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Response Journal™

# Sample

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## Response Journal

Reflections: A Student Response Journal



*The Hound of the Baskervilles*  
Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

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*Reflections: A Student Response Journal*



*The Hound of  
the Baskervilles*

**Sir Arthur Conan Doyle**



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## *Response Journal*

### **To The Student**

Although we may read a novel, play, or work of non-fiction for enjoyment, each time we read one, we are building and practicing important basic reading skills. In our ever-more complex society, in which reading has become more and more crucial for success, this, in itself, is an important reason to spend time reading for enjoyment.

Some readers, however, are able to go beyond basic reading techniques and are able to practice higher thinking skills by reflecting on what they have read and how what they read affects them. It is this act of reflection—that is, stopping to think about what you are reading—that this journal is attempting to encourage.

To aid you, we have included writing prompts for each section; however, if you find something that you wish to respond to in the book more compelling than our prompts, you should write about that. We hope you enjoy reading this book and that the act of responding to what you have read increases this enjoyment.

After you read the indicated sections, choose the questions to which you will respond. Keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers to these prompts, and there is no one direction in which you must go.

## Getting Ready

1. *The Hound of the Baskervilles* was a very popular book when it was first published. It was printed in serial form, meaning that a chapter at a time was printed, and fans of the book eagerly awaited each installment. Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories created a reading frenzy. Today, Sherlock Holmes is still a very popular character. In fact, many readers consider *The Hound of the Baskervilles* to be one of the best mystery novels of all time.

Think of some of our current popular entertainers: actors, sports figures, writers, or singers. Of all of our celebrities, whose work do you think will still be studied a hundred years from now? In an essay of no fewer than two paragraphs, choose one popular celebrity and explain why you think that person's work will be studied in years to come.

2. As you read *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, write down any words that you do not recognize. Then, at the end of each chapter, write the definitions for these words.

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9. When Dr. Mortimer first meets Sherlock, he examines, from a distance, the physical shape of his head. In fact, he admires Holmes' skull so much that he covets it.

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, there was a study of criminology called phrenology. Phrenologists believed that they could tell everything they needed to know about someone's personality and mentality just by examining the shape of that person's head. Law enforcement officers who employed phrenology thought that they could judge whether a person was a criminal according to his head shape alone. Today, unfortunately, many people still judge others by their appearance, according to race, skin tone, or even style of clothing.

Write a letter to your local chief of police, telling her that it is not fair to judge a suspect solely on the basis of that person's physical appearance.

10. Holmes considers himself an "enthusiast" of crime solving. It is his passion for solving crimes that makes him such a good detective. What would you say is your passion? Do you have a love for music or for art? Do you love sports or writing? Does your love for a particular activity make you want to try harder when you participate in it? Write a short section for a self-help book about living a full life. In this section, explain how having a passion for a pastime can motivate you to excel in that activity.

### **3 – The Problem**

15. Dr. Mortimer tells Holmes and Watson that, in addition to the legend and Sir Charles Baskerville's own fear of the demon hound, many reliable witnesses testified that they saw the hound on the moor the night that Sir Charles died. If a person is thinking rationally, though, how can he believe that there really exists a ghostly hound that is bent on taking revenge on every member of the Baskerville family?

Write a presentation for a radio show about this case, exploring the otherworldly mystery that surrounds it. You may begin by saying:

**Radio host:** Good evening. Tonight, we present a very strange story. It is the story of Sir Charles Baskerville. He was found dead in his own yard, but without a mark on his body. Did Sir Charles die of natural causes, or was he simply frightened to death? You be the judge, as we present the facts of this terrifying case...

16. Although he doesn't know it yet, Sir Henry Baskerville faces a terrible dilemma. All of his ancestors who have stayed at Baskerville Hall since the curse began have died under mysterious circumstances. Henry stands to inherit a great fortune if he stays there. He could be wealthy and have a fabulous mansion, yet he could also be killed like his ancestors. Knowing the risks, write a letter to Sir Henry Baskerville, offering your advice about whether he should move into Baskerville Hall.
17. The case of the Hound of the Baskervilles pits scientific fact against belief in the supernatural. Do you believe that all of the Baskervilles died of natural causes, or do you think that there really is a demon dog that wants to kill all of the Baskervilles? Write a posting for a ghost hunters' website presenting your views on the existence of supernatural phenomena like ghosts. Do you believe in ghosts and monsters, or do you think that everything that happens in this world can be explained scientifically? Be sure to use specific details to support your opinion.

## **5 – Three Broken Threads**

23. When Holmes and Watson meet with Sir Henry and Dr. Mortimer, the conversation turns to who has inherited Sir Charles' belongings. Sir Henry, Sir Charles' closest living relative, will inherit Baskerville Hall and around three-quarters of a million pounds. Even though he will now be a landowner, Sir Henry himself has not written a will, a document that describes what should happen to his belongings when he dies. Therefore, if he dies at Baskerville Hall, his wealth is up for grabs.

It is usually a good idea to write a will, especially if one owns land or has a lot of possessions. That way, that person's belongings are certain to go to whomever he wants to have them. Write a will of your own, describing whom you would want to have your belongings when you die. Most wills begin

Last will and testament of (your name)

I, (your name), being of sound mind and body, do hereby bequeath...