

Classic Literature for Christian Homeschoolers

Volume 1: Classic Mysteries

Answer Key to Review Questions

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Week 1, Day 1 – “A Scandal in Bohemia”

1. Who is the narrator for “A Scandal in Bohemia”? How does this compare to if the story were told using a third-person narrator?

The narrator is Dr. Watson. Using Dr. Watson as a narrator gives a more authentic feel to the events of the story, as it is more believable, coming from someone who was there at the time of the events. It also gives the story a more personal touch, as opposed to having been told by a third-person narrator.

2. Explain the story’s basic conflict.

To avenge the king’s unfair treatment of her years before, Irene Adler threatens to ruin him by making public his previous relationship with her, which will put his relationship to his betrothed wife in turmoil.

3. Why is Irene Adler compared to “grit in a sensitive instrument” near the story’s beginning?

Sherlock Holmes is impressed with her beauty and intelligence (which is unusual for him), and they threaten to “gum up the works” of his analytical machine-like mind, much like a stone or sand in an expensive piece of machinery.

4. Describe the character of Sherlock Holmes. What do his deductions of Watson’s recent circumstances do for the story?

Deeply observant, a little arrogant and impatient, a tireless worker, a master of disguise, and apparently possessing no end of quirky talents and gifts. His deductions of what has happened in Watson’s life recently—made solely by observing his appearance—both intrigue the reader and give reason to expect that Holmes will be able to make more logical deductions to solve mysteries that are presented.

5. Are Holmes’s first suggestions to the king morally sound? Why or why not? (Compare to Ephesians 4:28, Colossians 3:9, and Romans 13:9.)

No. Ephesians 4:28 says, “Let him that stole steal no more”; Colossians 3:9 says, “Lie not to one another”; Romans 13:9 says, among other things, “Thou shalt not bear false witness.” Yet in his first encounter with the king, Holmes suggests to him that he steal Miss Adler’s photograph and/or lie about or deny his previous involvement with her.

6. How does Irene Adler thwart Holmes? What little touch does she add to tweak Holmes after she realizes she has been tricked?

She realizes that she has been tricked into revealing the photograph’s hiding place, and flees to avoid Holmes’s retrieval of it the next morning. Before she leaves, however, she follows Holmes to his apartment and boldly says, “Good night, Mr. Sherlock Holmes,” to him, disguised as a man.

7. How are the king of Bohemia and Irene Adler similar? How do they differ?

Answers will vary. The two characters are similar in that they both seem to be a little too proud of themselves. They differ in that the king comes across as a clueless, snobbish oaf, while Irene Adler seems more cultured and refined. This is amply demonstrated at the story’s end, when the king (ironically) tells Holmes, “Is it not a pity that she was not on my level?” and Holmes replies, “From what I have seen of the lady, she seems, indeed, to be on a very different level to your Majesty.”

8. Do you think that Sherlock Holmes “loves” Irene Adler? Why or why not?

Probably he doesn’t “love” her, but respects her as a cultured beauty and worthwhile rival.

Week 1, Day 3 – “The Thinking Machine”

1. Describe how the author effectively and compellingly sets up the story in the first paragraph.

The first sentence is fantastic, compelling the reader to continue and wonder what could be so impossible. The first paragraph uses strong nouns and verbs to set up the story’s main event. It reads like a gripping newspaper story, written in the “inverted pyramid” style—giving the basic facts of the story, but captivating the reader into wanting to continue.

2. What is Professor Van Dusen like, both in physical appearance and in his personality?

He is a small man, physically weak, thin, with weak, “watery” eyes and a shock of yellow hair, about 50 years old. He is a scientific genius, however, with a steel-trap mind which he has trained to make logical deductions (although he is often grouchy and intolerant of those around him).

3. Explain how Van Dusen meets the challenge given him. How do you think this will set up the rest of the “Thinking Machine” stories?

He studies chess with a master for a few hours and defeats the Russian champion easily, using logic. This sets up any following stories by showing Van Dusen’s relentless thinking ability.

Week 2, Day 1 – “The Problem of Cell 13”

1. What three things does The Thinking Machine request before he is locked up, and why?

Tooth powder, to keep the acid from spreading; money, to make outsiders he contacts more inclined to help him get what he wants inside Chisholm Prison; and polish for his shoes, to use as ink in writing notes.

2. List some key traits of Chisholm Prison. How does the Thinking Machine put this information to use?

It is made of granite, contains several locked doors, high and smooth walls, lighted at night by electric lights, etc. The Thinking Machine knows he can forget escaping certain ways, but concentrates on using the particular characteristics of his cell to help him escape, using the fact that the wires are close to his cell to help him escape by burning through them and using the cover of darkness.

3. Were you able to decipher the Thinking Machine’s first coded message?

Answers will vary. (“Yes,” for example. Or possibly, “No.”)

4. Explain the reason for the other prisoner’s screams during the night.

He hears The Thinking Machine saying the word “acid” to Hutchinson Hatch (his request for acid). The prisoner had been jailed for throwing acid in a woman’s face, and he feels guilty.

5. Were you able to guess how the Thinking Machine escaped before you read Section VI?

Answers will vary!

6. What role do rats and electricity play in the Thinking Machine’s plan?

The rats’ entrance into Cell 13 tells The Thinking Machine that there is a link to the outside world, which he uses to contact others and bring items into his cell. Electricity (which was much less omnipresent in 1905) is critical, because the prison is lighted by it. Turning it off using acid, again, provides The Thinking Machine with cover through darkness.

7. How does the Thinking Machine write notes, and ultimately, escape?

He uses the polish on his shoes and the tips of his shoelaces. His escape is effected by using acid to weaken his cell's bars, and he walks out disguised as an electrician hired to fix the lights.

8. At the end of "Cell 13," The Thinking Machine says that had his initial plan failed, there were "two other ways out." What do you think these could be?

Answers will vary.

Week 2, Day 3 – "The Adventure of the Speckled Band"

1. Why does Watson say he waited for a period of time before he wrote the account of this mystery?

He promised Helen Stoner he would not write of it, but she died and now would suffer no embarrassment by the story's publication.

2. Describe Helen Stoner's appearance and personality. Why is she so afraid?

She is dressed in black, with a veiled face, and prematurely gray hair. She is frightened to death because her stepfather is violent and acts as if he were insane. Her sister died under mysterious circumstances two years earlier.

3. Whom does Sherlock Holmes begin to suspect of a crime? Why? What is the suspected criminal's motive?

Dr. Roylott. He has every motive to want his stepdaughters dead, since part of his late wife's inheritance will go to them if they marry (which each was about to do).

4. List some characteristics of Dr. Roylott. Why does Sherlock Holmes say a man in his profession can be so dangerous?

He is violent, huge, and unpredictable. Holmes says that doctors like Roylott are dangerous if they turn to crime, because they have the scientific knowledge to carry out murders and the nerve to carry them out.

5. Name several sounds heard by various characters in "The Speckled Band" that are critical to the story's plot.

Answers will vary, but might include the whistle used to train the adder, the clank of the metal safe which houses the adder, and the sound "like that of a small jet of steam escaping continually from a kettle" (the hiss of the snake).

6. Sum up Holmes's investigation and his plan to put an end to the doings in the Roylott household.

He discovers the bed bolted to the floor, the vent leading the doctor's room, the dummy bell-rope, the saucer of milk (for the snake), the marks indicating Dr. Roylott had stood on the chair (to put the snake into the vent), and so on. He stays the night with Watson in Helen's room to thwart Dr. Roylott's next attempt at killing her.

7. Could Julia have died from fright, since there were no marks found on her by the coroner?

Answers will vary, but it is possible, since it seems unlikely the coroner would miss bite marks, however small, in his investigation. Also, it seems likely that Julia would have had swelling and discoloration if she had been bitten to death by a poisonous snake.

Week 3, Day 2 – "The Adventure of the Red-headed League"

1. Give a few pieces of evidence that demonstrate what Watson thinks of Jabez Wilson.

He portrays him as a ridiculous and pathetic client of Holmes, even describing Mr. Wilson as "obese, pompous, and slow."

2. Why does Holmes say to Watson, “Omne ignotum pro magnifico”?

Because once he explains his methods of deducing various characteristics of Jabez Wilson based upon his appearance, Mr. Wilson laughs and says Holmes isn't so clever after all, which nettles Holmes a little.

3. Whom does Sherlock Holmes begin to suspect of a crime? Why?

John Clay, because of Jabez Wilson's physical description of him; his disappearance into the cellar, supposedly to develop pictures; and his willingness to work so cheaply, even though he is a skilled employee.

4. What is the ruse of the “Red-headed League”?

It is a plan to get Jabez Wilson out of the way so that Clay and his accomplices can dig a tunnel under the pawn shop to the bank vault.

5. Why does Holmes visit Mr. Wilson's shop and ask for directions?

He wants to see John Clay's pants, to see if his knees are dirty from kneeling to dig underground.

6. Give at least one example of humor in “The Red-headed League.”

Answers will vary!

7. John Clay's plan was made more attractive because of the bank's recent acquisition of French gold. How do you think Clay knew about this?

Answers will vary, but it is possible that he had inside information somehow. It has been speculated by Sherlock Holmes enthusiasts that Mr. Merryweather was in on the scheme, even trying to warn Clay by striking his walking stick on the floor before Holmes chides him.

8. What could Clay and his accomplices have done to make their crime and getaway more likely to succeed?

Answers will vary, but one way would be to continue to pay Jabez Wilson at his phony job for another week, even after the bank robbery was completed. This way, Mr. Wilson would not have contacted Holmes when he did, allowing Holmes time to reason out the mystery in time to stop the robbery from occurring.

9. What do the last four paragraphs of the story say about the characters of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson, and about their relationship? How can Holmes's lament here speak to the present generation?

Watson is an encouraging friend to Sherlock Holmes, telling him he is a brilliant reasoner and a “benefactor to the race.” Holmes reveals himself a sad man, in some ways, since he feels as if his life is one long attempt to escape boredom, unless he is on a case. Sadly, our generation often feels the same way, with people of all ages living their lives as pleasure-seekers in one long attempt to attain a physical or mental “high,” instead of living in an obedient relationship to Jesus Christ.

Week 6, Day 3 – “The Adventure of the Copper Beeches”

1. What does Sherlock Holmes note about the cases that Dr. Watson has chosen to write about?

That “crime is common” and “logic is rare,” so he would have preferred that Watson focus more on the logical deductions Holmes uses in solving the cases than the crimes themselves.

2. What is unusual about the salary offered to Miss Hunter? What odd request does Mr. Rucastle make of her as part of her duties?

It is three times more than the normal governess salary. Rucastle requests that Violet Hunter obey any whims or odd notions that he or his wife have as part of her duties, which turn out to be things (like wearing a certain dress and cutting her hair) that are to make her more believable in impersonating their daughter.

3. Sum up the chilling comment about the countryside that Holmes makes when Watson remarks upon its beauty.

Unlike Watson, who remarks upon the countryside's beauty, Holmes says that the countryside holds dark secrets more than the average location because it is isolated, and thus criminals and evil can hide more easily.

4. Describe the various concerns Violet Hunter has about several members of the Rucastle household.

The six-year-old boy is wicked, tormenting animals and such; Mr. Rucastle seems capable of violence and uses veiled threats; Mrs. Rucastle is moody, weepy, and withdrawn; and the butler couple seem off, with the husband often drunk.

5. What is the real reason for Violet Hunter's hire?

To impersonate the Rucastles' daughter so they will keep her inheritance.

6. Are there any key questions you can think of that "The Copper Beeches" leaves unanswered?

Answers will vary, but might include things like "Do the Rucastles think they can keep their daughter locked up forever?" and "Were there other governesses?"

Week 7, Day 2 – "The Doondorf Mystery"

1. What kind of man is Doondorf, based on the author's initial description of his looks, background, and actions?

He is a rough man, savage, tough to be able to take a rough piece of land and build a house on a rock on it and plant peach trees. His character is low, since he uses the peaches to manufacture liquor, which contributes to much unsocial and dangerous behavior of those who drink it.

2. What is Uncle Abner, Randolph, and Bronson's business with Doondorf? As representatives of the law (and the church), how far should their authority extend over the "Doondorf problem"?

Uncle Abner and Randolph come to Doondorf to try to stop him from manufacturing and selling alcohol. It is, however, is legally questionable to put the blame on Doondorf for acts that others commit, even if he does sell them the liquor.

Bronson, claiming to speak for God, is similar. Certainly It is noble idea to try to reduce drunkenness and resulting violence, and Christians should certainly oppose both, but Bronson really has no right to destroy Doondorf's property.

3. Which two persons claim to have perpetrated the crime, and why? What facts about the scene make their claims doubtful or impossible?

The old woman and Bronson both claim to have killed Doondorf, but the door is still bolted from the inside, and it is impossible to get out from a window, since there is a drop of more than 100 feet down sheer rock (and the windows have not been opened). Doondorf could not have killed himself, since the gun has been put carefully into forks in the wall. Also, Doondorf was killed at 1 PM, according to his stopped watch, and Bronson was still on the road, and the old woman in the grove at that time.

4. What is ironic about *how* Doondorf meets his...doom? (Recall what Bronson prays against him.)

Bronson prays God would send "fire from heaven" to kill Doondorf, and essentially, that's what happens, since the sun's light activates the firing mechanism of the gun on the wall that kills Doondorf.

5. What would you say is the *theme* of “The Doomdorf Mystery”? (See for example Proverbs 26:27 and Proverbs 28:10.)

Answers will vary, but something like “he who lives by the sword must die by the sword,” which is quoted in the story itself; or, as Proverbs 26:27 says, “Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein: and he that rolleth a stone, it will return upon him.” Proverbs 28:10 says, “Whoso causeth the righteous to go astray in an evil way, he shall fall himself into his own pit.”

Week 7, Day 4 – “The Final Problem”

1. Why does Watson say at the story’s opening he has “no choice but to lay the facts before the public”?

Moriarty’s brother has in print defended him through untrue statements, and Watson feels he must counter with the truth.

2. Describe the character of Professor Moriarty. Why do you think Doyle chose “Moriarty” for his name?

He is brilliant in his mathematical abilities, a diabolical criminal, head of a London crime syndicate; a genius, a philosopher, an abstract thinker. He acts strangely, weaving his head from side to side like some kind of snake, is ruthless, and does not hesitate to threaten to kill anyone who gets in his way. Doyle likely chose “Moriarty” as a name because it closely resembles the Latin root “mors, mortis,” which means “death” (the root of English words like “mortal,” “mortuary,” “mortician,” and so on), since Moriarty is such a deadly threat.

3. How is the first meeting between Holmes and Moriarty different from most confrontations between adversaries?

Moriarty warns Holmes to back off; the behavior is not quite friendly, but each respects the other’s intelligence. It differs from many confrontations between adversaries, because there is no fight or physical battle with loud shouting or maniacal threats; in fact, very little is said, because each man anticipates the other’s answers.

4. What precautions does Holmes take in preparing to leave for Europe?

He disguises himself as an Italian priest, orders Watson not to take the first or second hansom in case it is driven by a confederate of Moriarty’s, hides from Moriarty’s special train, and so on.

5. What comments does Holmes make to indicate he believes he will be killed?

He says he would gladly bring his own career to a conclusion if society was rid of Moriarty; he says if he can he would not “lived wholly in vain”; he tells Moriarty he would gladly sacrifice himself if he knew that doing so would assure that Moriarty and his gang would be brought to justice.

6. What is the purpose of the note to Dr. Watson from the dying lady?

It was to get Watson out of the way, to assure that Holmes had no other person for assistance or protection, so Moriarty could get at him.

7. Do you think Holmes deliberately sacrificed his life to lure Moriarty into a trap?

Answers will vary.

8. Professor Moriarty is one of the most famous villains in the history of literature, although the reader barely gets to know him. Why does he make such an impact?

He is so well described by Doyle. Holmes himself introduces the reader (and Watson) to the character of Moriarty, and since we know Holmes has worked so long to fight evil and injustice using his detective skills, we take him seriously when he talks so respectfully of Moriarty’s powers. The two famous confrontations between Holmes and Moriarty add to Moriarty’s reputation as Holmes’s greatest adversary.

Week 11, Day 1 – “An Act of God”

1. Why do you think Uncle Abner studies and seems deep in thought about the *girl* and not the mountebank at the story’s opening?

He recognizes that the “gypsy girl” looks like either the mountebank, or Blackford, or both men, thinking what this could mean.

2. What change comes over the mountebank’s face when Uncle Abner goes to see him in his wagon? What does this change indicate?

The mountebank goes from looking “dull and stupid” to “keen and bright,” indicating that he was pretending to be clueless and clumsy when he killed Blackford, but actually is an intelligent man who plotted Blackford’s death.

3. What clues does Abner reveal to the mountebank? What does the mountebank reveal to Abner?

Abner tells him the murder knife that killed Blackford was the only sharpened one; the gypsy girl is Blackford’s daughter; the letter from Blackford to Rufus (Abner’s brother) was not written by Blackford. The mountebank admits that Blackford is the girl’s father (and the mountebank’s daughter was her mother) and that he deliberately killed Blackford. He also says that Blackford wooed the mountebank’s daughter, and that the law would have left her penniless, with a child, which was unjust. He wanted to kill Blackford openly, but feared he would leave his granddaughter alone after he was hanged for the murder, so he arranged to do it so it looked accidental. Also, he has arranged for Blackford to leave his daughter (the mountebank’s granddaughter) her rightful inheritance.

4. How does Uncle figure out the incident of the letter and the handwriting?

That is was not written by Blackford, a deaf-mute who would not misspell words based on their phonetic sounds, but instead by the similarity to letters that resemble each other.

5. Uncle Abner calls floods, earthquakes, and tornadoes “acts of the devil,” but the story’s central event “an act of God.” Is he correct? Why or why not?

Answers will vary, but certainly not every act that seemingly rights a wrong or punishes an evil person is an act of God. Christians are forbidden to seek vengeance, and are told to return good for evil. If we believed like Uncle Abner says, everything any man did generally regarded as just would be excused and encouraged! To call the deliberate murder of a man, foul as he might be, “an act of God,” contradicts the whole of Christian teaching. Besides, just because a man treats his wife and child badly doesn’t mean anyone has the right to murder him!

Week 12, Day 3 – “The Adventure of the Empty House”

1. How does Watson try to imitate Sherlock Holmes’s methods after Holmes’s death?

He tries to solve mysteries using logical deduction, but is not successful.

2. Describe the old book collector Watson encounters. What does Watson learn in talking to him after he comes up to Watson’s apartment?

The old book collector is Holmes in disguise! After he reveals himself, Holmes tells Watson how he escaped from the falls, and explains that he is there to capture the man who tried to kill him on the ledge of the falls, who is the same man who killed Ronald Adair.

3. What kind of man is Colonel Moran?

A large, powerful, masculine man who is England's greatest shooter and hunter, and an evil criminal who is willing to work for Moriarty and murder, if called upon to do so.

4. How is the empty house used to bring about justice? In what way is the empty house even more useful than hoped for?

Holmes wants to catch Moran trying to "kill" him by shooting at his effigy, but he doesn't realize that Moran will come into the very same empty house in which he and Watson are hiding.

5. What is the connection between the house and the death of Ronald Adair?

Moran apparently killed Adair to keep him from ousting him from the club for cheating at cards, which is how he lived.

6. To what is the perpetrator of the crime compared to near the story's end? Why is this ironic? What is the criminal's motive?

He is compared to a tiger in Holmes's "tree" (the empty house), which is ironic, since Moran was known as a tremendously successful big-game hunter of animals, including tigers, and used traps to lure tigers, just as Holmes lured him into a trap using the dummy of himself.

7. What evidence in the story suggests that Doyle held to an evolutionist point of view when it came to the problem of evil in mankind?

Moran, says Holmes, is a biological oddity, like a tree that grew wrongly, which is what gave him such a criminally evil mind. He speaks of Moran as more of an animal, or evolutionary mutation, that had to be dealt with than a fully conscious moral agent who behaved as an evil person.

Week 15, Day 3 – "The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle"

1. What does Holmes deduce from the hat he finds? Were you able to deduce anything from the hat's description before his explanations?

Among other things, the man is intelligent (the hat size is large, and so is, presumably, the man's brain), he was previously well off, but his fortunes have declined (the hat was fashionable when it was bought, but has deteriorated without being replaced), he still has self-respect (he covers stains on the hat with ink), he is middle aged and recently had a haircut (clean-cut gray hairs found), he is not in good shape (perspiration marks found in the hat), and his wife does not love him any more (the hat has not been brushed of dust for weeks), and he has not had gas for heat (several candle tallow stains are found).

2. Sum up the circumstances of the carbuncle's loss. What interesting comments about precious stones in general does Holmes make?

It was lost after John Horner was called to fix a grate, and suspicion fell upon him. Holmes remarks that precious stones are beautiful, but are "responsible" for evil—murders, robberies, suicides, hangings, prison sentences—since men crave them so much.

3. How does Holmes test Mr. Baker? How does Baker "pass"?

Holmes says they have eaten the bird, but still have the leftover parts. If Baker had stuffed the carbuncle down the bird's throat, he would have wanted those parts, but he doesn't care, as long as he has another bird to replace it, so he knows nothing about the stone.

4. Sum up Holmes's method of finding out where the bird came from.

He traces it to where it was sold by a salesman, then tricks him into showing him where he (the salesman) bought it by pretending to bet it came from the city, not the country.

5. Why does Holmes release James Ryder as he did? What reasons does he give for doing so?

Holmes releases Ryder because he thinks it will do him worse to go to prison, and that Ryder is truly too scared ever to run afoul of the law again. Answers will vary on whether students believe he was right to do so.

6. Do you think it would reflect the Christmas spirit for an instructor to do something similar to Holmes’s act—say, to release students from having to take a quiz covering their Week 15 Christmas-themed readings?

Answers will probably NOT vary....

Week 26, Day 1 – “The Flaming Phantom”

1. Describe the house and the old constable’s story about the house’s background.

It is old, broken down, by the sea, and looks “haunted.” The constable reveals to Hutchinson Hatch that the house has not been lived in for years, and used to belong to a man who is rumored to have hidden jewels in the house.

2. List the questions that The Thinking Machine asks Hutchinson Hatch. Based upon these, can you make a guess about the solution to the mystery? (There are a few other clues as well.)

The Thinking Machine asks Hutchinson Hatch if the ghost’s handwriting was a man’s or woman’s, if Hatch smelled anything, what he heard that sounded like a rat running across the floor, how far away the house is from water, and if any of the mirrors were dusty (among other things).

3. How do the disappearance of items play into the mystery of the house and phantom?

The jewels are still suspected of being in the house by the culprit (George Weston), and the flaming phantom is a ruse to keep others away from the house until he can find the jewels.

4. Did you guess any of the explanations that The Thinking Machine gives for the mystery of the phantom?

Answers will vary.

Week 27, Day 1 – The Hound of the Baskervilles (Chapters 1-2)

1. What does the exchange between Holmes and Watson regarding the walking stick do for the story?

It gives the reader a good example of Holmes’s deductive reasoning, shows the friendship between Holmes and Watson, and provides humor in showing how erroneous Watson is in his assumptions about the owner of the stick.

2. What is Dr. Mortimer like?

He is a reasonable doctor, interested in anthropology (to the point where he asks Holmes if he can run his fingers over his skull!), and was a friend of the late Sir Charles Baskerville.

3. Briefly sum up the letter Mortimer reads, and the recent news of Sir Charles Baskerville, including Mortimer’s incredible find.

There is a supposed “curse” on the Baskerville name because of the wickedness of Sir Hugo, who is supposed to have been killed by a gigantic hound on the moor. Sir Charles’s recent death has upset Mortimer greatly, not just because Sir Charles was a friend and patient, but because Mortimer saw some footprints of a “gigantic hound” near Sir Charles’s body.

Week 27, Day 2 – *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (Chapters 3-4)

1. Explain why Dr. Mortimer believes the ghostly hound is a real creature.

He saw the prints, and he interviewed several locals, who confirmed that they had seen a ghostly hound on the moor.

2. What does Sherlock Holmes think about the events Dr. Mortimer has described?

He doubts it is supernatural, but believes there is a danger.

3. What two things does Holmes deduce from the information Mortimer gives about the night of Sir Charles's death?

First, that Sir Charles was running for his life, since his footprints changed, and second, that Sir Charles was waiting to keep an appointment with someone, since otherwise he would not have stepped foot on the moor at night (because he feared the legend of the hound).

4. List the odd things that happen to Sir Henry upon his arrival, and Holmes's deductions.

Two of Sir Henry's boots (one old, one never worn) go missing, and he receives a letter made of pasted Times words warning him to stay away from the moor. Holmes deduces, among other things, that the message is cut from the Times, pasted with gum, cut with nail scissors, and that the sender is disguising his writing because it might be known by Sir Henry.

Week 27, Day 3 – *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (Chapters 5-6)

1. Describe the man following Sir Henry in the cab. Why is Sherlock Holmes extremely concerned about danger for Sir Henry?

The man following Sir Henry is tall, with a black (possibly false) beard, and clever enough to escape. Sherlock Holmes is convinced he is an extremely dangerous man because (1) he audaciously tells his cab-man his name is Sherlock Holmes, knowing Holmes will ask it, and (2) because Sir Henry's fortune is worth roughly a billion dollars in today's money, which makes it more likely that someone will resort to treachery or even murder to get it.

2. Why does Holmes entrust Sir Henry to Watson? How does he instruct Watson?

Holmes has business in London to take care of, and cannot go with Sir Henry, so he sends Watson, telling him to stick closely to Sir Henry.

3. Sum up Holmes's instructions to Watson.

To stay with Sir Henry and report to Holmes, most importantly of any new developments between Sir Henry and his neighbors.

4. Why are there a number of armed watchmen and police in the area as the group arrives?

Selden, a notorious murderer, has escaped and is on the loose.

5. Describe Baskerville Hall and the Barrymores. What news do they have for Sir Henry?

It is a huge, old, majestic home, with ivy running up some walls and rich furnishings. The Barrymores are a married couple serving Sir Henry—Mr. Barrymore with a black beard and handsome. They tell Sir Henry that they intend to leave, even though their family has served the Baskervilles for generations, because Sir Charles's death has upset them and he left them money enough in his will to help them start up a business for themselves.

6. What does Watson hear in the middle of the night?

The sounds of a woman sobbing uncontrollably.

Week 28, Day 1 – *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (Chapter 7)

1. Give some reasons why suspicion begins to fall upon Barrymore.

He lies about his wife's sobbing, because Watson sees her eyes red and swollen. There is also no real evidence Barrymore was not in London, since the telegram he was supposed to have received in his own hands didn't go to him directly.

2. Describe Stapleton and his sister. What does he say about the rumors of a ghostly hound?

He is 30-40 years old, a naturalist specializing in butterflies and moths, and gently mocks the rumors of a ghostly hound upon the moor. He tells Watson he was formerly a schoolmaster and ran a private school. His sister is darker than he, beautiful, "slim, elegant, and tall."

3. What is the Grimpen Mire? What is Stapleton's specialty concerning it?

A dangerous place on the moor, because of quicksand-like spots that suck down anything that steps on it (including horses, one of which we see die in the mire). Stapleton is able to get across the Grimpen Mire without being pulled in because he knows special landmarks and which steps to take.

4. What do Watson and Stapleton hear? To what do they attribute the sound?

An awful, terrifying howl. Stapleton attributes it to the wind, or an almost-extinct bird, but Watson insists it is a living voice of some kind.

5. What odd thing does Beryl Stapleton tell Watson? What misunderstanding occurs? How does she try to correct the situation?

She tells him to leave the moor immediately, but thought he was Sir Henry, so the message was meant for him. Later she tells him, alone, to ignore her warning, but Watson believes it is important. He asks her why she wouldn't repeat the warning in front of her brother, and she says that her brother doesn't want Sir Henry to be scared away, because having him at Baskerville Hall is good for the poor folk around the moor.

Week 28, Day 2 – *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (Chapter 8)

1. Sum up Watson's news about (a) Selden, the escaped convict, (b) the situation between Sir Henry and Miss Stapleton, (c) Mr. Frankland, (d) the Barrymores.

(a) *Selden has not been seen for weeks and is presumed long gone.*

(b) *Sir Henry is strongly attracted to Miss Stapleton, but her brother seems to disapprove.*

(c) *Mr. Frankland is a fiery old man who brings lawsuits for fun and has a telescope.*

(d) *Barrymore is upset at being suspected by Sir Henry, and Sir Henry mollifies him by giving him his old clothes. Mrs. Barrymore seems burdened and upset about something, and Watson observes Barrymore walking in the middle of the night down the hall and shining a candle out of a window onto the moor.*

2. Do you think having Watson writing a report for one of the chapters of *Hound of the Baskervilles* is an effective idea? Why or why not?

Answers will vary, but it does seem effective in that it puts the recent facts in a very understandable, concise fashion. It also is a creative way to vary how the story is written, instead of simply having a number of chapters written about events, as has been done up to this point.

Week 28, Day 3 – The Hound of the Baskervilles (Chapter 9)

1. Explain the argument between Stapleton and Sir Henry regarding his seeing Miss Stapleton.

Sir Henry and Miss Stapleton are interested in each other, but one day when they meet on the moor, Stapleton breaks them up, angrily denouncing Sir Henry. Stapleton later apologizes, explaining that his sister means much to him (and he would hate to lose her), but the incident has left a strange feeling in Sir Henry's mind.

2. What do Watson and Sir Henry do about Barrymore's sneaking around at night with the candle? What is his reaction, and what do they discover?

They follow him and catch him signaling someone on the moor. Barrymore refuses to tell Sir Henry what he is doing, and Sir Henry asks him to leave, until Mrs. Barrymore explains that the man Barrymore is signaling is her brother, Selden, the escaped criminal.

3. Describe Watson and Sir Henry's trek upon the moor.

They go to catch Selden, but hear the terrifying howl of a hound. Selden attacks the men, and they are unable to catch him as he flees. Watson looks up and sees the silhouette of a man against the full moon rising upon the moor.

Week 28, Day 4 – The Hound of the Baskervilles (Chapter 10)

1. What does Sir Henry agree to do in regard to Selden, to please Barrymore? How does Barrymore do a favor for Sir Henry?

Sir Henry agrees to do nothing about Selden until the Barrymores make arrangements to ship Selden to South America, where they say he will do no more harm. Barrymore shares with Sir Henry that the reason Sir Charles went out on the moor on the night of his death was to meet a woman whose initials are L. L.

2. Who is "L. L.," and what is her situation? How is she important to the case?

She is Laura Lyons, Frankland's daughter. She married against her father's wishes, and her husband left her. Frankland has given her a pittance, and Stapleton and Sir Charles gave her some money to set up a typewriting business. Lyons was supposed to meet Sir Charles on the moor on the very hour of his death.

3. What does Watson learn from Barrymore about the man on the tor? What does Watson resolve to do?

Selden has seen him. He is a "gentleman" and lives out on the moor among the houses on the hillside, and he has a boy bring him his needs regularly. Watson resolves to find the man the next day.

Week 29, Day 1 – The Hound of the Baskervilles (Chapters 11-12)

1. Explain what is suspicious about Laura Lyons's answers to Watson in his interview.

She admits to having asked Sir Charles to meet her on the moor on the hour of his death, but says she did not go, and will not reveal why she did not go.

2. What news does Frankland have, and how does Watson trick him into showing him?

Frankland knows where the “man on the tor” is, although he thinks it is the convict. Watson knows it is not the convict since Frankland says a boy bring him things (which is what Barrymore told Watson the “man on the tor” had done). Watson pretends to disagree with Frankland and feigns indifference to the story, until Frankland angrily tries to prove he is right by showing Watson where the man stays.

3. What evidence in the hut does Watson find?

The man has apparently been spying on them. He has information, and even a note that says, “Dr. Watson has gone to Coombe Tracy.”

4. What surprises does Watson learn from Holmes (Chapter 12)?

- Holmes himself was the “man on the tor,” watching closely the events on the moor; he never was staying in London.
- Stapleton’s “sister” is actually his wife, and he is the villain in the plot—the man with the black bear who followed them in London. He is using his wife to lure Sir Henry so he can get the Baskerville fortune.
- Laura Lyons is being used by Stapleton on the hopes she will become his wife.

5. Sum up the next death on the moor, and the circumstances around it.

The hound chases Selden on the moor, attracted by the scent of his clothes (which still have the scent of Sir Henry, who gave them to Barrymore). Selden dies of a broken neck, and Watson and Holmes initially think he is Sir Henry, by his clothes. Stapleton guiltily arrives on the scene (he was the one who sent the hound), and pretends to be shocked at “Sir Henry’s” death, but really is shocked to see that it is Selden.

Week 29, Day 2 – The Hound of the Baskervilles (Chapter 13)

1. What is Holmes’s assessment of Stapleton, and why?

Holmes tells Watson that Stapleton—who is able to gather himself quickly—is possibly the most formidable foe he has ever faced, capable of anything, since he was able to gather himself so coolly in the face of learning that it was Selden, not Sir Henry, who died on the moor.

2. What unintentionally ironic remark does Sir Henry make? What is Holmes’s ironically humorous reply?

Sir Henry says if he hadn’t sworn not to go out alone, he would have had a more “lively evening.” Holmes says, “I have no doubt that you would have had a more lively evening,” meaning that if Sir Henry had gone out, the hound might have killed him.

3. What does Holmes notice about the painted portraits in Baskerville Hall?

The portrait of the evil Sir Hugo looks just like Stapleton, which confirms that he is a Baskerville and is there to get rid of Sir Henry so he can take the inheritance.

4. What strange instruction does Holmes have for Sir Henry? What is its purpose?

He tells him to accept the Stapletons’ offer for dinner, and to walk home across the moor by himself in the dark afterwards. The purpose of it is to convince Stapleton that he is gone, so Stapleton will feel freer to act.

5. Sum up Holmes’s interview with Laura Lyons.

He tells her Stapleton does not intend to marry her, that he is already married to his “sister,” and that their name is “Vandeleur.” Lyons reveals that he used her to get Sir Charles out on the moor with promises of marriage, but that she didn’t know it would lead to his death.

Week 29, Day 3 – *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (Chapter 14)

1. How is the evening dangerous for Sir Henry? How is the hound dispatched of for good? What do we learn about the hound?

He is attacked on the moor after leaving the Stapletons' home. Holmes and Watson kill the hound with their revolvers. The hound has been painted with phosphorous to give it a ghostly glow.

2. Why couldn't Watson see Mrs. Stapleton in the house?

She was locked up in a room and gagged, having been abused by Stapleton, fearing that she would warn Sir Henry of her husband's plans.

3. What is Stapleton's "fate"?

He gets lost on the moor because of the fog and apparently sinks down, not being able to clearly see the markers showing where it is safe to step.

4. What evidence do Holmes and Watson find?

One of Sir Henry's boots, which Stapleton flung away in his flight; a chain and gnawed bones where Stapleton kept the hound; and the remains of Mortimer's curly-haired spaniel, which the hound apparently killed and ate.

Week 29, Day 4 – *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (Chapter 15)

1. Where and why are Dr. Mortimer and Sir Henry going after they discuss the details of the case?

They are going on a trip to Europe to help Sir Henry recover from his "shattered nerves."

2. What facts about Stapleton are revealed to the reader in this chapter through Holmes's explanation?

- He was Sir Henry's nephew, the son of Rodger Baskerville, who was forced to flee to South America.
- He married Beryl Garcia, stole public money, changed his name to Vandeleur, and fled to England, where he set up a school.
- He bought a savage hound and hid it, setting himself up by the Baskerville estate and attempting to lure Sir Charles out to kill him with the hound, using Laura Lyons to help him.
- He stole Sir Henry's boot in London to give the hound Sir Henry's scent, but had to steal a second one when he realized Sir Henry had never worn the first (newly bought) boot.
- Stapleton apparently was involved in various other crimes in London, including a murder.
- Stapleton had a confidant, Anthony, who took care of the hound while Stapleton was in London.

3. List Holmes's explanations for various other case points, including (a) his holding close to his face the warning letter made of *Times* words, (b) the reason for his deceiving Watson about staying in London, (c) the reason for putting Sir Henry through the ordeal of walking on the moor at night alone, (d) the reason for Mrs. Stapleton's being tied up in their house, and (e) how Stapleton could announce he was the heir to the Baskerville fortune if he were already known around the area under another identity.

The explanations are (a) Holmes smelled perfume on the letter and knew it was a woman's doing, (b) he deceived Watson because Stapleton would be more on his guard if he knew Holmes were near, (c) Holmes wanted to catch Stapleton in the act of letting the hound loose on Sir Henry, (d) Mrs. Stapleton was a threat to warn Sir Henry about her husband, and (e) Stapleton could claim the property from South America or disguise himself or claim the property through an accomplice.

Week 30, Day 3 – “Naboth’s Vineyard”

1. When you finish “Naboth’s Vineyard,” reread the first paragraph. What does it mean, and how does it make a little more sense once the story is ended?
It means that in this case, the people are supposed to be “sovereign,” and that even if “the forms and agents of the law are removed,” the people can exercise judgement, like what is done in “Naboth’s Vineyard.”
2. On whom does suspicion fall for the crime? Why?
Taylor, the farm hand is suspected. He is an uncommunicative stranger, he left town at about the same time as the murder of Elihu Marsh, his gun has been fired, and he refuses to answer why he suddenly left town.
3. How is Judge Simon Kilrail initially described? Why is this significant?
He’s described as just as land-hungry as anybody else, desirous of being part of the “landed gentry,” and heartless and cruel as a judge. It hints that he is capable of doing wrong, and explains why he murdered Elihu Marsh.
4. On whom do Uncle Abner and Dr. Storm focus on during the trial? What does this person do during the trial at first, then surprisingly claim?
Kilrail’s housekeeper; she is very nervous and upset, much more than is normal. Suddenly, she confesses to Marsh’s murder, which brings the house down and stirs Taylor to deny her claim and take responsibility himself.
5. What do Dr. Storm and Uncle Abner reveal to the judge when they visit his house?
That they never believed Taylor killed Marsh, because they found poison in Marsh’s system and believe the gunshot wound is a cover-up.
6. List the three clues Uncle Abner tells the courtroom about. What is the significance of each one?
Unknown to Kilrail, his watch key fell to the floor as he shot Marsh; a book on his shelf was almost unused, except for the very page in which a poison was described (the same kind that killed Marsh); and the deed book gave Kilrail Marsh’s lands upon Marsh’s death.
7. How do the story’s opening and closing point to the story’s theme of aristocracy and common people? What other incidents in the story also contribute?
The story opens with a declaration that “the people” are “sovereign” and capable of making fair, just decisions; the story ends with Kilrail’s suicide, suggesting that important, wealthy citizens aren’t necessarily superior.
Dr. Storm criticizes the prosecutor as not being a “gentleman,” and therefore un-worthy of holding office. Randolph, although a pompous, proud-of-his-ancestry type, does show courage in standing at Uncle Abner’s call at the trial’s end. Other men, who are not big-shots or loudmouths, stand up for Uncle Abner, showing the quiet strength that many men possess.
The point the author is making about “gentlemen” and common people seems to be that there is nothing inherently superior about “gentlemen” like Judge Kilrail, who wanted to be a part of the “landed gentry,” over good, solid people like Taylor and Kilrail’s housekeeper, who are just simple laborers, but have loyalty and honor. Both “classes” are capable of both honor and moral failure.
8. How is the sovereignty of the people in “Naboth’s Vineyard” different from the sovereignty of God?
The sovereignty of the people refers basically to their self-reliance and ability to rightly judge matters and govern themselves, BUT this ability is tempered by the good and evil that men do. Various degrees of this good/evil battle are

shown in “Naboth’s Vineyard” (Marsh is a mean man, but is wrongly killed; Taylor and the housekeeper are good people, but lie in court; some townspeople are arrogant about their ancestry, but courageous enough to stand up with Uncle Abner).

The primary example, however, is Kilrail himself, who commits suicide with a “duel-ing pistol,” which suggests the good/evil sides of man. As evil as he was to kill a man for his land, he does pronounce a just judgement upon himself—the death penalty for murder—although the way he does it is morally wrong.

9. Why is the story titled “Naboth’s Vineyard”? (See 1 Kings 21:1-16.)

Just like King Ahab—a man in high authority—had Naboth unjustly killed to get his land, Judge Kilrail murders Elihu Marsh for his land.