

# A study in scarlet essay example

[Family](#), [Parents](#)



## **Interpretive**

•What effect does Watson's narration have on the reader's perceptions of Holmes?

ANSWER:

Watson's narration affects the reader's perception of Holmes in that it makes it easier for the readers to believe that Holmes is more than just a character in a book while still maintaining the mystery of his identity.

## **SUPPORT:**

" How on earth did you know that?" I asked in astonishment. (p 17)

Holmes was not a difficult man to live with. He was quiet in his ways, and his habits were irregular. (p 21)

My surprise reached a climax, however, when I found I found incidentally that he was ignorant of the Copernican Theory and of the composition of the Solar System. (p 23)

## **EXPLAIN:**

Because the narration was not done by Holmes himself, the mystery of all his deductions and actions remain in the sense that we do not know what exactly is going through his mind at the moment which would be the case if the story is in his point of view. The readers are kept guessing as to how Holmes were able to reach certain conclusions just like Watson when he asks " How on earth did you know that?" (Doyle 17). Also, by using Watson as the narrator, Arthur Conan Doyle had brought the character of Holmes closer to the readers because he is depicted as someone who is less than perfect through someone who actually knows him personally, someone who lived

with him and is familiar with his habits and faults. For example, his inability to retain facts and information that are regarded as general knowledge such as the solar system.

**•Holmes has an unusual reaction to his suspect's escape in ASiS. What does this reaction say about him?**

ANSWER:

Holmes reaction on his suspect's escape in A Study in Scarlet implies that he cares very little about what would be considered as appropriate reaction. Instead, what he cares about are the intelligence of the person he is deducing and the cleverness of the crime. His reaction also tells us that he never reacts the way normal people expect him to.

SUPPORT:

Amusement and chagrin seemed to be struggling for the mastery, until the former suddenly carried the day, and he burst into a hearty laugh. (p. 54)

**EXPLAIN:**

Normally, if a man was chasing someone and that person he was chasing was able to escape, the only emotion he would feel would be either anger or frustration. Holmes laugh therefore is entirely inappropriate. His amusement which won out over anger in the end shows that even if the suspect escaped, he is amused because he had met a man who is smart enough to escape him. He, in a way, admires the suspect which will be shown in the succeeding entries in the book in which he will imitate the suspect's disguise. Also, readers would perhaps think that Holmes would at least dwell a little on the suspect's escape. Holmes however does not react like that and instead he had already moved on to the next step of the game.

## **•What does Holmes’ article “ The Book of Life” tell us about him?**

ANSWER:

Holmes’ article “ The Book of Life” tells us that Holmes values more what the world sees as ‘ elementary problems’. This article showed us that for him, it is more important what a person can learn through careful observation than information that is simply presented to him in books or in school.

SUPPORT:

“ By a man’s finger-nails, by his coat-sleeves, by his boots, by his trouser-knees, by the callosities of his forefinger and thumb, by his expression, by his shirt-cuffs – by each of these things a man’s calling is plainly revealed. That all united should fail to enlighten the competent inquirer in any case is almost inconceivable.” (p. 26)

EXPLAIN:

For someone so intelligent, Holmes is not the stereotypical nerd. He bases his information, not on universally known truths or facts by other people but on the tiny details that most people would not concentrate on. He believes that the only reason people cannot see what he sees instantly is that they are not properly looking at what is already in front of them.

## **•How does Watson’s educational background affect his adaptation of Holmes’ deductive approach?**

ANSWER:

Watson’s educational background as a doctor of medicine makes sure that his adaptation of Holmes’ deductive approach is done in a direct and detailed manner.

**SUPPORT:**

“ How could one man compel another to take poison? Where did the blood come from? What was the object of the murderer, since robbery had no part in it? How came the woman’s ring there? Above all, why should the second man write up the German word RACHE before decamping?” (p. 42)

**EXPLAIN:**

Because Watson is a doctor, his adaptation of Holmes’ deductive approach is like that of a doctor to a patient. He asks questions to Holmes’ deductions and asks follow-up questions for each explanation and then he speaks out-loud to Holmes about what he thinks about the answers he gets.

**Application**

- How does Doyle maintain tension during the rising action in A Study in Scarlet?

Keyword: tension

**ANSWER:**

Doyle maintained tension during the rising action in A Study in Scarlet by offering no clues or hints other than the ones that Holmes’ deductions and explanations offer.

**SUPPORT:**

“ If this man was murdered, how was it done?” asked the former. (p. 40)

“ Poison,” said Sherlock Holmes curtly, and strode off. (p. 40)

**EXPLAIN:**

Doyle forces the readers to move in the same phase as the characters and Watson – being the narrator – is moving by keeping the readers in the dark of what is happening or what might be the conclusion of the case.

## •What one part of our cluster theme, Crime, Law, or Deviance is best represented in A Study in Scarlet?

Keyword: Crime

ANSWER:

The categories of crime specifically, the first category “ crimes against a person,” as well as the relationship of the profile of a person to his or her motivation to do crimes are best represented in A Study in Scarlet.

SUPPORT:

“ There has been murder done, and the murderer was a man. He was more than six feet high, was in the prime of life, had small feet for his height, wore coarse, square-toed boots and smoked a Trichinopoly cigar.” (p. 40)

EXPLAIN:

Basically, the whole story is about crimes and solving the mystery of crimes. Because A Study in Scarlet explains the murder of a man, it can be said that the book had also discussed what “ crimes against a person” is. The more clear representation however is the profiling of the criminal. If a reader would look closely, that actually is what Holmes is using to track down the criminal. He needs to have a sort of qualities in his mind about the criminal so that he can catch the criminal and he does this by examining and observing his surroundings.

•What do we learn about Watson’s character in the story’s exposition that makes him the ideal narrator for A Study in Scarlet?

## Keyword: Watson’s character

ANSWER:

Watson’s character complements Holmes’ personality and thus he is an ideal

narrator for A Study in Scarlet because he can depict Holmes, his deductions and the people around them in a clear but slightly dramatic version that appeals to the reader.

SUPPORT:

As I watched him I was irresistibly reminded of a pure-blooded, well-trained foxhound, as it dashes backward and forward through the covert, whining in its eagerness, until it comes across the lost scent. (p. 39)

EXPLAIN:

While Watson can be very easily seen as an ordinary man, he is really quite smart and he serves as the perfect counterpart to Holmes. Evidence to his intelligence is the fact that he is a medical man but the more convincing fact that clears any doubt to Watson's intellectual capacity is that Holmes himself approves of him. On the other hand, although he is supposedly only narrating what he is seeing, Watson speaks (or writes, in this sense) by adding certain dramatics, emotions and insights to the events so that it would become a story and not simply a book of facts.

## **THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES**

Interpretive

**•Why might the Sherlock writers have chosen to change the supernatural elements in the original story to scientific conspiracy?**

ANSWER:

Sherlock writers have chosen to change the supernatural elements in the original story to scientific conspiracy because otherwise, it would not have fit in the modern setting.

SUPPORT:

“ his indoor servants at Baskerville Hall consisted of a married couple named Barrymore, the husband acting as butler and the wife as housekeeper.” (p. 13)

“ and, lighting a lantern, went in search of his master.” (p. 13)

EXPLAIN:

The TV series ‘ Sherlock’ is set in modern London and as such it is would be too unrealistic if they used the original story of a man using a hound to murder the master of the house. London has changed throughout the years and there are some things that are no longer present or necessary in the present times than it was in the past. Because of that, it is impossible to still have a setting as seen in the original story fit in the modern one.

**•In THofB, how has Holmes and Watson’s relationship evolved since their first encounter in ASiS?**

ANSWER:

**Holmes and Watson are more comfortable with each other.**

SUPPORT:

“ No, my dear fellow, it is at the hour of action that I turn to you for aid.” (p. 23)

He laughed at my bewildered expression. (p. 24)

EXPLAIN:

At A Study in Scarlet, Watson and Holmes were still just getting to know each other’s likes and dislikes as well as each other’s habits. Watson was also a bit quieter at that point of time because he is still familiarizing himself with Holmes’ work. In The Hound of the Baskervilles however, they had become

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more comfortable with each other to the point that Holmes openly relies on Watson's assistance and Watson brings out more emotions from Holmes such as genuine laughter.

**•In what ways is Sherlock comparable to a hound?**

ANSWER:

**His methods of chasing after a criminal are similar to that of a hound.**

SUPPORT:

**“ and giving the hounds a kerchief of the maid's” (p. 10)**

“ indeed seen the unhappy maiden, with the hounds upon her track” (p. 11)

EXPLAIN:

Hounds were typically used before to chase after criminals. Sherlock is like that too because the police uses him for the exact same reason. A hound needs to have a scent of the person to chase that said person, Sherlock needs clues to chase a criminal and he uses his senses – just like a hound – to obtain those clues. Sherlock, just like a hound, will not stop until he has found the person he is chasing.

**•Who is the killer in The Hound of the Baskervilles?**

ANSWER:

**The Hound.**

SUPPORT:

“ A hound it was, an enormous coal-black hound, but not such a hound as mortal eyes have seen.” (p. 144)

**EXPLAIN:**

In Doyle's book, Holmes and Watson were able to catch the hound right in the act and were even able to kill it. However, the hound was only a tool and not the evil mastermind like the superstitions talked about.

**Application**

- What parallels exist between the narrative arc of the Sherlock episode and the original story?

Keyword: narrative

**ANSWER:**

The parallels that exist between the Sherlock episode and the original story were the existence of Henry, the concept of the Dartmoor and the mystery of the Hound.

**SUPPORT:**

“ Mr. Holmes, they were the footprints of a gigantic hound!” (p. 16)

**EXPLAIN:**

In both BBC's ' Sherlock' episode and Doyle's The Hound of The Baskervilles, the Dartmoor was described first by the client as part of the narration although of course in different manners and with differences to the actual description. The mystery was also both presented by both stories. Also, in both stories, Henry was the only surviving relative and also the client. But the most obvious parallel is the hound which was emphasized when the exact same words from Doyle's book were used in the ' Sherlock' episode.

**•How is the antagonist in THoTB different from the one in the Sherlock episode “ The Hounds of Baskerville”?**

Keyword: antagonist

ANSWER:

**They were completely two different person and they were motivated by two different reasons.**

SUPPORT:

“ He said that the death was a very mysterious one, and that I should certainly be suspected if the facts came out. He frightened me into remaining silent.” (p. 138)

EXPLAIN:

**•Who or what is the true antagonist in The Hound of the Baskervilles?**

Keyword: antagonist

ANSWER:

SUPPORT:

“ The whole course of events,” said Holmes, “ from the point of view of the man who called himself Stapleton was simple and direct, although to us, who had no means in the beginning of knowing the motives of his actions and could only learn part of the facts, it all appeared exceedingly complex.” (p. 151)

EXPLAIN:

At the end of the story, Holmes was able to discover that the ‘ hound’ was a simple dog which Stapleton had used to hide his identity behind. By presenting a non-human murderer, most people would consider the case

close and the murder of Sir Henry would not be traced back to him if ever. Unfortunately for him, Holmes is not ‘most people.’

## **THE ROUND TABLE**

Interpretive

### **•Why might Erdrich have chosen to start the book with “small trees had attacked my parents’ house at the foundation” (1)?**

ANSWER:

The words Erdrich used to start the book served to make the readers curious to the story and thus make them read more. Also, the sentence was meant to be a hint to what happened to the narrator’s life.

SUPPORT:

They had grown into the unseen wall and it was difficult to pry them loose.

(p. 1)

EXPLAIN:

The first sentence provides the reader with a good imagery while being purposely unclear about the characters themselves. The reader at this point would probably then start to wonder what exactly the author means by that sentence so the reader would read on. On the other hand, the sentence could be seen as a preview to Joe’s life. His parent’s house served as symbol of their family and the ‘small trees’ were a symbol of the problems that came their way, thus the word ‘attacked’.

**•Joe states, “ My mother’s job was to know everyone’s secrets” (149). How does this power affect Geraldine?**

ANSWER:

There is a big price to pay for power and for Geraldine, knowing other people’s secret were more of a burden than a gift.

SUPPORT:

My father and I had followed her to the doorway, and I think as we watched her we both had the sense that she was ascending to a place of utter loneliness from which she might never be retrieved. (p. 43)

EXPLAIN:

Eventually, Geraldine’s knowledge of several people’s secrets led her to change physically, emotionally, and mentally because of the assault done to her. She was caught in the drama of other people’s life and suffered for it simply because she knew too much.

**•Why does Joe choose the Wishkob homestead as the hiding place for the gun?**

ANSWER:

**No one would suspect that the gun is in Linda’s house.**

SUPPORT:

“ That makes weird sense”, said Cappy. (p. 286)

EXPLAIN:

Given his reputation, Linden would have more motivation to kill Linda and not the other way around. She had already given up so much for her twin so no one would be heartless enough to disturb her now. Thus, no one would

search her house and no one would find the evidence that would point back to Joe.

**•Was Linden Lark’s execution justified by tribal law as it’s presented in Mooshum’s stories?**

ANSWER:

**According to the tribal law in Mooshum’s stories, yes Linden Lark’s execution is justified.**

SUPPORT:

“ Still, you don’t leave a rattlesnake alive to bite you next time you walk the path, I said to the Blackfeet, even if he don’t have fangs.”

EXPLAIN:

The tribes’ unwritten law was that if one did a crime, it is only right for that criminal to pay for it with his life.

•Whitey, Joe’s dad, and Linda all hint that they know Joe murdered Lark, yet they were all willing to defend him. What does this willingness say about Joe’s community?

ANSWER:

**It only shows that Joe’s community protects their own people.**

SUPPORT:

“ Nobody seen it. Nobody seen nothin’. Then it rained so hard. You’ll be getting over this flu quickly.” (p. 287)

EXPLAIN:

What Whitey meant with his words were “ you’ll get over what happened

today” which is as much a support as he can give to Joe. Joe’s community believes in the old tribal laws, when a man is evil, he deserves to be killed and the one who killed him is not a criminal but a hero.

- How does the culture in which Joe is raised affect how he interprets the figure he sees in his backyard (79-80)?

ANSWER:

His Indian roots and culture thought Joe to believe in superstitions and also the unseen like ghosts. That was why Joe interpreted the figure as a ghost and not a human trespassing on their backyard.

SUPPORT:

Although I was not exactly alarmed, I had the clear notion that what I was seeing was unreal. Yet it was neither human nor entirely inhuman. (p. 80)

“ Yes, they’re out there,” my father answered. (p. 81)

“ Then again, sometimes a ghost is a person out of your future. A person dropping back through time, I guess, by mistake. I’ve heard that from my own mother.” (p 82)

EXPLAIN:

In Indian culture, they accept that there really are things that people cannot explain and that there are entities that are not entirely human. This culture is seen by the way Joe’s father reacted calmly to Joe saying that he had seen a ghost in their backyard.

**•How is the relationship between the Old Buffalo Woman and Nanapush echoed in the novel as a whole?**

ANSWER:

Old Buffalo Woman sacrificed herself to Nanapush and in turn, a lot of people

benefitted to it. Also, her death meant justice for Akii who was wrongly accused. This was echoed in the novel the way justice was sought after.

SUPPORT:

“ Nanapush himself said that whenever he was sad over the losses that came over and over through his life, his old grandmother buffalo would speak to him and comfort him.” (p. 228)

EXPLAIN:

Sometimes for a cycle of hurt and tragedy to end, it requires a sacrifice. This is one of the lessons of the story and one that Old Buffalo Woman had taught Nanapush when she let the boy kill her.

### **•Why might Erdrich have chosen to use rain during the scene of Lark’s death (283-285)?**

ANSWER:

### **Erdrich have chosen to use rain during the scene of Lark’s death because that makes it more dramatic.**

SUPPORT:

We sat in the idling car. The rain was hardly a sprinkle now. (p. 284)

EXPLAIN:

The way the rain started, became heavy and then drifted off to a drizzle provided a dramatic representation of the emotions and events that happened at that moment. The building p of rain was a symbol of Joe building up the determination to kill Lark. The heavy rain was the scenes when Lark struggled and then eventually died. The drizzle was the aftermath of the whole event, the calm after the storm.

Application



**•How does the role prescribed by Joe’s doodem influence his behavior?**

Keyword: doodem

ANSWER:

Joe’s doodem made him realize that there are consequences to every action. Lies also had their consequences and sometimes the price you have to pay not only hurts you but the people around you.

SUPPORT:

my brain was still stuffed with money like the head of that trashed doll with manufactured mischief in her eyes. (p. 201)

EXPLAIN:

Joe lied to his father about the doll and the money inside it and as a consequence he in a way betrayed his friends and his mother’s trust by sharing their secrets so that he may cover up his own lie.

**•What scene in The Round House produces the most cathartic response, in your opinion?**

Keyword: cathartic

ANSWER:

I think that would be the part where Linda tries to reason out that it was a good thing he was born physically deformed.

SUPPORT:

“ I was thankful for the way things had turned out. Before we were born, my twin had the compassion to crush against me, to perfect me by deforming me, so that I would be the one who was spared.” (191)

EXPLAIN:

It's heartbreaking to know that despite all the pain she went through because of her being born physically deformed – getting disowned by her parents, ridiculed for her look – she still retained enough kindness in her to actually be thankful to her brother and be sorry for him even when the as the story progresses, she realizes she does not deserve the courtesy she gave him.

**•Does Linden Lark fully fit the definition of a wiindigoo?**

Keyword: wiindigo

ANSWER:

**Yes, Linden Lark fully fit the definition of a wiindigoo**

SUPPORT:

“ A wiindigoo could cast its spirit inside of a person. That person would become an animal, and see fellow humans as prey meat.” (p. 223)

EXPLAIN:

In simple terms, a wiindigoo is a human gone crazy and no longer identifies his fellow humans. He is then fully capable of doing bad things to others as Linden had done to Joe's mother and to Mayla Wolfskin.

**•How does the definition of moral evil that Father Travis relays to Joe influence Joe's behavior (253)?**

Keyword: evil

ANSWER:

**He was able to understand that Lark was really an evil man and sought to avenge his mother.**

SUPPORT:

“ Moral evil is different. It is caused by human beings. A person does something deliberately to another person to cause pain and torment. That is a moral evil.” (p. 253)

EXPLAIN:

Because he understood the concept of moral evil, he was able to understand that morally, Lark was evil. Therefore, killing him will be doing the world a favor.