By Moya Irvine

Sherlock Holmes, the world's best-known detective

Benedict Cumberbatch plays a modern version of the master of deduction.

Benedict Cumberbatch *as Sherlock Holmes.* | Photo: *Hartswood Films/Rex Shutterstock*

1 SHERLOCK HOLMES fans are already looking forward to December, because the BBC has a special present in store for them: Benedict Cumberbatch returns for a Christmas special as the master detective with Martin Freeman of Hobbit fame as his partner, Dr Watson. In 2016, there's going to be a whole new season of the BBC's Sherlock series, which shows the master detective transported into the 21st century.

2 Benedict Cumberbatch is one of many actors that have played Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's sleuth on television and in films. Although the BBC series is set in the present day, the detective is still basically the Sherlock Holmes his fans love: an eccentric master of deduction.
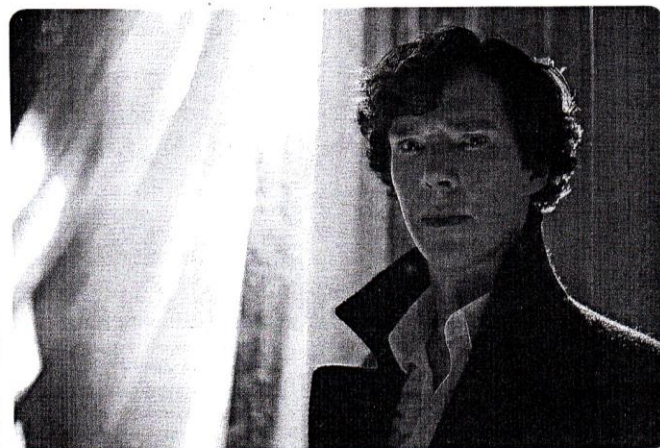
3 The original Holmes appeared in 60 works – four novels and five volumes of short stories – written by Conan Doyle between 1887 and 1927. Although his detective lives in London, the author himself was a Scot, born in Edinburgh in 1859.

4 Arthur Conan Doyle trained as a doctor at Edinburgh University, where he met Joseph Bell, a doctor with an incredible ability to diagnose diseases by observing details. He also liked to show off and guess a person's job by observing tiny details most people would miss. Bell was the inspiration for Holmes.

5 After training, Arthur Conan Doyle worked as a doctor on a ship before opening a practice in Portsmouth. He had completed his first stories as a medical student and carried on writing while trying to establish his career in medicine.

6 He achieved his breakthrough as an author in 1886, with A Study in Scarlet, the novel that introduces Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson. The pair are a model for many later detective story characters. There is often one brilliant character who makes all the clever deductions, and a loyal, less intelligent partner.

7 He may not be as bright as Holmes, but Dr John Watson plays a very important role: he is the narrator. He is with Holmes all the time, sees the same clues and events, but unlike the detective, he can't make any deductions from them. Watson is like the reader. He is also a warmer, more human character than the logical and unemotional master detective.

8 Some of the things we associate with Holmes weren't even invented by Arthur Conan Doyle. The famous deerstalker hat, for example, was never mentioned by the author. An artist gave it to the detective in an illustration for a Holmes story. And Sherlock Holmes never said: "Elementary, my dear Watson," the words most often quoted.

9 However, he did share a flat with Dr Watson at 221b Baker Street. He did smoke a pipe, play the violin and take cocaine.

10 Despite the success of the Sherlock Holmes stories, Conan Doyle grew sick of writing them, and decided to kill off his detective. In The Final Problem, written in 1893, Holmes dies in a struggle with his arch-enemy Professor Moriarty at the Reichenbach Falls.

11 Fans were shocked. Some people wore black armbands; others wrote letters to the author, begging him to bring Holmes back. But Arthur Conan Doyle stayed firm until 1901, when he produced The Hound of the Baskervilles.

12 Holmes went on to solve many more cases until 1927, three years before the author, now Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, died.

13 The first Sherlock Holmes films were made in Conan Doyle's lifetime. A silent film called Sherlock Holmes Baffled was the first, in 1900. In a 1939 version of the Hound of the Baskervilles Basil Rathbone is the classic Holmes complete with deerstalker.

14 Benedict Cumberbatch's Holmes is different in many ways. This Sherlock is young, cool and good-looking. He only wears a deerstalker once – as a joke. He rushes around London taking taxis instead of horse-drawn carriages, and his hounds of the Baskervilles are connected to a genetic research institute.

15 Dr Watson is thoroughly up-to-date as well: he tells us about his adventures in a blog. The 21st-century Moriarty, played by the Irish actor Andrew Scott, is younger, scarier and crazier.

16 If you want to appreciate the witty dialogue, try to watch the series in English on DVD or one of the streaming services.

READING

1. **In which paragraphs of the text can you get the following information?**
   Note that one heading refers to two paragraphs.

		Paragraph
a)	Later, a few details were added to Conan Doyle's stories	
b)	new productions	
c)	the present detective	
d)	the author's medical background	
e)	an attempt to end the stories	
f)	alive again!	
g)	facts about the author	
h)	a recommendation	
i)	the complete adventures of Sherlock Holmes	
j)	the present Doctor Watson	
k)	who inspired Conan Doyle's portrayal of the detective?	
l)	the pattern for the stories	
m)	reactions on the death of Sherlock Holmes	
n)	a historic role transferred to the present	
o)	the first film productions	

2. Read the text and decide whether the following statements are true or false or not in the text.

	true	false	not in the text
a) Conan Doyle loved reading detective novels.			
b) There are great differences between the present Sherlock Holmes and the past ones.			
c) Sherlock Holmes lives in the capital of the UK.			
d) Conan Doyle wore a deerstalker hat himself.			
e) Conan Doyle always loved writing stories about Sherlock Holmes.			
f) The dialogues in the new production are quite funny.			

3. What does the text say about these main characters? Complete the following grid

Sherlock Holmes	Doctor Watson
- eccentric master of deduction	-

VOCABULARY

**1. Find synonyms or synonymous expressions for the following words.
Do not change the meaning of the sentences.**

a) returns   (paragraph 1)   _____

b) whole   (paragraph 1)   _____

c) incredible   (paragraph 4)   _____

d) completed   (paragraph 5)   _____

e) carried on   (paragraph 5)   _____

f) achieved   (paragraph 6)   _____

g) brilliant   (paragraph 6)   _____

h) bright   (paragraph 7)   _____

i) struggle   (paragraph 10)   _____

j) scarier   (paragraph 15)   _____

k) witty   (paragraph 16)   _____

2. Find the opposites of the following words.

a) tiny (paragraph 4)   _____

b) clever (paragraph 6)   _____

c) less (paragraph 6)   _____

d) same (paragraph 7)   _____

e) warmer (paragraph 7)   _____

f) never (paragraph 8)   _____

g) good-looking (paragraph 14)   _____

3. Complete the following mind map:

murder

crime
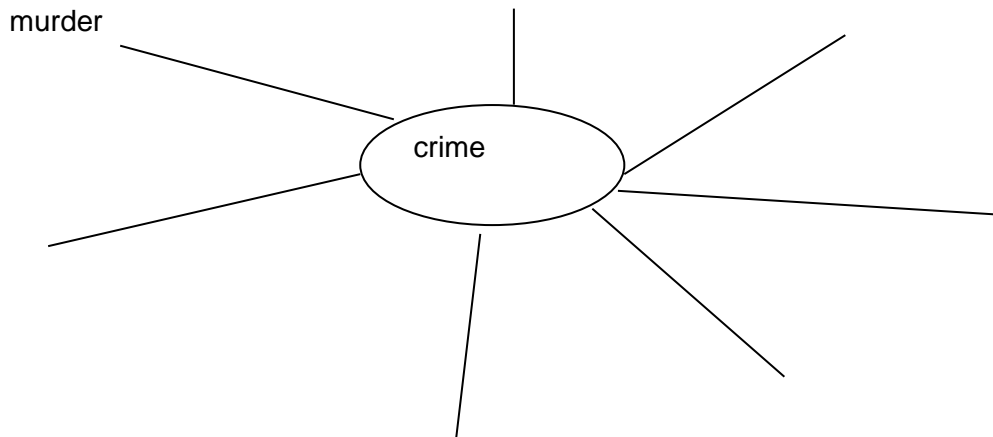
STRUCTURES

Key word transformation
Rewrite the following sentences by using the words in brackets:

1. Holmes is far better at reading clues than Doctor Watson.   **(as)**

_____

_____

2. By the time Holmes got to the train station the suspect had left.   **(anymore)**

_____

_____

3. The police suspected the gardener to have stolen the diamond ring.   **(thought)**

_____

_____

4. It is not wise to annoy the police officer.   **(silly)**

_____

_____

__ ANSWER KEY

READING
1.

		Paragraph
a)	Later, a few details were added to Conan Doyle's stories	8
b)	new productions	1
c)	the present detective	14
d)	the author's medical background	5
e)	an attempt to end the stories	10
f)	alive again!	12
g)	facts about the author	9
h)	a recommendation	16
i)	the complete adventures of Sherlock Holmes	3
j)	the present Doctor Watson	15
k)	who inspired Conan Doyle's portrayal of the detective?	4
l)	the pattern for the stories	6+7
m)	reactions on the death of Sherlock Holmes	11
n)	a historic role transferred to the present	2
o)	the first film productions	13

2.
a) not in the text
b) false
c) true
d) not in the text
e) false
f) true

3.

Sherlock Holmes	Doctor Watson
- eccentric master of deduction - lives in London - brilliant character who makes all the clever deductions - bright - logical and unemotional	- not as clever as Holmes - is the narrator - is with Holmes all the time - sees the same clues and events but can't really make any deductions from them

VOCABULARY

1.
a) comes back
b) complete
c) unbelievable
d) finished
e) went on
f) managed
g) excellent
h) clever
i) fight
k) more frightening
l) funny

2.

a) giant, huge
b) stupid
c) more
d) different
e) colder
f) always
g) ugly

3.

theft
burglary
kidnapping
pickpocketing
corruption
blackmailing
mugging

Key word transformation

1. Doctor Watson is not as good at reading clues as Holmes.
2. By the time Holmes got to the train station the suspect wasn't there anymore.
3. The police thought that the gardener had stolen the diamond ring.
4. It is silly to annoy the police officer.