

Famous Stories



1. Read the following text and answer the questions

Count Dracula

I heard a heavy step approaching behind the great door, and saw through the chinks the gleam of a coming light. Then there was the sound of rattling chains and the clanking of massive bolts drawn back. A key was turned with the loud grating noise of long disuse, and the great door swung back.

Within, stood a tall old man, clean shaven save for a long white moustache, and dressed in black from head to foot, without a single speck of colour about him anywhere. He held in his hand an antique silver lamp, in which the flame burned without a chimney or globe of any kind, throwing long quivering shadows as it flickered in the draught of the open door.

The old man motioned me in with his right hand with a courtly gesture, saying in excellent English, but with a strange intonation.

"Welcome to my house! Enter freely and of your own free will!"

He made no motion of stepping to meet me, but stood like a statue, as though his gesture of welcome had fixed him into stone.

The instant, however, that I had stepped over the threshold, he moved impulsively forward, and holding out his hand grasped mine with a strength which made me move back, an effect which was not lessened by the fact that it seemed cold as ice, more like the hand of a dead than a living man.

Again he said.

"Welcome to my house! Enter freely. Go safely, and leave something of the happiness you bring!" The strength of the handshake was so much akin to that which I had noticed in the driver, whose face I had not seen, that for a moment I doubted if it were not the same person to whom I was speaking.

So to make sure, I said interrogatively, "Count Dracula?" He bowed in a courtly way as he replied, "I am Dracula, and I bid you welcome, Mr. Harker, to my house. Come in, the night air is chill, and you must need to eat and rest." As he was speaking, he put the lamp on a bracket on the wall, and stepping out, took my luggage. He had carried it in before I could forestall him. I protested, but he insisted. "Nay, sir, you are my guest. It is late, and my people are not available. Let me see to your comfort myself." He insisted on carrying my traps along the passage, and then up a great winding stair, and along another great passage, on whose stone floor our steps rang heavily.

At the end of this he threw open a heavy door, and I rejoiced to see within a well-lit room in which a table was spread for supper, and on whose mighty hearth a great fire of logs, freshly replenished, flamed and flared.

The Count halted, putting down my bags, closed the door, and crossing the room, opened another door, which led into a small octagonal room lit by a single lamp, and seemingly without a window of any sort. Passing through this, he opened another door, and motioned me to enter. It was a welcome sight. For here was a great bedroom well lighted and warmed with another log fire, also added to but lately, for the top logs were fresh, which sent a hollow roar up the wide chimney. The Count himself left my luggage inside and withdrew, saying, before he closed the door.

"You will need, after your journey, to refresh yourself by making your toilet. I trust you will find all you wish. When you are ready, come into the other room, where you will find your supper prepared."

The light and warmth and the Count's courteous welcome seemed to have dissipated all my doubts and fears. Having then reached my normal state, I discovered that I was half famished with hunger. So making a hasty toilet, I went into the other room.

1. What was strange about the Count's language?

2. How did the writer feel when the Count shook hands with him?

3. Why did the writer think that the Count and the driver might have been the same person?

4. Why did Dracula carry the writer's belongings himself?

5. How did the writer feel once he was in his room? Why?

ADVANCED PAPER 1 / 16

2. Read about one of Sherlock Holmes' stories and complete the blanks with *one* word only

"I am afraid, Watson, that I shall have to go," said Holmes, as we sat down together to our breakfast one morning.

"Go! Where to?"

"To Dartmoor; to King's Pyland."

I was not surprised. Indeed, my only wonder was _____ he had not already been mixed upon this extraordinary case, which was _____ one topic of conversation through the length and breadth of England. For a _____ day my companion had rambled about the room with his chin upon his chest and his brows knitted, charging and recharging his pipe with the strongest black tobacco, and absolutely deaf _____ any of my questions or remarks.

Fresh editions of every paper had been sent up _____ our news agent, only to _____ glanced over and tossed down into a corner. Yet, silent _____ he was, I knew perfectly well _____ it was he was brooding over. There was _____ one problem before the public which could challenge his powers of analysis, and _____ was the singular disappearance of the favourite for the Wessex Cup, and the tragic murder of its trainer.



3. Go on reading and put the verbs in the right tense. Whenever you see a '+' add a modal verb.

And so it _____ (happen) that an hour or so later I found myself in the corner of a first-class carriage _____ (fly) along en route for Exeter, while Sherlock Holmes, with his sharp, eager face framed in his ear-flapped travelling-cap, dipped rapidly into the bundle of fresh papers which he _____ (buy) at Paddington. We _____ (leave) Reading far behind us before he _____ (throw) the last one of them under the seat, and offered me his cigar-case.

"We _____ (go) well," said he, looking out the window and _____ (glance) at his watch. "Our rate at present is fifty-three and a half miles an hour."

"I _____ (not see) the quarter-mile posts," said I.

"Nor have I. But the telegraph posts upon this line _____ (be) sixty yards apart, and the calculation is a simple one. I presume that you _____ (look) into this matter of the murder of John Straker and the disappearance of Silver Blaze, the horse?"

"I have seen what the Telegraph and the Chronicle _____ (+ say)."

"It is one of those cases where the art of the reasoner _____ (+ use) to pick out details rather than to acquire fresh evidence," Sherlock said.

4. Now read about *Alice in Wonderland* and fill in the blanks with a suitable connective

Alice was beginning to get very tired of sitting by her sister on the bank, and of having nothing to do: once or twice she had peeped into the book her sister was reading, but it had _____ pictures nor conversations in it, 'and what is the use of a book,' thought Alice 'without pictures or conversation?'

_____ she was considering in her own mind (as well as she could, _____ the hot day made her feel very sleepy and stupid), _____ the pleasure of making a daisy-chain would be worth the trouble of getting up and picking the daisies, _____ suddenly a White Rabbit with pink eyes ran close by her.

There was nothing so very remarkable in that; _____ did Alice think it so very much out of the way to hear the Rabbit say to itself, 'Oh dear! Oh dear! I shall be late!' (when she thought it over afterwards, it occurred to her _____ she ought to have wondered at this, but at the time it all seemed quite natural). _____ when the

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ADVANCEDPAPER 1 / 16

Rabbit actually took a watch out of its waistcoat-pocket, and looked at it, and then hurried on, Alice started to her feet, _____ it flashed across her mind that she had never before seen a rabbit with either a waistcoat-pocket, or a watch to take out of it. _____, burning with curiosity, she ran across the field after it, and fortunately was just in time to see it pop down a large rabbit-hole under the hedge.

5. Two friends are talking about some of the famous stories they have read. Complete their conversation.

Paul: I've just finished reading an excellent book.

Andy: Really? _____ ?

Paul: "Rich Man, Poor Man". _____ ?

Andy: Not really. _____ ?

Paul: Twin brothers who are separated at birth and lead very different lives.

Andy: _____ ?

Paul: Their parents die in an accident and they are given to different families.

Andy: But _____ ?

Paul: No, all their parents had no brothers or sisters and their grandparents are dead, too.

Andy: How awful! _____ ?

Paul: No, they only meet again when they are adults.

Andy: So, _____ ?

Paul: For more than thirty years. It's really sad.

Andy: And _____ ?

Paul: Practically by chance. One of them is working for a charity and one evening, as he's serving dinner for the poor. He steps into a man who looks just like him.

Andy: What a shock! And how do they react?

Paul: I won't tell you. I think you'd _____ yourself.

Andy: Good idea! Can I _____ from you?

Paul: Sure! Here you are

6. Writing: Choose one of the following topics. (200-250 words)

- "Honesty and good manners are more important than creativity and initiative." Discuss
- "I was just stepping out of the house when ..." Finish the story