:

1. television talk show host
2. television talk show co-host
3. guest – Sherlock Holmes
4. guest – Dr. Watson
5. guest – Sir Henry Baskerville
6. guest – Dr. Mortimer
7. guest – Mr. Barrymore
8. guest – Mrs. Laura Lyons
9. guest – Miss Stapleton
10. other neighbors of your choosing
11. a psychoanalyst or psychologist
12. members of the audience asking questions

Of course Mr. Stapleton has been sentenced and incarcerated. However, you may want to bring him in as a character via satellite.

Each person should plan what he or she wants to say or ask during the television talk show. Use as many details and specific examples from the text as possible. Whenever possible, you may quote the characters directly from the book. At any other time, try to retain each character's individual voice and tone.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Wrap-Up

Creative Changes

Objective: Adapting the story to a creative film version

Activity

Many different film versions of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* exist. Imagine that you are a movie director who wants to film an entirely new and creative version of the story. You have access to an extensive budget and an extremely talented crew who will help you realize your vision. The executive producers have only one specific request: they require you to make significant changes to the original text, because many faithful adaptations have already been created. The producers want you to consider making some or all of the following changes in order to turn the movie into a blockbuster:

- You must create a new title.
- You must change the setting (time and place).
- You can add additional characters.
- You can change/update investigative technologies.
- You can change the ending or add to the existing ending by continuing the story.
- You can change the time frame in which the story takes place.

Create a one-page outline or write a short essay explaining all the changes you plan to make in your film version of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. Comment on the following details in your outline or essay:

- title
- setting (add detailed descriptions about time and place)
- characters
- costumes
- set design
- the investigation
- the film's opening, main action, and outcome
- time frame