

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

(1859-1930)

Task 1. Read the text.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was born in Edinburgh in 1859. His father was an artist and an architect but he died young. After his death the family was very poor. Arthur's mother was a very good story-teller and the boy remembered her fantastic stories all his life. He got education at Edinburgh University where he qualified as a doctor and then practiced for 8 years.

When he began writing his famous detective stories he very soon became famous all over the world. "A Scandal in Bohemia" opened a collection of detective stories under the title "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes". In his stories he originated the now universally accepted science of deduction. The Chinese and Egyptian police used Conan Doyle's works as their official training text-books. The readers asked for more and more stories and for two years Conan Doyle wrote a lot with one of his best stories "The Hound of the Baskervilles" among them. When he wrote about 20 stories with Sherlock Holmes as the main detective, he was so tired of them that he decided to kill Sherlock Holmes. He wrote a story which he named "Holmes's last Case" where Sherlock Holmes was killed during the struggle with professor Moriarty. As the readers didn't want to lose their favourite character, ten years later the famous detective appeared again.

The range of his books is immense. Conan Doyle wrote historical novels, short stories, he is the author of the official history of the Boer War and of the six volume history of the Great War. But the fame of Sherlock Holmes tends to overshadow all these. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was famous not only as a writer, he invented the Naval life-jacket and the steel helmet; he worked in close association with Sir Winston Churchill in Pilgrim Trust. Conan Doyle played football and cricket for his country, took

part in Prince Henry Motor Race. He was an expert boxer and it was he who introduced skiing into Switzerland in 1893.

When Conan Doyle died in 1930, one of his greatest contemporaries, Sir Winston Churchill said of him: "I had a great admiration for him. Of course I read every Sherlock Holmes story. But the works I like even more than the detective stories are the great historical novels which like Sherlock Holmes, have certainly found a permanent place in English Literature". After his death the famous detective Sherlock Holmes together with his friend Dr.Watson, continued to be among the favourite characters of English Literature and tourists coming to London always go to visit Baker Street to see the house where Sherlock Holmes lived.

Task 2. Answer the questions

1. What stories did Conan Doyle remember all his life?
2. What science did the writer originate in his stories?
3. What happened to Sherlock Holmes in the course of writing detective stories?
4. Apart from writing detective stories what other literary works did Conan Doyle write?
5. What else is Conan Doyle famous for?