

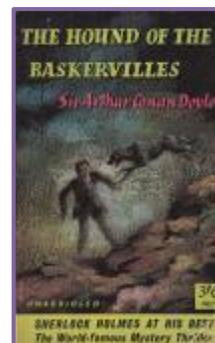
Name:

Date:.....

Read the following extract taken from *The Hound of the Baskervilles* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

Introduction

After investigating reports of a mysterious black hound that terrorises a Devonshire family, Sherlock Holmes and his sidekick, Dr Watson, hunt the creature on the moors one night, using one of the members of the family, Sir Henry, as bait. They are accompanied by Mr Lestrade, a policeman from London.



A sound of quick steps broke the silence of the moor. Crouching among the stones we stared intently at the silver-tipped bank in front of us. The steps grew louder, and through the fog, as through a curtain, there stepped the man whom we were awaiting. He looked round him in surprise as he emerged into the clear, starlit night. Then he came swiftly along the path, passed close to where we lay, and went on up the long slope behind us. As he walked he glanced continually over either shoulder, like a man who is ill at ease.

“Hist!” cried Holmes, and I heard the sharp click of a cocking pistol. “Look out! It’s coming!”

There was a thin, crisp, continuous patter from somewhere in the heart of that crawling bank. The cloud was within fifty yards of where we lay, and we glared at it, all three, uncertain what horror was about to break from the heart of it. I was at Holmes’s elbow, and I glanced for an instant at his face. It was pale and exultant, his eyes shining brightly in the moonlight. But suddenly they started forward in a rigid, fixed stare, and his lips parted in amazement. At the same instant Lestrade gave a yell of terror and threw himself face downward upon the ground. I sprang to my feet, my inert hand grasping my pistol, my mind paralyzed by the dreadful shape which had sprung out upon us from the shadows of the fog. A hound it was, an enormous coal-black hound, but not such a hound as mortal eyes have ever seen. Fire burst from its open mouth, its eyes glowed with a smouldering glare, its muzzle and hackles and dewlap were outlined in flickering flame. Never in the delirious dream of a disordered brain could anything more savage, more appalling, more hellish be conceived than that dark form and savage face which broke upon us out of the wall of fog.

With long bounds the huge black creature was leaping down the track, following hard upon the footsteps of our friend. So paralyzed were we by the apparition that we allowed him to pass before we had recovered our nerve. Then Holmes and I both fired together, and the creature gave a hideous howl, which showed that one at least had hit him. He did not pause, however, but bounded onward. Far away on the path we saw Sir Henry looking back, his face white in the moonlight, his hands raised in horror, glaring helplessly at the frightful thing which was hunting him down. But that cry of pain from

the hound had blown all our fears to the winds. If he was vulnerable he was mortal, and if we could wound him we could kill him. Never have I seen a man run as Holmes ran that night. I am reckoned fleet of foot, but he outpaced me as much as I outpaced the little professional. In front of us as we flew up the track we heard scream after scream from Sir Henry and the deep roar of the hound. I was in time to see the beast spring upon its victim, hurl him to the ground, and worry at his throat. But the next instant Holmes had emptied five barrels of his revolver into the creature's flank. With a last howl of agony and a vicious snap in the air, it rolled upon its back, four feet pawing furiously, and then fell limp upon its side. I stooped, panting, and pressed my pistol to the dreadful, shimmering head, but it was useless to press the trigger. The giant hound was dead.

Glossary

Hist: a call for silence, like shhh

Exultant: triumphant, excited.

Dewlap: a loose flap of skin below the jaw

Fleet of foot: fast



The Hound of the Baskervilles reading comprehension

Name: Date:.....

Now answer the following questions about *The Hound of the Baskervilles*.

1. Why has an introduction been included?

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2. Why has a glossary been included?

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.....

3. How do we know that the narrator and his companions are hiding at the start of the piece?

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.....

4. Find one piece of evidence in the text to show that the hound is a large beast.

.....
.....

5. How does the narrator know that the gunshots hit the animal?

.....
.....

6. Find evidence in the text to support how the narrator knows that Sir Henry is:

a. **scared:**
.....

b. **helpless:**
.....

7. When the animal has been shot, it gives the hunters some hope. Why?

.....
.....

8. What happens to Sir Henry?

.....
.....

9. How do we know the animal can move fast?

.....
.....

10. Find a **group of words** in the text which suggests that the hound appeared from nowhere.

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.....



Guidance answers

1. The introduction sets the scene, orientates the reader, gives the story so far, and allows the reader to enter into the story without being confused by events leading up to this part.
2. The glossary helps the reader to understand complex or specialised vocabulary / old fashioned words they are probably unfamiliar with.
3. They are crouching.
4. The words 'enormous' coal-black hound; 'huge black creature'; 'giant hound' are used to show that the hound is a large beast.
5. The animal cries out in pain; it 'gave a hideous howl'.
6. a. he is crying out as he runs away 'scream after scream'; his face is white with fear
b. 'glaring helplessly at the frightful thing'
7. They realise it is a living (mortal) creature and not some kind of ghost or demon dog. They realise that if they can wound it, they can surely kill it as evidenced by 'he was vulnerable; he was mortal'.
8. The hound catches up to him and attacks him as evidenced by 'hurl him to the ground'. It also attacks his throat as shown by 'worry at his throat'.
9. Dr Watson says Holmes is faster than him, and he (Watson) considers himself to be very fast - but the hound is faster than them both.
It manages to catch Sir Henry before they can stop it.
The author uses words like 'bound', 'spring', 'leap', implying the speed that it covers the ground.
10. The hound 'sprung out upon us'.