

Mycroft Holmes reading worksheet: Adapted from [The Greek Interpreter](#) (1893)



Dr Watson meets Sherlock's brother, Mycroft Holmes, for the first time.

My friend Sherlock Holmes never spoke about his family or his early life. I concluded that he was an **orphan** with no living relatives.

Imagine my surprise when one summer evening he began talking to me about his brother.

We were discussing the old question of **character**. Do we inherit our personalities? Or is education and upbringing more important?

"How do you explain your remarkable **powers of observation**?" I asked. "It surely comes from early training."

To my surprise, Holmes shook his head, "I think it was passed down from my parents."

'How do you know that?'

"Because my brother, Mycroft, has greater powers of observation than I."

This did not seem possible to me. "You are too **modest**, Holmes."

"It is not modesty, but a simple statement of fact" he said. "Mycroft has a brilliant mind."

"Is he younger than you?"

"Seven years older."

"Then why is he not **well known**?"

"He is well known at the Diogenes club."

Holmes saw from my expression that the name was new to me

"The Diogenes club is the strangest club in London," he said, pulling out his watch. "And Mycroft is its strangest **member**. He's always there between 4.45 and 7.40."

"So he's there now? Where is this club?"

"I'll show you," said Holmes. "Shall we go now?"

Five minute later we were walking towards Regents Park. "So I am going to meet another great detective?" I said.

"Oh no," said Holmes. "Mycroft could never be a **detective**. Solving cases requires energy and practical work. You need to talk to people. This does not interest him. "

We reached Pall Mall. Sherlock Holmes stopped at the door of a grand old building. "This club has very special character," he said.

"How so, Holmes?"

"It is a club started by brother for the most **unsociable** men in London. Men who do not want the company of other men."

"So why do they come here?"

"Diogene members sit and read and drink and smoke in comfort. But they must not approach each other. That is against the rules."

Holmes lead me into a large hall. It was busy but each gentleman sat at a private table. Holmes showed me into a small room. It looked out onto Pall Mall.

"Please wait here," he said.

A minute later he returned with a companion. It could only be his brother.

Mycroft Holmes was a much bigger and more heavily built than Sherlock. His face was huge and his eyes grey and watery. The brothers shared the same sharpness of expression.

"I am glad to see you, sir," said Mycroft, holding out his hand. It was broad and flat, like the flipper of a seal.

"You have made my brother famous. By the way, Sherlock, why didn't you consult me about the Manor House case? Too difficult for you, I thought."

"No, I solved it," said Sherlock, smiling.

"It was Adams, of course?"

"Yes, it was Adams."

"I was **sure** of it from the start," said Mycroft.



Quick Check: True or false?

1. Sherlock often talks about his family.
2. Doctor Watson is an orphan.
3. Watson and Holmes discuss whether genes or environment form character.
4. Mycroft Holmes is very clever.
5. Adams is a friend of Mycroft Holmes.

Vocabulary: Find the word in bold to match these definitions

1. Desire for success
2. Ability to notice and analyse details of physical appearance etc.
3. To be certain
4. Prefers solitude
5. Without living parents

Summary 25-50 words

Write a short description of Mycroft Holmes. You could: mention:

- similarities and differences between Sherlock and his brother
- the Diogenes club
- Mycroft's physical appearance etc