



1800s Literature Part II – Syllabus

Course Description: An excerpt-based class, students are introduced to primary works of literature from the middle and late 1800s, including poems by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882) and Emily Dickinson (1830-1886), *Little Women* (1868) and *Little Men* (1871); *Around the World in Eighty Days* (1873); *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876) and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884); *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (1892); and *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895); All texts are included as part of the class; no materials are required for purchase.

Essay Basics or equivalent experience writing five-paragraph essays is strongly recommended.

Course Outline:

Week One: The 1800s Continue

- Intro to Poetry
- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
- Emily Dickinson

Week Two: Literature & Legacies

- Changing Viewpoints – Transcendentalism, Abolitionism, and Feminism
- Louisa May Alcott and *Little Women*
- *Little Women's* Relevance
- Louisa's Legacy – Writing Personal Letters

Week Three: Unconventional Methods

- What followed *Little Women*
- Louisa May Alcott's *Little Men*
- Themes in Literature

Week Four: Adventure Is Out There

- Jules Verne: The Father of Science Fiction
- Intro to Science Fiction
- *Around the World in 80 Days*
- Character Development

- Basic Research Skills – Country Research

Week Five: The Father of American Literature

- Meeting Mark Twain
- *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*
- Understanding Dialect
- Figurative Language & Literary Devices
- Practicing with Imagery through Artwork by Norman Rockwell

Week Six: The Great American Novel

- More of Mark Twain
- *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*
- Characterization in *Huck Finn*
- Creative Writing: The Adventures of YOU
- Exploring Twain's Quotes

Week Seven: Mystery in Literature

- Sir Arthur Conan Doyle
- Mystery 101
- *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*
- Solve A Mystery
- Mystery Grab Bag – Creative Writing

Week Eight: Historical Fiction

- Stephen Crane
- *The Red Badge of Courage*
- Realism, Naturalism, and & Impressionism in Writing
- Intro to Primary and Secondary Sources
- A Day in the Life Of . . .

Grading Information: All assignments will be graded using *The Growing Writer Rubric* and averaged to receive a final course grade.



1800s Literature Part II

Lesson Seven: Mystery in Fiction

SAMPLE LESSON

The 1800s were a century of immense exploration in the literary realm; authors were regularly writing new forms and genres. The early 1800s brought us the works of Jane Austen, a woman who transformed the world of writing for female authors. In the 1830s, Charles Dickens introduced and popularized serial publication and cliffhangers. In 1845, Frederick Douglass captured the attention of a generation with his autobiography recounting his life as a slave. In 1847, Charlotte Bronte challenged the mainstream view of women in society with her novel *Jane Eyre*. The mid-1800s also brought us Romanticism and with it Nathaniel Hawthorne's historical fiction novel, *The Scarlet Letter*. Other works were appearing, such as Harriet Beecher Stowe's iconic *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, calling out the atrocities of slavery in England and America.

The latter half of the 1800s saw many writers entering the realm of children's literature for the first time, when most prior novels had been marketed to adults. Remember, in fact, that *Little Women* and *Little Men* were both written for children; and that *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *Adventures of Huck Finn* impacted the genre of children's literature in a way readers had never known.

In the late 1800s, Jules Verne and H.G. Wells turned the world upside down with their science-fiction novels, and a new genre of writing was born. In 1887, Sherlock Holmes was introduced to the world. And although crime fiction (detective stories, murder mysteries, etc.) had been around for centuries, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle is considered to have single-handedly skyrocketed this genre into popularity.

SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE –

If you ever happen find yourself wandering through the All Saints Churchyard in Hampshire, you may see a cross inscribed with “Patriot, Physician, and Man of Letters.” (1) It's hard to imagine a better way of summing up the life of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle than those three phrases on his tombstone.

Doyle was born on May 22, 1859 in Edinburgh, Scotland. At twenty, he embarked on his first adventure—serving as a ship’s surgeon on a whaling expedition to the Arctic Ocean—without even thinking that he was qualified. (2) Since it was hard to be taken seriously as a young medical professional, he took to the seas again once he had his degree. After his time on the seas, Doyle attempted to set up a jointly-owned medical practice in Plymouth, England, with a former classmate, but the relationship didn't work out. Doyle then headed for Portsmouth, England where he set up his own independent practice. Unfortunately, Doyle found little success as a medical professional, and when his private practice failed, he turned to writing fiction.

Despite Doyle’s present-day fame, his early work wasn’t met with immense applause. In fact, even when Sherlock Holmes emerged in the 1887 novel *A Study in Scarlet*, the manuscript was a flop. Doyle’s historical fiction garnered some attention, but his popularity skyrocketed when Holmes was first published in short-story form in the July 1891 edition of *The Strand Magazine*.

Two years of the great detective bored his author, though, and Doyle famously attempted to write Sherlock’s death in 1893. Unfortunately for Doyle, Sherlock’s fans wouldn’t settle for that ending. Thousands of readers canceled their subscriptions to the *Strand*, and even wore mourning crepe on their hatbands and formed “Let’s Keep Holmes Alive” clubs. Reluctantly, Doyle resurrected Holmes, who ultimately appeared in fifty-six short stories and four novels.

Doyle was staunchly patriotic, and—much like John Watson, Holmes’ faithful friend—volunteered as a medical doctor at war in 1900. (He was knighted by King Edward VII for his service.) He was also fascinated by spiritualism, a religious system founded on the idea that the living can communicate with the dead. Although Doyle had long been interested in spiritualism, his belief intensified when he lost his son and five other relatives to World War I. Fittingly, six days after Doyle’s death in 1930, a medium claimed to have contacted him in a séance at Royal Albert Hall. (3)

MYSTERY FICTION 101 –

Have you ever heard this quote? “When you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth.”

If you have read any of Sherlock Holmes in the past, you may be familiar with the statement. It’s one of that great (albeit fictional) consulting detective’s favorite maxims, but it also serves as the basis for many of Doyle’s most fascinating stories. Seemingly improbable conclusions are drawn by Holmes, while the reader and the Scotland Yard (the local police force) are given all of the facts . . . and yet left in the dark. We, as

readers, are left to make our own guesses, working hard to follow Holmes' reasoning and to piece together these improbable puzzles, then finally surfacing with him at the brilliantly logical conclusion.

That, right there, is the power of a great mystery story. It is intriguing, it bends your mind, and it encourages you to work on solving the mystery right beside the detective (or whatever role the hero takes).

Whatever the mystery revolves around, **the correct solution must not be immediately clear.** After all, if the reader knows 'whodunit' in the first paragraph, there will be no need to read the entire story. So, the mystery must begin by leaving the reader in the dark. A diamond necklace is stolen—from the middle of a locked room, while security cameras are running. A man discovers that everyone in his neighborhood has disappeared—overnight, with their cars still sitting in the driveway and their doors locked from the inside. Whatever the plot is, however high the stakes are, it must be enigmatic, and it must be intriguing.

All successful mystery stories should give the hero clues enough to eventually uncover **who, what, when, where, how, and why.** Who or what caused the activity, occurrence, or crime? What did they do? How did they do it? When and/or where did it happen? Most importantly, what was the motive? Why did they do it?

MEANS AND MOTIVE: WHODUNIT?

To figure out who committed a crime (or activity/occurrence) in a story, we need to know why they committed the crime. Below, we have provided a list of some common motives. For example, if there were stolen jewels, money could be a motive. If someone has gone missing, envy or vengeance could both be motives. Considering motives can help us sift through the list of suspects to determine who committed the crime.

- **Vengeance:** This is the classic story motive. Why did he do it? For vengeance, of course. If you're dealing with rich or influential people, wartime heroes, etc., vengeance is a favorite choice.
- **Money:** Maybe he just needed to pay the bills, and so he stole the jewels. Or perhaps someone was blackmailing him.
- **Envy:** it isn't fair that so-and-so has such-and-such when the culprit doesn't. Envy is a terrible trait, and it is a great motivator.
- **Love:** This is another favorite. To save a loved one from going to jail . . .
or to make a crush notice her . . .
- **Personal/Business Safety:** He received threats about what would happen if he did not steal the painting. She had to put her competitor out of business to keep her own store afloat.

- **Pride or Respect:** She had to commit the deed to prove herself, or to make someone respect her.
- **Fun or Interest:** This may seem like our strangest motive yet, but it can make for a unique and twisted culprit—picture Joker from the Batman series. If this is the motive, your culprit committed the deed solely because he was bored, or because he thought that it looked like fun.
- **It Was Unintentional!** Of course, it could have just been done by accident. If this is the case, the writer would need to clearly show why it was not immediately reported or explained to someone.

THE HOW, WHAT, AND WHEN –

With a motive in mind, discovering the culprit will be easier. But, we still need more clues.

- **One: Consider the setting and any obstacles in the way.** Are there security precautions, such as cameras or alarms? What are the entrances and exits to the area? Was there a crowd? How skilled is the culprit—has he done something like this before? Does he have any skills that will help him, and if so, how did he get these skills? Understand what the 'scene of the crime' looks like.
Two: Consider 'how' and 'when.' When did these things occur? If the mystery centers around a crime, there most likely would not have been any witnesses (at least, witnesses that knew what they were seeing), and there were probably multiple security measures. So then one must consider how the crime occurred.
Three: Consider what went wrong. The hero will need to solve this crime somehow, so what went wrong? What evidence was left behind? Was a door left ajar, or a fingerprint left in some unseen place, or is there an eyewitness that didn't know what she was seeing at the time?

THE GOOD GUYS –

Finally, with a strong plot and culprit, the story still needs someone to make everything right. This could be a detective, a private investigator, a police officer, a concerned bystander, or a family member that decided the verdict was wrong.

In the Sherlock Holmes stories, Holmes is the one solving the cases, but Dr. John Watson is the narrator. Watson only knows what he can deduce for himself, and what he sees Holmes doing. (Or what Holmes tells him.) As the reader, we are observing the case from Watson's bystander perspective, not Holmes' detective perspective. This means that we do not know whodunit until the climax, when Watson hears how Holmes solved the case . . . or whenever Holmes makes his great reveal. This keeps the reader in suspense for a longer period of time.

On the other hand, many mysteries have the reader follow the detective character. There is nothing wrong with this method, but it is more difficult to keep the reader 'in the dark', because once the hero knows whodunit, the reader will also know.

Regardless of the set-up, a successful mystery plot **introduces a questionable activity, occurrence, or crime, and then uses a hero to solve it, giving the reader clues along the way.** (Note to watch for when reading: some information may seem like important clues, but many mystery authors present 'red herrings,' things that seem important which really turn out to be distractions.)

THE ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES –

Although Sherlock Holmes appears in dozens of Doyle's short stories and a handful of novels, *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* is a collection of the twelve short stories which appeared in *The Strand* between July 1891 and June 1892. The stories within this collection include the following:

- “A Scandal in Bohemia”
- “The Red-Headed League”
- “A Case of Identity”
- “The Boscombe Valley Mystery”
- “The Five Orange Pips”
- “The Man with the Twisted Lip”
- “The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle”
- “The Adventure of the Speckled Band”
- “The Adventure of the Engineer's Thumb”
- “The Adventure of the Noble Bachelor”
- “The Adventure of the Beryl Coronet”
- “The Adventure of the Copper Beeches”

Each one of these stories is a great read and worthy of its own lesson and discussion. However, for the sake of time, this week, we will be reading Doyle's favorite short story, “The Adventure of the Speckled Band.”

Assignment 7A: Read “The Adventure of the Speckled Band” by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle attached with this week's lesson. Then, in complete sentences, answer the following discussion questions. Be specific! Use evidence and direct quotations from the text to aid your answers.

Discussion Questions –

1. What are the who, what, when, where, how, and why in this story?
2. What methods does Doyle use to build suspense and intrigue?
3. Do you feel that Doyle was successful in the way he wrote the story, revealed information, etc? Do you feel that his methods were effective for creating suspense and, ultimately, a satisfying ending?
4. What kind of questions did Sherlock Holmes ask to help solve the case?
5. What were some important observations made by Sherlock Holmes that led to solving the case?
6. A successful detective story presents not only a cunning hero but also a clever culprit. The two must be worthy opponents. Do you think Dr. Roylott is a clever and worthy opponent to Sherlock Holmes?
7. Think back to your reading. What was your initial hypothesis as to who/what caused Julia's death? What led you to form this hypothesis? Was this hypothesis right or wrong?

Assignment 7B: Let's solve a mystery! Hannah Hayes hosted a hot chocolate party. After the last guest had left, she noticed that her bag of giant marshmallows had gone missing. Although each guest denies taking the bag of marshmallows, Hannah believes that it was the last guest to leave who took the bag. Use the clues below to solve the mystery. Read each clue carefully. Then, write down the time that each guest left the party. Finally, write the name of the person that Hannah believes took the bag of giant marshmallows.

Clue	Time of Departure
1. Hudson Hall left 20 minutes before Henley Hughes.	
2. Howard Hamilton left 40 minutes before Harriet Hunt.	
3. Hazel Henderson left 30 minutes after Henley Hughes.	
4. Henrik Hill D left 25 minutes before Hadessah Harris.	
5. Hadley Harrison left 20 minutes before Henry Hollis.	
6. Harriet Hunt left 20 minutes before 9:00 PM.	
7. Henley Hughes left 55 minutes after Howard Hamilton.	
8. Hadessah Harris left 45 minutes after Henry Hollis.	
9. Hayden Hoffman left 35 minutes after Harriet Hunt.	
10. Henry Hollis left 30 minutes after Howard Hamilton.	

Hannah believes the marshmallow-napper is: _____

Assignment 7C: Now it's time for a mystery grab bag! Take a look at the attached “Mystery Grab Bag” document. Choose one of the photos (there are five in total). Each photo contains five items. These items are the “evidence.” Your job is to examine and identify the items, and then formulate a story including all five items as “clues” to solve a mystery. You should create a logical mystery answering the questions of who, what, when, where, how, and why. (No required word count. Have fun with this!)

Sources –

1. For more on Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, including wonderful photos, see: “Biography.” *ArthurConanDoyle.com*, The Sir Arthur Conan Doyle Literary Estate, <https://www.arthurconandoyle.com/biography.html>.
2. For more on this period in his life, read his autobiography: Conan Doyle, Sir Arthur. *Memories and Adventures*, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1924.
3. Hoekstra, Kyle. “Sir Arthur Conan Doyle: 10 Facts About Sherlock Holmes's Creator.” *History Hit*, 5 July 2021, <https://www.historyhit.com/sir-arthur-conan-doyle-facts-about-sherlock-holmes-creator/>.