

Read the text and answer the questions that follow.

SHERLOCK HOLMES LIVES ... ?

- I Sherlock Holmes, the fictional English private detective who solves complex mysteries with logical thinking, has captivated readers for over a hundred years. Writer Arthur Conan Doyle introduced him in the 1887 novel *A Study in Scarlet*. A second Holmes novel, *The Sign of Four*, appeared in 1890. Then, Conan Doyle began writing short Holmes stories for the monthly magazine *The Strand*. Accompanied by dramatic illustrations, the stories were immensely popular. And then, quite suddenly, tired of the character, Conan Doyle ended Holmes' life in the December 1893 story *The Final Problem*.
- II Holmes fans reacted emotionally. Twenty-thousand *Strand* readers cancelled their subscriptions. Some men wore black cloth around their arms as a sign of sadness over Holmes' death. And disappointed readers wrote letters begging Conan Doyle to produce more Holmes stories. But Conan Doyle ignored his fans and concentrated on writing historical novels, which were unsuccessful.
- III In 1901, needing money, Conan Doyle published the novel *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, presenting it as an old Holmes case. A couple of years later, he brought the character back to life and by 1927, he had written over 30 more Holmes short stories. Conan Doyle died in 1930, but the Holmes stories live on. They still sell well in various languages, and have been made into dozens of films and plays.
- IV Holmes has even been the subject matter of academic articles, books and "the game", a hobby of thousands of people around the world. Participants call themselves Sherlockians and pretend to believe that Holmes and his assistant Dr Watson were real people. They research the stories in order to work out conflicting details and unsolved issues that Conan Doyle never specified, such as when Holmes was born, or what university he attended. Sherlockians have set up local clubs and Internet sites, published their research and held conferences. With new books about Holmes being released every year, the number of Sherlockians is sure to grow.

1 Are the following statements true (T) or false (F)? Find evidence in the text to support your answers.

- 1. Holmes first appeared in a short story in a magazine.
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- 2. After *The Final Problem* was published, more people subscribed to the *Strand*.
.....
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- 3. "The game" is popular globally.
.....
.....

2 Find words or expressions in the text that mean:

1. fascinated (paragraph I)
2. bored with (paragraph I)
3. paid no attention to (paragraph II)
4. solve (paragraph IV)
5. established (paragraph IV)

3 Complete the sentences using the information given in the text. Use your own words as far as possible.

1. As a result of Conan Doyle's financial problems,
.....
2. It is safe to assume that there will be an increase in the number of Sherlockians because.....
.....

4 Choose the correct answer.

1. Conan Doyle decided to kill Holmes because
a. he was tired of writing.
b. he was bored with the character.
c. the readers demanded it.
2. Sherlockians
a. believe that Sherlock Holmes actually lived.
b. try to understand things about Holmes' life that don't appear in the stories.
c. are detectives who investigate mysteries.

5 Write a composition of about 100-120 words. Choose one option.

1. Describe your favourite fictional character.
2. Describe a detective story or mystery you have read or seen on television or in a film, and explain how the case was solved.