

*Всероссийская олимпиада школьников по
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Today, I'd like to tell you a little about one of my favourite authors. He has a special place in my heart because the first book I ever read that didn't have pictures in was one of his! I was nine years old when I was captivated by the book *The Lost World*, which is an exciting adventure story set in South America. However, the writer is famous to most of us for a different type of book completely – detective stories. And I'm sure you all know about them! Is the name 'Sherlock Holmes' familiar to you? Of course it is! Holmes is undoubtedly one of the most famous fictional detectives there has ever been. Since the first mystery, *A Study in Scarlet*, was published in 1887, the stories of Sherlock Holmes have both delighted readers and inspired many crime writers. Even popular writers today, in the 21st century, say how much Sherlock Holmes and his methods of investigating have influenced their own writing.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, whose parents were Irish, was born in Scotland but spent most of his life in the south-east of England. He was trained as a doctor but turned to writing when his medical practice failed to do very well. He said that the main inspiration for his writing was his mother. She had an amazing ability to tell stories. Doyle also loved the mysteries of the American writer Edgar Allan Poe, and some people compare Holmes with Poe's French detective, Dupin. The success of his first few stories encouraged Doyle to continue writing, and by the time he died in 1930, he had written 56 short stories and 4 novels about the famous detective. However, his writing was not restricted to stories about his most famous character. Doyle also wrote over 115 short stories which did not include Sherlock! As well as reading about him, we can also see Sherlock Holmes in many films and TV series. Recently, an even newer audience has had the chance to follow his adventures in two new cinema adaptations. There have also been new TV series that bring the stories up to date in the 21st century. Their adventures are based on the real stories, but they live and work in modern-day cities.

Although the Sherlock Holmes stories were very successful, Conan Doyle's real love was history, and he wanted to be known as a serious writer of historical fiction. He killed his famous detective in the story *The Final Problem*, but his readers complained and eventually he brought Sherlock back ten years later in *The Adventure of the Empty House* with an explanation about why he hadn't really died.

Conan Doyle was interested in real-life mysteries, too. He was a member of The Ghost Club, which was an organisation that investigated reports of strange sights or sounds that couldn't be explained. He believed that it

was possible to contact and speak to dead people. And in 1920, he published an article with a photograph of a young child in a garden with fairies. However, many years later, the child in the photo admitted that it was all a big trick. Doyle died in 1930 after a heart attack at the age of 71. He was first buried in the rose garden of his home. Later, however, his body was moved to a churchyard in the New Forest. His greatest creation was Sherlock Holmes and I am convinced that the detective will continue to excite audiences for many years to come.

Task 2

- Interviewer:** Lara Baum and her family are from Bern in Switzerland. They have just taken part in an experiment called 'One-Ton, One-Year'. Lara, what does 'One-Ton, One-Year' mean?
- Lara:** I saw an advert for a family to live in an eco-house for a year. The idea was to live a very green lifestyle and the challenge was to produce just one ton of carbon dioxide per person per year. The challenge ended up being trickier than we'd imagined, actually, though it wasn't physically tiring and we got much healthier over the year.
- Interviewer:** But you said the challenge was to produce just one ton of carbon dioxide per person per year? That sounds like a lot of carbon dioxide!
- Lara:** Well, one ton of carbon dioxide per person per year sounds a lot, but the average Swiss person produces seven tons of carbon dioxide every year. To put that into perspective, the average African person produces a lot less than one ton of carbon dioxide a year.
- Interviewer:** How do these seven tons of carbon dioxide add up?
- Lara:** Transport is a major factor: carbon dioxide from flying abroad is followed closely by local transport. Then there's the carbon dioxide from heating the home, cooking, electricity for lighting, computers and TV – not to mention the production of the food we eat.
- Interviewer:** You had to move into an eco-house. How did you find that experience?
- Lara:** Well, eco-houses are small so that you don't need much energy to build them or heat them. It was difficult to live in at first but I got used to it eventually. I realise it's not for everyone though! The house was made with modern materials that keep it warm in winter and cool in summer. All the power came from huge solar panels on the roof. Instead of using our own car, they gave us an electric car, which we plugged into the house every day.

- Interviewer:** Did you have to change your diet at all?
- Lara:** Yes! For a start, we only ate fruit and vegetables that were grown locally.
- Interviewer:** Why?
- Lara:** Well, some fresh food is transported thousands of kilometres, sometimes from the other side of the world. And it's often transported by plane rather than by ship, which produces a lot of carbon dioxide. So we tried to eat food that didn't require much energy in its production. But then – I think it was after about nine months of the challenge – we realised that our carbon footprints were getting close to a ton, so we had to stop eating meat and dairy products.
- Interviewer:** So, no meat or dairy products? Why?
- Lara:** A lot of energy is used in meat production and on dairy farms. It takes less energy to produce vegetables, beans and grains. I liked being vegetarian – in fact, I might continue as a veggie, but my dad hated it!
- Interviewer:** Was the challenge hard?
- Lara:** Not really, the eco-house made it surprisingly easy to keep our carbon footprint small. We also avoided planes and normal cars – we used bicycles and our electric car instead.
- Interviewer:** If it wasn't difficult, could anybody do it?
- Lara:** Well, the green transport was different, quite fun actually, and in general the lifestyle was fine. We had the Internet at home, but apart from computers, we didn't use much electricity – I really missed my hairdryer, though! Hairdryers use loads of electricity and we all had to give up equipment that used too much. So yes, the challenge was quite tricky. But overall, I'd say the low-carbon lifestyle was pretty cool.