

Sherlock Holmes is a fictional private detective created by British author Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Known as a "consulting detective" in the stories, Holmes is known for a proficiency with observation, forensic science, and logical reasoning that borders on the fantastic, which he employs when investigating cases for a wide variety of clients, including Scotland Yard. First appearing in print in 1887 (in *A Study in Scarlet*), the character's popularity became widespread with the first series of short stories in *The Strand Magazine*, beginning with "A Scandal in Bohemia" in 1891; additional stories appeared from then to 1927, eventually totalling four novels and 56 short stories. All but one are set in the Victorian or Edwardian periods, taking place between about 1880 to 1914. Most are narrated by the character of Holmes's friend and biographer Dr. Watson, who usually accompanies Holmes during his investigations and often shares quarters with him at the address of 221B Baker Street, London, where many of the stories begin.

Though not the first fictional detective, Sherlock Holmes is arguably the most well-known, with Guinness World Records listing him as the "most portrayed movie character" in history.[1] Holmes's popularity and fame are such that many have believed him to be not a fictional character but a real individual;[2][3][4] numerous literary and fan societies have been founded that pretend to operate on this principle. The stories and character have had a profound and lasting effect on mystery writing and popular culture as a whole, with both the original tales as well as thousands written by authors other than Conan Doyle being adapted into stage and radio plays, television, films, video games, and other media for over one hundred years.