

Sherlock Holmes

Sherlock Holmes, according to *The New York Times*, is the 3rd most read publication on the planet behind the Bible and the dictionary. Five million Sherlock Holmes books are printed in Europe and the U.S. **every year**. Holmes has been translated into 84 languages.

Sherlock Holmes is resourceful, quintessentially English, intelligent, learned, insightful, and relishes a challenge.

The fictional character created by the Scottish writer Arthur Conan Doyle, first appeared in Doyle's *A Study in Scarlet*, published in *Beeton's Christmas Annual* of 1887. As the world's first and only "consulting detective," he pursued criminals throughout Victorian and Edwardian London, the south of England, and continental Europe. Holmes made a singular impact upon the popular imagination and has been the most enduring character of the detective story.

Doyle modeled Holmes's methods and mannerisms on those of Dr. Joseph Bell, who had been Doyle's professor at the University of Edinburgh Medical School. In particular, Holmes's uncanny ability to gather evidence based upon his honed skills of observation and deductive reasoning paralleled Bell's method of diagnosing a patient's disease.

Holmes offered some insight into his method, claiming that "When you have excluded the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth." His detecting abilities become clear, though no less amazing, when explained by his companion, [Dr. John H. Watson](#), who recounts the criminal cases they jointly pursue. Although Holmes rebuffs praise, declaring his abilities to be "elementary," the oft-quoted phrase "Elementary, my dear Watson," never actually appears in Conan Doyle's writings.

Watson's narrations describe Holmes as a very complex and moody character who, although of strict habit, is considerably untidy. His London abode at 221B, Baker Street, is tended by his housekeeper, Mrs. Hudson. Holmes appears to undergo bouts of mania and depression.

Throughout the four novels and 56 short stories featuring Holmes, a number of characters recur, including the bumbling [Scotland Yard](#) inspector [Lestrade](#); the group of "street Arabs" known as the Baker Street Irregulars, who are routinely employed by Holmes as informers; his even wiser but less ambitious brother, Mycroft; and, most notably, his formidable opponent, Professor James Moriarty.

