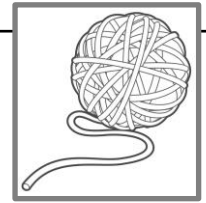


DETECTIVE FICTION

Key Vocabulary	Big Questions!
DETECTIVE SIDEKICK CASE CLUE SUSPECT SECRECY DECEPTION INTERROGATION INTELLECT DEDUCTION CRIMINALITY ----- NARRATIVE NARRATOR EPISTOLARY FORM CHARACTERISATION REVELATION RESOLUTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the historical context of the birth of the detective fiction genre? • How did early detective reportage anticipate the genre? • What are the conventions of the genre and what is the effect of their use? • How has the representation of detectives and criminals changed over time? • How did Sir Arthur Conan Doyle structure his novel <i>The Hound of the Baskervilles</i>? • How has Sir Arthur Conan Doyle used language to represent the lives and experiences of detectives and criminals? • How can I adopt strategies used by Conan Doyle to form my own creative and original writing in this genre? • How can I compose an analytical essay that demonstrates my understanding of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's novel and its connections to previous and later novels in this genre?

Conventions of the detective fiction genre:

- The hero is a detective of **intellectual genius** who uses their powers of **deduction** to solve cases
- A **case** which the detective takes on
- **Clues** which the detective 'follows'
- **Suspects** whom the detective investigates; these usually have **secrets** of their own which the detective has to uncover and discount
- The detective's **sidekick** who acts as the Proppian helper
- **Interrogations** in which the detective uses their skills of manipulation to get suspects to reveal information
- **False villains and heroes:** characters whose guilt or innocence are presented as obvious from the start – these are red herrings
- **Red herrings:** clues or pieces of information which are intended to be misleading or distracting
- **A denouement which includes revelation and resolution:** all is revealed to the reader and all 'loose-ends' are tied up.



Getting creative and describing character:

Authors of Detective Fiction regularly utilise these strategies to craft their writing:

Similes

He looked rather pleasantly like a blond Satan, describing Sam Spade in the *Maltese Falcon*

Metaphors

Mr. Holmes, a picker up of shells on the shores of the great unknown ocean, describing Sherlock Holmes in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*

Dynamic verbs

Holmes leaned forward in his excitement, and his eyes had the hard, dry glitter which shot from them when he was keenly interested, describing Sherlock Holmes in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*

Speech presentation and use of adverbs

'This calls for action,' said Miss Marple briskly. 'But it would be advisable, I think, to be careful. Would you have noticed at all, Bunch dear, whether you were followed when you came to London today?' describing Miss Marple in *Sanctuary*

Embedded clauses to add the detail and perception of detection

I inhaled - taking in the strange odours of the backwoods alchemist's lair – smells both sweet and bitter, vegetable and mammal, fish and also the deep, rich odour of the earth were evident all their refined guises, describing Easy Rawlins' experiences in *Little Green*

FAMOUS DETECTIVES and their authors



SHERLOCK HOLMES
by Arthur Conan-Doyle
A brilliant London-based detective, Holmes is famous for his prowess at using logic and astute observation to solve cases. He first appeared in 1887, in Conan-Doyle's *Study in Scarlet*. He is the hero of our core text: *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1902) and brought great comfort to crime-infested London: he always solves the case!



AUGUSTE DUPIN
by Edgar Allan-Poe
Dupin is not a professional detective; he is motivated by personal reasons to involve himself in the cases he solves. Dupin combines his considerable intellect with creative imagination, even putting himself in the mind of the criminal. He first appeared in *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* in 1841. He was especially relatable because – like the public – he solved cases from his armchair, reading and piecing together clues in the paper!



MRS MARPLE
by Agatha Christie
Mrs Marple is an elderly amateur sleuth who has always lived in St. Mary Mead, a snug English village. A natural busybody, she is skilled at problem solving and has an unsentimental understanding of human nature. In the 1930s, Christie found the 'invisible' face of Englishness – discounted and overlooked as an old woman – and gives this woman power and genius.



EASY RAWLINS
by Walter Mosley
Ezekiel "Easy" Porterhouse Rawlins is an African-American private investigator, a hard-boiled detective and World War II veteran living in the Watts neighbourhood of Los Angeles. Mosley is a political and cultural activist, and this hero – living through the '40s-'60s – addresses not only matters of race; but also evil and warped morality in our modern society.

THIS HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE GENRE:

- The first Metropolitan Police station was opened on **6 October 1829** in a street called Great Scotland Yard.
- The birth of the detective in fiction occurs when the short story *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* is published in **1841** by the American writer, Edgar Allan Poe
- In **1842** the commissioner for Scotland Yard requested of the Home Office that they should establish a squad of plain-clothes detectives and – that August – the first eight British detectives were hired.
- In **1850**, Dickens publishes an article called 'The Detective Police Party' in *Household Words*, with the aim to convey to 'our readers some faint idea of the extraordinary dexterity, patience, and ingenuity, exercised by the Detective Police'.
- The popularity of the detective novel explodes with the publication of *The Moonstone* (**1868**) by Wilkie Collins, serialised in Charles Dickens' magazine *All the Year Round*
- Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Hound of the Baskervilles* is published in **1902**, a return to his popular and enduring hero who first appeared 15 years prior.
- In the UK, after appearing in a series of short stories, *The Murder at the Vicarage* is published (**1930**) with an unusual detective heroine: an old lady called Mrs Marple. The writer is the immensely popular Agatha Christie.
- Meanwhile in America, Dashiell Hammett publishes the short story *Fly Paper* in **1929** and the hard-boiled detective subgenre is born: a tough, unsentimental style of American crime writing that brought a new tone of earthy realism or naturalism to the field of detective fiction.

DETECTIVE FICTION: COMPONENT KNOWLEDGE QUIZ

1. Who is Sherlock Holmes' **sidekick**?
2. Name one **red herring** in the novel *The Hound of the Baskervilles*?
3. What is the style of a **hard-boiled detective novel**?
4. Name the **author** of the stories and novels about the dear old lady detective Miss Marple?
5. In what century did England gain its first official police force and hire its first eight detectives at Scotland Yard?
6. What was the name of the **first ever detective** to be featured in a story?
7. Name one of the **clues** Holmes receives in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*.
8. If a detective is **interrogating** a suspect, what are they doing?
9. Who is the **false villain** of the novel, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, is it Barrymore or Stapleton?
10. CHALLENGE: where does the word '**clue**' come from?