

READING

Arthur Conan Doyle

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was a Scottish writer best-known for his creation of the detective Sherlock Holmes.

Arthur Conan Doyle was born on May 22, 1859, in Edinburgh, Scotland. His parents were rich, but his father had problems with alcohol. Doyle's mother, Mary, was a lively and well-educated woman who loved reading. She told her son a lot of strange and interesting stories.

When he was nine, Arthur Conan Doyle started studying at a Jesuit school in England. In 1876, he started studying medicine at the University of Edinburgh. There he met Professor Dr. Joseph Bell, who had excellent powers of deduction and who became the model for Sherlock Holmes. Doyle's classmates included future famous authors James Barrie and Robert Louis Stevenson.

Doyle finished his medical studies in 1881. His first job was to work as a doctor aboard Mayumba, a ship travelling from Liverpool to Africa. After that, he lived in Plymouth and then in Portsmouth, where he worked as a doctor. In 1885, Doyle met and married his first wife, Louisa Hawkins. They had two children, a daughter and a son.

In 1886, Doyle started writing a story which he would later publish as *A Study in Scarlet*. This novel introduced readers to Sherlock Holmes and his assistant, Dr. Watson. It was the first of about sixty stories about them and it made Arthur Conan Doyle famous. During the 1890s and early 1900s, he composed four of his most popular Sherlock Holmes books: *The Sign of Four* (1890), *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (1892), *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes* (1894) and *The Hound of Baskervilles* (1901).

In 1906, Doyle's wife died of tuberculosis. A year after her death, Doyle married Jean Leckie. They had two sons and a daughter. In 1912, Doyle published *The Lost World*, a story about Professor Challenger, who goes on an expedition to South America and finds there living prehistoric animals. Doyle also wrote a lot of books about spiritualism. In 1928, he published his final twelve stories about Sherlock Holmes in a book called *The Casebook of Sherlock Holmes*.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle died on July 7, 1930.

1 Read the text and answer the following questions.

- 1 How old was Arthur Conan Doyle when he started studying at a Jesuit school? _____
- 2 Who was the inspiration for the character of Sherlock Holmes? _____
- 3 What was Arthur Conan Doyle's first job? _____
- 4 How many books about Sherlock Holmes did Arthur Conan Doyle write? _____
- 5 How many daughters did Arthur Conan Doyle have? _____
- 6 What does Professor Challenger find in South America? _____
- 7 What was the last book about Sherlock Holmes? _____

2 Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)?

- 1 Arthur Conan Doyle came from a poor family. _____
- 2 Doyle's father had some problems with drinking. _____
- 3 Doyle's mother liked books and told her son interesting stories. _____
- 4 Doyle went to university with other famous writers. _____
- 5 *The Sign of Four* was the first book about Sherlock Holmes. _____
- 6 Doyle's second wife died of tuberculosis. _____
- 7 Arthur Conan Doyle wrote some books about spiritualism. _____

KEY

1 Read the text and answer the following questions.

- 1 How old was Arthur Conan Doyle when he started studying at a Jesuit school? **he was nine years old**
- 2 Who was the inspiration for the character of Sherlock Holmes? **Professor Dr. Joseph Bell**
- 3 What was Arthur Conan Doyle's first job? **he worked as a doctor aboard Mayumba, a ship travelling from Liverpool to Africa**
- 4 How many books about Sherlock Holmes did Arthur Conan Doyle write? **about sixty**
- 5 How many daughters did Arthur Conan Doyle have? **two (one with Louisa Hawkins and one with Jean Leckie)**
- 6 What does Professor Challenger find in South America? **living prehistoric animals**
- 7 What was the last book about Sherlock Holmes? ***The Casebook of Sherlock Holmes***

2 Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)?

- 1 Arthur Conan Doyle came from a poor family. **F (his parents were rich)**
- 2 Doyle's father had some problems with drinking. **T**
- 3 Doyle's mother liked books and told her son interesting stories. **T**
- 4 Doyle went to university with other famous writers. **T**
- 5 *The Sign of Four* was the first book about Sherlock Holmes. **F (A Study in Scarlet was the first Sherlock Holmes book)**
- 6 Doyle's second wife died of tuberculosis. **F (his first wife died of tuberculosis)**
- 7 Arthur Conan Doyle wrote some books about spiritualism. **T**