

Read the text about how to write novels on detectives and culprits, the criminals they catch. Some sentences are missing. Choose the correct sentence from the list (A-K) for each gap (1-8). There are two extra sentences that you should not use. Write your answers in the boxes provided on the answer sheet. The first one (0) has been done for you.



How to write a detective novel

The detective himself, or one of the official investigators, should never turn out to be the culprit. This is bald trickery, on a par with offering someone a bright penny for a five-dollar gold piece. It's false pretenses.

0) ____ To solve a criminal problem in this latter fashion is like sending the reader on a deliberate wild-goose chase, and then telling him, after he has failed, that you had the object of his search up your sleeve all the time. Such an author is no better than a practical joker.

1) ____ His function is to gather clues that will eventually lead to the person who did the dirty work in the first chapter; and if the detective does not reach his conclusions through an analysis of those clues, he has no more solved his problem than the schoolboy who gets his answer out of the back of the arithmetic book.

2) ____ No lesser crime than murder will suffice. Three hundred pages is far too much bother for a crime other than murder. After all, the reader's trouble and expenditure of energy must be rewarded.

The problem of the crime must be solved by strictly naturalistic means. Such methods for learning the truth as slate-writing, ouija-boards, mind-reading, spiritualistic séances, crystal-gazing, and the like, are taboo. A reader has a chance when matching his wits with a rationalistic detective, but if he must compete with the world of spirits and go chasing about the fourth dimension of metaphysics, he is defeated *ab initio*.

3) ____ To bring the minds of three or four, or sometimes a gang of detectives to bear on a problem, is not only to disperse the interest and break the direct thread of logic, but to take an unfair advantage of the reader. If there is more than one detective the reader doesn't know who his co-deductor is. It's like making the reader run a race with a relay team.

The culprit must turn out to be a person who has played a more or less prominent part in the story — that is, a person with whom the reader is familiar and in whom he takes an interest.

4) ____ This is begging a noble question. It is a too easy solution. The culprit must be a decidedly worthwhile person — one that wouldn't ordinarily come under suspicion.

5) ____ The culprit may, of course, have a minor helper or co-plotter; but the entire onus must rest on one pair of shoulders: the entire indignation of the reader must be permitted to concentrate on a single black nature.

6) ____ A fascinating and truly beautiful murder is irremediably spoiled by any such wholesale culpability. To be sure, the murderer in a detective novel should be given a sporting chance; but it is going too far to grant him a secret society to fall back on. No high-class, self-respecting murderer would want such odds.

7) ____ That is to say, pseudo-science and purely imaginative and speculative devices are not to be tolerated in the *roman policier*. Once an author soars into the realm of fantasy, in the Jules Verne manner, he is outside the bounds of detective fiction, cavorting in the uncharted reaches of adventure.

8) ____ By this I mean that if the reader, after learning the explanation for the crime, should reread the book, he would see that the solution had, in a sense, been staring him in the face — that all the clues really pointed to the culprit — and that, if he had been as clever as the detective, he could have solved the mystery himself without going on to the final chapter. That the clever reader does often thus solve the problem goes without saying.

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| A | A servant must not be chosen by the author as the culprit. |
| B | Scientists do not make good detectives because of their complex approach to problem solving. |
| C | The culprit must be determined by logical deductions — not by accident or coincidence or unmotivated confession. |
| D | The detective should not be a member of a secret organization. |
| E | There simply must be a corpse in a detective novel, and the deader the corpse the better. |
| F | There must be but one culprit, no matter how many murders are committed. |
| G | The truth of the problem must at all times be apparent — provided the reader is shrewd enough to see it. |
| H | Secret societies, camorras, mafias, <i>et al.</i> , have no place in a detective story. |
| I | There must be but one detective — that is, but one protagonist of deduction. |
| J | The method of murder, and the means of detecting it, must be rational and scientific. |
| K | The detective novel must have a detective in it; and a detective is not a detective unless he detects. |

