

SELECTED EXCERPTS AND ARTICLES  
FOR USE WITH ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS UNIT

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*Sherlock Holmes:  
Reading Like a Detective*

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*Grade 8  
Text Packet*



TNCore

TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

## Selected Works (in order of appearance)

Doyle, Arthur C. *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. New York: Grosset and Dunlap, Pubs. 1902. Project Gutenberg. Web. 8 Dec 2008.

<<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2852/2852-h/2852-h.htm>>.

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<<http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/d/dickens/charles/d54rp/chapter15.html>>.

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<<http://www.pri.org/stories/2013-04-18/social-media-sites-look-help-boston-marathon-bombing-investigation>>.

Henn, Steve, and Alexis Madrigal. Interview by Audie Cornish. "Social Media Vigilantes Cloud Boston Bombing Investigation." NPR. 22 Apr 2013. Radio.

<<http://www.npr.org/2013/04/22/178462380/social-media-vigilantes-cloud-boston-bombing-investigation>>.

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Konnikova, Maria. "Do You Think Like Sherlock Holmes?" *Slate*. 3 Jan 2013: n. page. Web. 12 Mar 2014.

<[http://www.slate.com/articles/health\\_and\\_science/science/2013/01/how\\_to\\_think\\_like\\_sherlock\\_holmes\\_see\\_and\\_observe\\_to\\_fight\\_attention\\_blindness\\_single.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/health_and_science/science/2013/01/how_to_think_like_sherlock_holmes_see_and_observe_to_fight_attention_blindness_single.html)>.

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# *The Hound of the Baskervilles*

(Close Reading)

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**Sir Arthur Conan Doyle**

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Doyle, Arthur C. *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. New York: Grosset and Dunlap, Pubs. 1902. *Project Gutenberg*. Web. 8 Dec 2008.  
<<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2852/2852-h/2852-h.htm>>.

**Close reading excerpt: *The Hound of the Baskervilles***  
**Chapter 1**

1 “Interesting, though **elementary**,” said he as he returned to his favourite corner of the  
2 settee. “There are certainly one or two indications upon the stick. It gives us the basis  
3 for several **deductions**.”

4 “Has anything escaped me?” I asked with some self-importance. “I trust that there is  
5 nothing of consequence which I have overlooked?”

6 “I am afraid, my dear Watson, that most of your conclusions were **erroneous**. When I  
7 said that you stimulated me I meant, to be frank, that in noting your **fallacies** I was  
8 occasionally guided towards the truth. Not that you are entirely wrong in this instance.  
9 The man is certainly a country practitioner. And he walks a good deal.”

10 “Then I was right.”

11 “To that extent.”

12 “But that was all.”

13 “No, no, my dear Watson, not all – by no means all. I would suggest, for example, that a  
14 presentation to a doctor is more likely to come from a hospital than from a hunt, and  
15 that when the initials ‘C.C.’ are placed before that hospital the words ‘Charing Cross’  
16 very naturally suggest themselves.”

17 “You may be right.”

18 “The probability lies in that direction. And if we take this as a working **hypothesis** we  
19 have a fresh basis from which to start our construction of this unknown visitor.”

20 “Well, then, supposing that ‘C.C.H.’ does stand for ‘Charing Cross Hospital,’ what  
21 further **inferences** may we draw?”

22 “Do none suggest themselves? You know my methods. Apply them!”

23 “I can only think of the obvious conclusion that the man has practised in town before  
24 going to the country.”

25 “I think that we might **venture** a little farther than this. Look at it in this light. On what  
 26 occasion would it be most probable that such a presentation would be made? When  
 27 would his friends unite to give him a pledge of their good will? Obviously at the  
 28 moment when Dr. Mortimer withdrew from the service of the hospital in order to start  
 29 in practice for himself. We know there has been a presentation. We believe there has  
 30 been a change from a town hospital to a country practice. Is it, then, stretching our  
 31 inference too far to say that the presentation was on the occasion of the change?”

32 “It certainly seems probable.”

33 “Now, you will observe that he could not have been on the staff of the hospital, since  
 34 only a man well-established in a London practice could hold such a position, and such a  
 35 one would not drift into the country. What was he, then? If he was in the hospital and  
 36 yet not on the staff he could only have been a house-surgeon or a house-physician—  
 37 little more than a senior student. And he left five years ago—the date is on the stick. So  
 38 your grave, middle-aged family practitioner vanishes into thin air, my dear Watson,  
 39 and there emerges a young fellow under thirty, amiable, unambitious, absent-minded,  
 40 and the possessor of a favourite dog, which I should describe roughly as being larger  
 41 than a terrier and smaller than a mastiff.”

42 I laughed incredulously as Sherlock Holmes leaned back in his settee and blew little  
 43 wavering rings of smoke up to the ceiling.





**Close reading excerpt: *The Hound of the Baskervilles***  
**Chapter 2**

1 “They had gone a mile or two when they passed one of the night shepherds upon the  
2 **moorlands**, and they cried to him to know if he had seen the hunt. And the man, as the  
3 story goes, was so crazed with fear that he could scarce speak, but at last he said that he  
4 had indeed seen the unhappy maiden, with the hounds upon her track. ‘But I have seen  
5 more than that,’ said he, ‘for Hugo Baskerville passed me upon his black mare, and  
6 there ran mute behind him such a hound of hell as God forbid should ever be at  
7 my heels.’

8 “So the drunken squires cursed the shepherd and rode onward. But soon their skins  
9 turned cold, for there came a galloping across the moor, and the black mare, dabbled  
10 with white froth, went past with trailing bridle and empty saddle. Then the **revellers**  
11 rode close together, for a great fear was on them, but they still followed over the moor,  
12 though each, had he been alone, would have been right glad to have turned his horse’s  
13 head. Riding slowly in this fashion they came at last upon the hounds. These, though  
14 known for their **valour** and their breed, were whimpering in a cluster at the head of a  
15 deep dip or goyal, as we call it, upon the moor, some slinking away and some, with  
16 starting hackles and staring eyes, gazing down the narrow valley before them.

17 “The company had come to a halt, more sober men, as you may guess, than when they  
18 started. The most of them would by no means advance, but three of them, the boldest,  
19 or it may be the most drunken, rode forward down the goyal. Now, it opened into a  
20 broad space in which stood two of those great stones, still to be seen there, which were  
21 set by certain forgotten peoples in the days of old. The moon was shining bright upon  
22 the clearing, and there in the centre lay the unhappy maid where she had fallen, dead of  
23 fear and of fatigue. But it was not the sight of her body, nor yet was it that of the body  
24 of Hugo Baskerville lying near her, which raised the hair upon the heads of these three  
25 daredevil roysterers, but it was that, standing over Hugo, and plucking at his throat,  
26 there stood a foul thing, a great, black beast, shaped like a hound, yet larger than any  
27 hound that ever mortal eye has rested upon. And even as they looked the thing tore the  
28 throat out of Hugo Baskerville, on which, as it turned its blazing eyes and dripping jaws  
29 upon them, the three shrieked with fear and rode for dear life, still screaming, across the  
30 moor. One, it is said, died that very night of what he had seen, and the other twain were  
31 but broken men for the rest of their days.”



**Close reading excerpt: *The Hound of the Baskervilles***  
**Chapter 6**

1 Over the green squares of the fields and the low curve of a wood there rose in the  
2 distance a gray, melancholy hill, with a strange jagged summit, dim and vague in the  
3 distance, like some fantastic landscape in a dream. Baskerville sat for a long time, his  
4 eyes fixed upon it, and I read upon his eager face how much it meant to him, this first  
5 sight of that strange spot where the men of his blood had held **sway** so long and left  
6 their mark so deep. There he sat, with his tweed suit and his American accent, in the  
7 corner of a **prosaic** railway-carriage, and yet as I looked at his dark and expressive face  
8 I felt more than ever how true a descendant he was of that long line of high-blooded,  
9 fiery, and masterful men. There were pride, valour, and strength in his thick brows, his  
10 sensitive nostrils, and his large hazel eyes. If on that forbidding moor a difficult and  
11 dangerous quest should lie before us, this was at least a comrade for whom one might  
12 venture to take a risk with the certainty that he would bravely share it.

13 The train pulled up at a small wayside station and we all descended. Outside, beyond  
14 the low, white fence, a wagonette with a pair of cobs was waiting. Our coming was  
15 evidently a great event, for station-master and porters clustered round us to carry out  
16 our luggage. It was a sweet, simple country spot, but I was surprised to observe that by  
17 the gate there stood two soldierly men in dark uniforms who leaned upon their short  
18 rifles and glanced keenly at us as we passed. The coachman, a hardfaced, gnarled little  
19 fellow, saluted Sir Henry Baskerville, and in a few minutes we were flying swiftly down  
20 the broad, white road. Rolling pasture lands curved upward on either side of us, and  
21 old gabled houses peeped out from amid the thick green foliage, but behind the  
22 peaceful and sunlit countryside there rose ever, dark against the evening sky, the long,  
23 gloomy curve of the moor, broken by the jagged and sinister hills.



**Close reading excerpt: *The Hound of the Baskervilles***  
**Chapter 9**

1 And it was at this moment that there occurred a most strange and unexpected thing. We  
2 had risen from our rocks and were turning to go home, having abandoned the hopeless  
3 chase. The moon was low upon the right, and the jagged **pinnacle** of a granite tor stood  
4 up against the lower curve of its silver disc. There, outlined as black as an ebony statue  
5 on that shining background, I saw the figure of a man upon the **tor**. Do not think that it  
6 was a **delusion**, Holmes. I assure you that I have never in my life seen anything more  
7 clearly. As far as I could judge, the figure was that of a tall, thin man. He stood with his  
8 legs a little separated, his arms folded, his head bowed, as if he were brooding over that  
9 enormous wilderness of peat and granite which lay before him. He might have been the  
10 very spirit of that terrible place. It was not the convict. This man was far from the place  
11 where the latter had disappeared. Besides, he was a much taller man. With a cry of  
12 surprise I pointed him out to the baronet, but in the instant during which I had turned  
13 to grasp his arm the man was gone. There was the sharp pinnacle of granite still cutting  
14 the lower edge of the moon, but its peak bore no trace of that silent and motionless  
15 figure.

16 I wished to go in that direction and to search the tor, but it was some distance away.  
17 The baronet's nerves were still quivering from that cry, which recalled the dark story of  
18 his family, and he was not in the mood for fresh adventures. He had not seen this lonely  
19 man upon the tor and could not feel the thrill which his strange presence and his  
20 commanding attitude had given to me. "A warder, no doubt," said he. "The moor has  
21 been thick with them since this fellow escaped." Well, perhaps his explanation may be  
22 the right one, but I should like to have some further proof of it. To-day we mean to  
23 communicate to the Princetown people where they should look for their missing man,  
24 but it is hard lines that we have not actually had the triumph of bringing him back as  
25 our own prisoner. Such are the adventures of last night, and you must acknowledge,  
26 my dear Holmes, that I have done you very well in the matter of a report. Much of what  
27 I tell you is no doubt quite irrelevant, but still I feel that it is best that I should let you  
28 have all the facts and leave you to select for yourself those which will be of most service  
29 to you in helping you to your conclusions. We are certainly making some progress. So  
30 far as the Barrymores go we have found the motive of their actions, and that has cleared  
31 up the situation very much. But the moor with its mysteries and its strange inhabitants  
32 remains as **inscrutable** as ever. Perhaps in my next I may be able to throw some light  
33 upon this also. Best of all would it be if you could come down to us.



**Close reading excerpt: *The Hound of the Baskervilles***  
**Chapter 12**

1 All my unspoken instincts, my vague suspicions, suddenly took shape and centred  
2 upon the naturalist. In that impassive colourless man, with his straw hat and his  
3 butterfly-net, I seemed to see something terrible – a creature of infinite patience and  
4 craft, with a smiling face and a murderous heart.

5 “It is he, then, who is our enemy – it is he who dogged us in London?”

6 “So I read the riddle.”

7 “And the warning – it must have come from her!”

8 “Exactly.”

9 The shape of some monstrous villainy, half seen, half guessed, loomed through the  
10 darkness which had girt me so long.

11 “But are you sure of this, Holmes? How do you know that the woman is his wife?”

12 “Because he so far forgot himself as to tell you a true piece of autobiography upon the  
13 occasion when he first met you, and I dare say he has many a time regretted it since. He  
14 was once a schoolmaster in the north of England. Now, there is no one more easy to  
15 trace than a schoolmaster. There are scholastic agencies by which one may identify any  
16 man who has been in the profession. A little investigation showed me that a school had  
17 come to grief under atrocious circumstances, and that the man who had owned it – the  
18 name was different – had disappeared with his wife. The descriptions agreed. When I  
19 learned that the missing man was devoted to entomology the identification  
20 was complete.”

21 The darkness was rising, but much was still hidden by the shadows.

22 “If this woman is in truth his wife, where does Mrs. Laura Lyons come in?” I asked.

23 “That is one of the points upon which your own researches have shed a light. Your  
24 interview with the lady has cleared the situation very much. I did not know about a  
25 projected divorce between herself and her husband. In that case, regarding Stapleton as  
26 an unmarried man, she counted no doubt upon becoming his wife.”

27 “And when she is undeceived?”

28 “Why, then we may find the lady of service. It must be our first duty to see her – both of  
29 us – to-morrow. Don’t you think, Watson, that you are away from your charge rather  
30 long? Your place should be at Baskerville Hall.”

31 The last red streaks had faded away in the west and night had settled upon the moor. A  
32 few faint stars were gleaming in a violet sky.

33 “One last question, Holmes,” I said as I rose. “Surely there is no need of secrecy  
34 between you and me. What is the meaning of it all? What is he after?”

35 Holmes’s voice sank as he answered:

36 “It is murder, Watson – refined, cold-blooded, deliberate murder. Do not ask me for  
37 particulars. My nets are closing upon him, even as his are upon Sir Henry, and with  
38 your help he is already almost at my mercy. There is but one danger which can threaten  
39 us. It is that he should strike before we are ready to do so. Another day – two at the  
40 most – and I have my case complete, but until then guard your charge as closely as ever  
41 a fond mother watched her ailing child. Your mission to-day has justified itself, and yet  
42 I could almost wish that you had not left his side. Hark!”



# “The Pair of Gloves”

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Charles Dickens

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Dickens, Charles. “Three Detective Anecdotes: The Pair of Gloves.” *Household Words*. 1850. *Reprinted Pieces* by Charles Dickens. South Australia: University of Adelaide, 2014. Web. 12 Mar 2014.

<<http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/d/dickens/charles/d54rp/chapter15.html>>.

## The Pair of Gloves

Charles Dickens

1 'It's a singler story, sir,' said Inspector Wield, of the Detective Police, who, in company  
2 with Sergeants Dornton and Mith, paid us another twilight visit, one July evening; 'and  
3 I've been thinking you might like to know it.

4 'It's concerning the murder of the young woman, Eliza Grimwood, some years ago,  
5 over in the Waterloo Road. She was commonly called The Countess, because of her  
6 handsome appearance and her proud way of carrying of herself; and when I saw the  
7 poor Countess (I had known her well to speak to), lying dead, with her throat cut, on  
8 the floor of her bedroom, you'll believe me that a variety of reflections calculated to  
9 make a man rather low in his spirits, came into my head.

10 'That's neither here nor there. I went to the house the morning after the murder, and  
11 examined the body, and made a general observation of the bedroom where it was.  
12 Turning down the pillow of the bed with my hand, I found, underneath it, a pair of  
13 gloves. A pair of gentleman's dress gloves, very dirty; and inside the lining, the letters  
14 TR, and a cross.

15 'Well, sir, I took them gloves away, and I showed 'em to the magistrate, over at Union  
16 Hall, before whom the case was. He says, "Wield," he says, "there's no doubt this is a  
17 discovery that may lead to something very important; and what you have got to do,  
18 Wield, is, to find out the owner of these gloves."

19 'I was of the same opinion, of course, and I went at it immediately. I looked at the  
20 gloves pretty narrowly, and it was my opinion that they had been cleaned. There was a  
21 smell of sulphur and rosin about 'em, you know, which cleaned gloves usually have,  
22 more or less. I took 'em over to a friend of mine at Kennington, who was in that line,  
23 and I put it to him. "What do you say now? Have these gloves been cleaned?" "These  
24 gloves have been cleaned," says he. "Have you any idea who cleaned them?" says I.  
25 "Not at all," says he; "I've a very distinct idea who DIDN'T clean 'em, and that's  
26 myself. But I'll tell you what, Wield, there ain't above eight or nine reg'lar glove-  
27 cleaners in London," – there were not, at that time, it seems – "and I think I can give  
28 you their addresses, and you may find out, by that means, who did clean 'em."  
29 Accordingly, he gave me the directions, and I went here, and I went there, and I looked  
30 up this man, and I looked up that man; but, though they all agreed that the gloves had

31 been cleaned, I couldn't find the man, woman, or child, that had cleaned that aforesaid  
32 pair of gloves.

33 'What with this person not being at home, and that person being expected home in the  
34 afternoon, and so forth, the inquiry took me three days. On the evening of the third day,  
35 coming over Waterloo Bridge from the Surrey side of the river, quite beat, and very  
36 much vexed and disappointed, I thought I'd have a shilling's worth of entertainment at  
37 the Lyceum Theatre to freshen myself up. So I went into the Pit, at half-price, and I sat  
38 myself down next to a very quiet, modest sort of young man. Seeing I was a stranger  
39 (which I thought it just as well to appear to be) he told me the names of the actors on  
40 the stage, and we got into conversation. When the play was over, we came out together,  
41 and I said, "We've been very companionable and agreeable, and perhaps you wouldn't  
42 object to a drain?" "Well, you're very good," says he; "I *shouldn't* object to a drain."  
43 Accordingly, we went to a public-house, near the Theatre, sat ourselves down in a quiet  
44 room up-stairs on the first floor, and called for a pint of half-and-half, apiece, and  
45 a pipe.

46 'Well, sir, we put our pipes aboard, and we drank our half-and-half, and sat a-talking,  
47 very sociably, when the young man says, "You must excuse me stopping very long," he  
48 says, "because I'm forced to go home in good time. I must be at work all night." "At  
49 work all night?" says I. "You ain't a baker?" "No," he says, laughing, "I ain't a baker."  
50 "I thought not," says I, "you haven't the looks of a baker." "No," says he, "I'm a  
51 glove-cleaner."

52 'I never was more astonished in my life, than when I heard them words come out of his  
53 lips. "You're a glove-cleaner, are you?" says I. "Yes," he says, "I am." "Then, perhaps,"  
54 says I, taking the gloves out of my pocket, "you can tell me who cleaned this pair of  
55 gloves? It's a rum story," I says. "I was dining over at Lambeth, the other day, at a free-  
56 and-easy – quite promiscuous – with a public company – when some gentleman, he left  
57 these gloves behind him! Another gentleman and me, you see, we laid a wager of a  
58 sovereign, that I wouldn't find out who they belonged to. I've spent as much as seven  
59 shillings already, in trying to discover; but, if you could help me, I'd stand another  
60 seven and welcome. You see there's TR and a cross, inside." "I see," he says. "Bless you,  
61 I know these gloves very well! I've seen dozens of pairs belonging to the same party."  
62 "No?" says I. "Yes," says he. "Then you know who cleaned 'em?" says I. "Rather so,"  
63 says he. "My father cleaned 'em."

64 "'Where does your father live?" says I. "Just round the corner," says the young man,  
65 "near Exeter Street, here. He'll tell you who they belong to, directly." "Would you come

66 round with me now?" says I. "Certainly," says he, "but you needn't tell my father that  
 67 you found me at the play, you know, because he mightn't like it." "All right!" We went  
 68 round to the place, and there we found an old man in a white apron, with two or three  
 69 daughters, all rubbing and cleaning away at lots of gloves, in a front parlour. "Oh,  
 70 Father!" says the young man, "here's a person been and made a bet about the  
 71 ownership of a pair of gloves, and I've told him you can settle it." "Good evening, sir,"  
 72 says I to the old gentleman. "Here's the gloves your son speaks of. Letters TR, you see,  
 73 and a cross." "Oh yes," he says, "I know these gloves very well; I've cleaned dozens of  
 74 pairs of 'em. They belong to Mr. Trinkle, the great upholsterer in Cheapside." "Did you  
 75 get 'em from Mr. Trinkle, direct," says I, "if you'll excuse my asking the question?"  
 76 "No," says he; "Mr. Trinkle always sends 'em to Mr. Phibbs's, the haberdasher's,  
 77 opposite his shop, and the haberdasher sends 'em to me." "Perhaps *you* wouldn't object  
 78 to a drain?" says I. "Not in the least!" says he. So I took the old gentleman out, and had  
 79 a little more talk with him and his son, over a glass, and we parted excellent friends.

80 'This was late on a Saturday night. First thing on the Monday morning, I went to the  
 81 haberdasher's shop, opposite Mr. Trinkle's, the great upholsterer's in Cheapside. "Mr.  
 82 Phibbs in the way?" "My name is Phibbs." "Oh! I believe you sent this pair of gloves to  
 83 be cleaned?" "Yes, I did, for young Mr. Trinkle over the way. There he is in the shop!"  
 84 "Oh! that's him in the shop, is it? Him in the green coat?" "The same individual." "Well,  
 85 Mr. Phibbs, this is an unpleasant affair; but the fact is, I am Inspector Wield of the  
 86 Detective Police, and I found these gloves under the pillow of the young woman that  
 87 was murdered the other day, over in the Waterloo Road!" "Good Heaven!" says he.  
 88 "He's a most respectable young man, and if his father was to hear of it, it would be the  
 89 ruin of him!" "I'm very sorry for it," says I, "but I must take him into custody." "Good  
 90 Heaven!" says Mr. Phibbs, again; "can nothing be done?" "Nothing," says I. "Will you  
 91 allow me to call him over here," says he, "that his father may not see it done?" "I don't  
 92 object to that," says I; "but unfortunately, Mr. Phibbs, I can't allow of any  
 93 communication between you. If any was attempted, I should have to interfere directly.  
 94 Perhaps you'll beckon him over here?" Mr. Phibbs went to the door and beckoned, and  
 95 the young fellow came across the street directly; a smart, brisk young fellow.

96 "'Good morning, sir," says I. "Good morning, sir," says he. "Would you allow me to  
 97 inquire, sir," says I, "if you ever had any acquaintance with a party of the name of  
 98 Grimwood?" "Grimwood! Grimwood!" says he. "No!" "You know the Waterloo  
 99 Road?" "Oh! of course I know the Waterloo Road!" "Happen to have heard of a young  
 100 woman being murdered there?" "Yes, I read it in the paper, and very sorry I was to

101 read it." "Here's a pair of gloves belonging to you, that I found under her pillow the  
102 morning afterwards!"

103 'He was in a dreadful state, sir; a dreadful state. "Mr. Wield," he says, "upon my  
104 solemn oath I never was there. I never so much as saw her, to my knowledge, in my  
105 life!" "I am very sorry," says I. "To tell you the truth; I don't think you *are* the murderer,  
106 but I must take you to Union Hall in a cab. However, I think it's a case of that sort, that,  
107 at present, at all events, the magistrate will hear it in private."

108 'A private examination took place, and then it came out that this young man was  
109 acquainted with a cousin of the unfortunate Eliza Grimwood, and that, calling to see  
110 this cousin a day or two before the murder, he left these gloves upon the table. Who  
111 should come in, shortly afterwards, but Eliza Grimwood! "Whose gloves are these?"  
112 she says, taking 'em up. "Those are Mr. Trinkle's gloves," says her cousin. "Oh!" says  
113 she, "they are very dirty, and of no use to him, I am sure. I shall take 'em away for my  
114 girl to clean the stoves with." And she put 'em in her pocket. The girl had used 'em to  
115 clean the stoves, and, I have no doubt, had left 'em lying on the bedroom mantelpiece,  
116 or on the drawers, or somewhere; and her mistress, looking round to see that the room  
117 was tidy, had caught 'em up and put 'em under the pillow where I found 'em.

118 That's the story, sir.'



# “Social Media Sites Look to Help in Boston Marathon Bombing Investigation”

(Close Reading)

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Aaron Schachter from *The World* interviews  
professor of journalism Alfred Hermida

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Hermida, Alfred. Interview by Aaron Schachter. “Social Media Sites Look to Help in Boston Marathon Bombing Investigation.” *The World*. PRI. 18 Apr 2013. Radio.  
<<http://www.pri.org/stories/2013-04-18/social-media-sites-look-help-boston-marathon-bombing-investigation>>.

**Close reading excerpt: “Social Media Sites Look to Help in Boston Marathon Bombing Investigation”**

1 *Investigators are still sifting through thousands of videos and pictures, both amateur and*  
2 *professional, taken at or around the time of the bombing at the Boston Marathon on Monday.*

3 *So too are users of websites such as 4chan and Reddit. The social media sites are **crowdsourcing***  
4 *the Boston investigation by asking users to post and analyze photos on their own, and then turn*  
5 *that information over to the FBI.*

6 *Some aren't too happy with this, likening the effect to **vigilantism**, or a **witch hunt**, that may*  
7 *be **implicating** innocent people.*

8 *We speak with Alfred Hermida, a professor of journalism at the University of British Columbia.*

9 Aaron Schachter: I'm Aaron Schachter and this is *The World*, a coproduction of the BBC  
10 World Service, PRI and WGBH in Boston. The investigation into the Boston Marathon is  
11 proceeding. In the words of Homeland Security Director, Janet Napolitano, apace.  
12 Investigators are sifting through thousands of videos and pictures taken by  
13 professionals and amateurs alike at the crime scene, but some websites are also getting  
14 involved. Sites like 4chan and Reddit are asking users to pour over pictures and video  
15 of the bombings to try and help with the investigation. To get more on this, I spoke with  
16 Alfred Hermida, and associate professor at the University of British Columbia's  
17 graduate school of journalism. I asked him first to tell me a bit more about sites like  
18 Reddit and 4chan.

19 Alfred Hermida: Think of it like online **collectives** of people who are usually very **tech**  
20 **savvy**. Quite often they tend to be male. They are usually younger, and they have an  
21 interest in all sorts of things that are going on. But what we've seen recently is places  
22 like 4chan, like Reddit, or even the anonymous collective taking on issues of **social**  
23 **justice**, that they see things that are happening that they feel frustrated either at the  
24 official response or that they feel they can help, and they start **interceding**.

25 Schachter: I took a look at the Reddit channel. They're calling themselves now the RBI,  
26 the Reddit Bureau of Investigation. And it's kind of a funny, quirky name, but some are  
27 really concerned because if you look at their page, there are a whole lot of pictures of  
28 people with backpacks circled. It creates suspects out of people who were just watching  
29 the race.



30 Hermida: It really depends on how you view this. When you look at something like  
 31 Reddit, what's happening is a conversation, a discussion. It's like being a fly on the wall  
 32 in the newsroom or in a police office, and you're listening to that discussion. So look at  
 33 it less like they're publishing information and more like they're discussing information.  
 34 They're saying I've seen this picture, what do you make of it? And collaboratively  
 35 working together trying to identify what's going on and figure out what's happening  
 36 there. They're trying to provide information for the FBI.

37 Schachter: That sounds helpful. It sounds **benign**, and yet pictures that these groups  
 38 have put together were on the cover of the *New York Post*, or at least the online version  
 39 of the *New York Post*. Certainly seems like it may have made suspects out of a couple  
 40 of guys.

41 Hermida: Well then, think about who'd made the decision to post it on a mainstream  
 42 media outlet. What happens is that picture is then taken out of context. What's  
 43 happening there is that somebody may post a picture, saying, 'what do you make of  
 44 this?' And asking the collective to bring their brains together and saying, 'let's sort of  
 45 figure out what's going on here.' The problem becomes is when you take that image out  
 46 of **context** and you then publish it saying Reddit says this is a suspect. That's not what  
 47 the Reddit users are saying. What they're saying is 'we're trying to help in whatever  
 48 way we can,' and part of what I was noticing on the conversation of Reddit was a  
 49 **backlash** against **mainstream** media for taking some of their discussions and taking it  
 50 out of context, and **misrepresenting** what they were trying to do.

51 Schachter: And how about people who might try to do that on the sites themselves?

52 Hermida: This is what's really interesting when you look at these discussion, is when  
 53 somebody tries to do that and, say, engage in, say, **racial profiling** or try to make  
 54 **allegations** for which there's very little evidence, there's a real backlash from the  
 55 community and often quite a vicious one. What tends to happen is you get this very  
 56 self-correcting mechanism taking place when others jump in and tell that person to shut  
 57 up, tell them not to spread this information.

58 Schachter: I wonder, professor, if there's any indication that what these sites are trying  
 59 to do actually works and if perhaps officials, the FBI, and others are tapping into them.

60 Hermida: I think it's very hard to know at this stage. This is all very, very new and I  
 61 think the initial reactions from authorities is to be rather suspicious of this kind of  
 62 activity. After all, we're used to a world where police investigate, and we watch from

63 the outside and expect them to tell us what are the results of that investigation. But  
64 much like what's happening in journalism, what's happening in other disciplines where  
65 individuals can take on some of those roles, we're seeing here individuals who are very  
66 tech savvy, who might have the digital **forensic** skills that are highly needed for this  
67 kind of investigation. But they're coming together and saying we have something to  
68 contribute. So the big issue really is, how do you channel that? And in some ways the  
69 authorities don't have a way of **channeling** the discussions happening on Reddit, don't  
70 have a way of channeling the expertise of some of these people who might be able to  
71 actually help with identifying what's happening in some pictures, help the police deal  
72 with the mass of information.

73 Schachter: Alfred Hermida teaches journalism at the University of British Columbia.  
74 Thank you.

75 Hermida: My pleasure.

# “Social Media Vigilantes Cloud Boston Bombing Investigation”

(Close Reading)

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**NPR host Audie Cornish interviews NPR’s technology correspondent Steve Henn and *The Atlantic’s* technology and social media correspondent Alexis Madrigal**

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Henn, Steve, and Alexis Madrigal. Interview by Audie Cornish. “Social Media Vigilantes Cloud Boston Bombing Investigation.” NPR. 22 Apr 2013. Radio.  
<<http://www.npr.org/2013/04/22/178462380/social-media-vigilantes-cloud-boston-bombing-investigation>>.

**Close reading excerpt: “Social Media Vigilantes Cloud Boston Bombing Investigation”**

1 CORNISH: The events last week in Boston played out live on television, on the Internet  
2 and all over social media. In online chat forums, such as Reddit and 4chan, **would-be**  
3 **sleuths** pored over photos of the bombing site, attempting to identify suspects. Again  
4 and again, these Internet rumors found their way into mainstream media.

5 On Thursday, the *New York Post* ran a front page photo of two individuals with the  
6 headline, Bag Men. And a missing student from Brown University was even named  
7 online as a suspect. Both these reports were inaccurate and all of them took root on the  
8 Internet. Joining us now to talk about how so many people got so much wrong is NPR’s  
9 technology correspondent Steve Henn. And Steve, first, for folks who don’t know, what  
10 are Reddit and 4chan?

11 HENN: Well, 4chan and Reddit are social media sites that let users post content more or  
12 less anonymously. And early last week on both of these sites and some others, people  
13 began discussion groups dedicated to finding the Boston bombers. I spoke with Alex  
14 Madrigal. He covers technology and social media at *The Atlantic*. And he started  
15 watching this from the beginning.

16 MADRIGAL: People decided that they could help with the investigation by taking all  
17 the photos that had come out of the bombing, combing through them and looking for –  
18 I’m sort of air-quoting here – “suspicious” characters, people carrying backpacks,  
19 people who might look like terrorists.

20 HENN: At the time, Madrigal compared this to online **vigilantism**.

21 CORNISH: But what did these online discussions look like?

22 HENN: Well, one of the most popular appeared on 4chan and it was a collection of  
23 photographs with, you know, these, quote/unquote, “suspects” circled. In some cases,  
24 notes were scrolled next to the photos explaining the reason why the person circled was  
25 **allegedly** suspicious. And some of the reasons in the posts were that the person was,  
26 quote, “brown.” In the end, none of the people who were circled in this post turned out  
27 to be at all related to the bombing.

28 But that individual post attracted more than 2.5 million hits by late afternoon  
 29 Wednesday last week. And it's clear some of these forums affected both the  
 30 investigation and the media's coverage of it. On Thursday morning, the *New York Post*  
 31 ran the front-page headline you mentioned, Bag Men. And it included a large color  
 32 photographs [sic] of two high school athletes who were featured in one of the 4chan  
 33 photos.

34 The *Post* later said they'd been given that photo by law enforcement.

35 CORNISH: All right, Steve, but how did all this online sleuthing actually affect the  
 36 investigation?

37 HENN: Well, over the weekend, investigators in Boston said one of the reasons they  
 38 decided to publicly release images of their suspects Thursday evening was to try and  
 39 tamp down on the Internet rumors and this kind of **speculation**, which by late last week  
 40 had become a distraction. Unfortunately, shortly after the FBI's press conference, folks  
 41 on Reddit began speculating that one of the suspects looked like Sunil Tripathi, a 22-  
 42 year-old student at Brown University who's been missing since mid-March.

43 That rumor began to spread online. And in the middle of the night, several people on  
 44 Twitter tweeted out that Sunil's name had been broadcast on a police scanner and he  
 45 had been named as a suspect. There's no evidence that happened, but starting about  
 46 three in the morning, Tripathi's family was **besieged** by media requests. Reporters were  
 47 calling both his sister and his parents, increasingly confident that their missing son was  
 48 somehow involved.

49 Major websites printed Tripathi's name as a suspect. And again, these accusations were  
 50 completely wrong, but this was obviously a horrendous experience for a family that  
 51 was already going through a very, very difficult time.

52 CORNISH: All right, Steve, now that it seems pretty clear that the prime suspect is in  
 53 custody, do you see any **contrition** online?

54 HENN: Yes, actually. Immediately after the suspects' names were released by police in  
 55 Boston, individuals who had participated on Twitter and on Reddit in naming Sunil  
 56 Tripathi reached out to the family and apologized. And just this afternoon, the general  
 57 manager of Reddit, Eric Martin, apologized publicly to the family, saying that he  
 58 regretted the pain that they had to endure. And he expressed hope that the entire  
 59 community would learn from this experience, and he promised to do a better job  
 60 policing Reddit's own rules in the future.

61 And even last week, during the events unfolding in Boston, there were those on Reddit  
62 and in some of these other forums that were warning some of the participants that what  
63 they were doing could seriously injure innocent people and that they needed to be more  
64 careful. Obviously, those warnings weren't heeded at the time.

65 CORNISH: NPR's technology correspondent Steve Henn. Steve, thank you.

66 HENN: You're welcome.

# “Sherlock Holmes Can Teach You to Multitask”

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Maria Konnikova

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Konnikova, Maria. “Sherlock Holmes Can Teach You to Multitask.” *Wired UK*. 17 Feb 2013: n. page. Web. 12 Mar 2014. <<http://www.wired.co.uk/magazine/archive/2013/02/ideas-bank/sherlock-holmes-can-teach-you-to-multitask>>.

## Sherlock Holmes Can Teach You to Multitask

Maria Konnikova

1 A phone heralds the arrival of a text message with a fabulous buzzing. The computer  
 2 dings when an email has hit your inbox. Your Facebook page pops up a new red alert.  
 3 Your Twitter feed does whatever it is that Twitter feeds do, drawing your mind to any  
 4 number of stories and announcements in the course of a second. What is it you were  
 5 saying again? Or thinking or working on?

6 In a world as loud as ours, it's hard not to get distracted. Although the distractions are  
 7 from our — across the three-quarter-century landscape of the modern world — the  
 8 modern environment plays into our brains in a way that's not just distracting, but  
 9 actually helps. The distractions are not just pulling your mind away from what you're  
 10 are trying to do, but they're also pulling your mind away from what you're not doing.  
 11 This is the key to understanding the modern world: it's not just that we're distracted, it's  
 12 that we're also engaged. The distractions are not just pulling your mind away from what  
 13 you're trying to do, but they're also pulling your mind away from what you're not doing.  
 14 This is the key to understanding the modern world: it's not just that we're distracted, it's  
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 17 This is the key to understanding the modern world: it's not just that we're distracted, it's  
 18 that we're also engaged. The distractions are not just pulling your mind away from what  
 19 you're trying to do, but they're also pulling your mind away from what you're not doing.

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20 Trying to do more than one thing at once is a natural part of multitasking. It's not  
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# “Do You Think Like Sherlock Holmes?”

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Maria Konnikova

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Konnikova, Maria. “Do You Think Like Sherlock Holmes?”  
*Slate*. 3 Jan 2013: n. page. Web. 12 Mar 2014.  
<[http://www.slate.com/articles/health\\_and\\_science/science/2013/01/how\\_to\\_think\\_like\\_sherlock\\_holmes\\_see\\_and\\_observe\\_to\\_fight\\_attention\\_blindness.single.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/health_and_science/science/2013/01/how_to_think_like_sherlock_holmes_see_and_observe_to_fight_attention_blindness.single.html)>.

## Do You Think Like Sherlock Holmes?

Maria Konnikova

1 I do not think like Sherlock Holmes. Not in the least. That was the rather disheartening  
2 conclusion I reached while researching a book on the detective’s mental prowess. I’d  
3 hoped to discover that I had the secret to Sherlockian thought. What I found instead  
4 was that it would be hard work indeed to even begin to approximate the essence of the  
5 detective’s approach to the world: his ever-mindful mindset and his relentless mental  
6 energy. Holmes was a man eternally *on*, who relished that on-ness and floundered in its  
7 absence. It would be exhausting to think like Sherlock. And would it really be worth it  
8 in the end?

9 It all began with those pesky steps, the stairs leading up to the legendary residence that  
10 Sherlock Holmes shares with Dr. Watson, 221B Baker Street. Why couldn’t Watson  
11 recall the number of steps? “I believe my eyes are as good as yours,” Watson tells his  
12 new flatmate – as, in fact, they are. But the competence of the eyes isn’t the issue.  
13 Instead, the distinction lies in how those eyes are deployed. “You see, but you do not  
14 observe,” Holmes tells his companion. And Holmes? “Now, I know there are seventeen  
15 steps,” he continues, “because I have both seen and observed.”

16 To both see *and* observe: Therein lies the secret. When I first heard the words as a child,  
17 I sat up with recognition. Like Watson, I didn’t have a clue. Some 20 years later, I read  
18 the passage a second time in an attempt to decipher the psychology behind its impact. I  
19 realized I was no better at observing than I had been at the tender age of 7. Worse, even.  
20 With my constant companion Sir Smartphone and my newfound love of Lady Twitter,  
21 my devotion to Count Facebook, and that itch my fingers got whenever I hadn’t  
22 checked my email for, what, 10 minutes already? OK, five – but it seemed a lifetime.  
23 Those Baker Street steps would always be a mystery.

24 The confluence of seeing and observing is central to the concept of mindfulness, a  
25 mental alertness that takes in the present moment to the fullest, that is able to  
26 concentrate on its immediate landscape and free itself of any distractions.

27 Mindfulness allows Holmes to observe those details that most of us don’t even realize  
28 we don’t see. It’s not just the steps. It’s the facial expressions, the sartorial details, the  
29 seemingly irrelevant minutiae of the people he encounters. It’s the sizing up of the  
30 occupants of a house by looking at a single room. It’s the ability to distinguish the

31 crucial from the merely incidental in any person, any scene, any situation. And, as it  
 32 turns out, all of these abilities aren't just the handy fictional work of Arthur Conan  
 33 Doyle. They have some real science behind them. After all, Holmes was born of Dr.  
 34 Joseph Bell, Conan Doyle's mentor at the University of Edinburgh, not some, well, more  
 35 fictional inspiration. Bell was a scientist and physician with a sharp mind, a keen eye,  
 36 and a notable prowess at pinpointing both his patients' disease and their personal  
 37 details. Conan Doyle once wrote to him, "Round the centre of deduction and inference  
 38 and observation which I have heard you inculcate, I have tried to build up a man who  
 39 pushed the thing as far as it would go."

40 Over the past several decades, researchers have discovered that mindfulness can lead to  
 41 improvements in physiological well-being and emotional regulation. It can also  
 42 strengthen connectivity in the brain, specifically in a network of the posterior cingulate  
 43 cortex, the adjacent precuneus, and the medial prefrontal cortex that maintains activity  
 44 when the brain is resting. Mindfulness can even enhance our levels of wisdom, both in  
 45 terms of dialectism (being cognizant of change and contradictions in the world) and  
 46 intellectual humility (knowing your own limitations). What's more, mindfulness can  
 47 lead to improved problem solving, enhanced imagination, and better decision making.  
 48 It can even be a weapon against one of the most disturbing limitations that our attention  
 49 is up against: inattentive blindness.

50 When inattentive blindness (sometimes referred to as attentional blindness) strikes,  
 51 our focus on one particular element in a scene or situation or problem causes the other  
 52 elements to literally disappear. Images that hit our retina are not then processed by our  
 53 brain but instead dissolve into the who-knows-where, so that we have no conscious  
 54 experience of having ever been exposed to them to begin with. The phenomenon was  
 55 made famous by Daniel Simons and Christopher Chabris: In their provocative study,  
 56 students repeatedly failed to see a person in a gorilla suit who walked onto a basketball  
 57 court midgame, pounded his chest, and walked off. But the phenomenon actually dates  
 58 to research conducted by Ulric Neisser, the father of cognitive psychology, in the 1960s  
 59 and 1970s.

60 One evening, Neisser noticed that when he looked out the window at twilight, he had  
 61 the ability to see either the twilight *or* the reflection of the room on the glass. Focusing  
 62 on the one made the other vanish. No matter what he did, he couldn't pay active  
 63 attention to both. He termed this phenomenon "selective looking" and went on to study  
 64 its effects in study after study of competing attentional demands. Show a person two  
 65 superimposed videos, and he fails to notice when card players suddenly stop their  
 66 game, stand up, and start shaking hands – or fails to realize that someone spoke to him

67 in one ear while he's been listening to a conversation with the other. In a real-world  
 68 illustration of the innate inability to split attention in any meaningful way, a road  
 69 construction crew once paved over a dead deer in the road. They simply did not see it,  
 70 so busy were they ensuring that their assignment was properly carried out.

71 Inattentive blindness, more than anything else, illustrates the limitations of our  
 72 attentional abilities. Try as we might, we can never see both twilight and reflection. We  
 73 can't ever multitask the way we think we can. Each time we try, either the room or the  
 74 world outside it will disappear from conscious processing. That's why Holmes is so  
 75 careful about where and when he deploys that famed keenness of observation. Were he  
 76 to spread himself too thin – imagine modern-day Holmes, be it Benedict  
 77 Cumberbatch or Jonny Lee Miller, pulling out his cell to check his email as he walks  
 78 down the street and has a conversation at the same time, something you'll never see  
 79 either of these current incarnations actually doing – he'd be unable to deploy his  
 80 observation as he otherwise would. Enter the email, exit the Baker Street steps – and  
 81 then some.

82 It's not an easy task, that constant cognitive vigilance, the eternal awareness of our own  
 83 limitations and the resulting strategic allocation of attention. Even Holmes, I'm willing  
 84 to bet, couldn't reach that level of mindfulness and deliberate thought all at once. It  
 85 came with years of motivation and practice. To think like Holmes, we have to both want  
 86 to think like him and practice doing so over and over and over, even when the effort  
 87 becomes exhausting and seems a pointless waste of energy. Mindfulness  
 88 takes discipline.

89 Even after I discovered my propensity for sneaking over to email or Twitter when I  
 90 wasn't quite sure what to write next, the discovery alone wasn't enough to curb my  
 91 less-than-ideal work habits. I thought it would be. And I tried, I really did. But  
 92 somehow, up that browser window popped, seemingly of its own volition. What, *me*?  
 93 Attempt to multitask while writing my book? Never.

94 And so, I took the Odyssean approach: I tied myself to the mast to resist the sirens' call  
 95 of the Internet. I downloaded Freedom, a program that blocked my access completely  
 96 for a specified amount of time, and got to writing. The results shocked me. I was  
 97 woefully bad at maintaining my concentration for large chunks of time. Over and over,  
 98 my fingers made their way to that habitual key-press combination that would switch  
 99 the window from my manuscript to my online world – only to discover that that world  
 100 was off-limits for another . . . how long is left? Has it really been only 20 minutes?

101 Over time, the impulse became less frequent. And what’s more, I found that my  
 102 writing – and my thinking, it bears note – was improving with every day of Internet-  
 103 less interludes. I could think more fluidly. My brain worked more conscientiously. In  
 104 those breaks when, before, there would be a quick check of email or a surreptitious run  
 105 to my Twitter feed, there would be a self-reflecting concentration that quickly  
 106 rummaged through my brain attic. (You can’t write about Holmes without mentioning  
 107 his analogy for the human mind at least once.) I came up with multiple ways of moving  
 108 forward where before I would find myself stuck. Pieces that had taken hours to write  
 109 suddenly were completed in a fraction of the time.

110 Until that concrete evidence of effectiveness, I had never quite believed that focused  
 111 attention would make such a big difference. As much research as I’d read, as much  
 112 science as I’d examined, it never quite hit home. It had taken Freedom, but I was finally  
 113 taking Sherlock Holmes at his word. I was learning the benefits of both seeing and  
 114 observing – and I was no longer trading in the one for the other without quite realizing  
 115 what I was doing.

116 Self-binding software, of course, is not always an option to keep our brains mindfully  
 117 on track. Who is to stop us from checking our phone mid-dinner or having the TV on as  
 118 background noise? But here’s what I learned. Those little nudges to limit your own  
 119 behavior have a more lasting effect, even in areas where you’ve never used them. They  
 120 make you realize just how limited your attention is in reality – and how often we wave  
 121 our own limitations off with a disdainful motion. Not only did that nagging software  
 122 make me realize how desperately I was chained to my online self, but I began to notice  
 123 how often my hand reached for my phone when I was walking down the street or  
 124 sitting in the subway, how utterly unable I had become to just do what I was doing, be  
 125 it walking or sitting or even reading a book, without trying to get in just a little  
 126 bit more.

127 I did my best to resist. Now, something that was once thoughtless habit became a guilt-  
 128 inducing twinge. I would force myself to replace the phone without checking it, to take  
 129 off my headphones and look around, to resist the urge to place a call just because I was  
 130 walking to an appointment and had a few minutes of spare time. It was hard. But it was  
 131 worth it, if only for my enhanced perceptiveness, for the quickly growing pile of  
 132 material that I wouldn’t have even noticed before, for the tangible improvements in  
 133 thought and clarity that came with every deferred impulse. It’s not for nothing that  
 134 study after study has shown the benefits of nature on our thinking: Being surrounded  
 135 by the natural world makes us more reflective, more creative, sharper in our cognition.



136 But if we're too busy talking on the phone or sending a text, we won't even notice that  
 137 we've walked by a tree.

138 If we follow Holmes' lead, if we take his admonition to not only see but also observe,  
 139 and do so as a matter of course, we may not only find ourselves better able to rattle off  
 140 the number of those proverbial steps in a second, but we may be surprised to discover  
 141 that the benefits extend much further: We may even be happier as a result. Even brief  
 142 exercises in mindfulness, for as little as five minutes a day, have been shown to shift  
 143 brain activity in the frontal lobes toward a pattern associated with positive and  
 144 approach-oriented emotional states. And the mind-wandering, multitasking  
 145 alternative? It may do more than make us less attentive. It may also make us less happy.

146 As Daniel Gilbert discovered after tracking thousands of participants in real time, a  
 147 mind that is wandering away from the present moment is a mind that isn't happy. He  
 148 developed an iPhone app that would prompt subjects to answer questions on what they  
 149 were currently doing and what they were thinking about at various points in the day. In  
 150 46.9 percent of samples Gilbert and his colleagues collected, people were not thinking  
 151 about whatever it was they were doing – even if what they were doing was actually  
 152 quite pleasant, like listening to music or playing a game. And their happiness?  
 153 The more their minds wandered, the less happy they were – regardless of the activity.  
 154 As Gilbert put it in a paper in *Science*, “The ability to think about what is not happening  
 155 is a cognitive achievement that comes at an emotional cost.”

156 Thinking like Sherlock Holmes isn't just a way to enhance your cognitive powers. It is  
 157 also a way to derive greater happiness and satisfaction from life.



# “Do You Think Like Sherlock Holmes?”

(Close Reading)

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**Maria Konnikova**

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Konnikova, Maria. “Do You Think Like Sherlock Holmes?”  
*Slate*. 3 Jan 2013: n. page. Web. 12 Mar 2014.  
<[http://www.slate.com/articles/health\\_and\\_science/science/2013/01/how\\_to\\_think\\_like\\_sherlock\\_holmes\\_see\\_and\\_observe\\_to\\_fight\\_attention\\_blindness.single.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/health_and_science/science/2013/01/how_to_think_like_sherlock_holmes_see_and_observe_to_fight_attention_blindness.single.html)>.

## Close reading excerpt: “Do You Think Like Sherlock Holmes?”

1 To both see *and* observe: Therein lies the secret. When I first heard the words as a child,  
 2 I sat up with recognition. Like Watson, I didn’t have a clue. Some 20 years later, I read  
 3 the passage a second time in an attempt to **decipher** the psychology behind its impact. I  
 4 realized I was no better at observing than I had been at the tender age of 7. Worse, even.  
 5 With my constant companion Sir Smartphone and my newfound love of Lady Twitter,  
 6 my devotion to Count Facebook, and that itch my fingers got whenever I hadn’t  
 7 checked my email for, what, 10 minutes already? OK, five – but it seemed a lifetime.  
 8 Those Baker Street steps would always be a mystery.

9 The **confluence** of seeing and observing is central to the concept of **mindfulness**, a  
 10 mental alertness that takes in the present moment to the fullest, that is able to  
 11 concentrate on its immediate landscape and free itself of any distractions.

12 Mindfulness allows Holmes to observe those details that most of us don’t even realize  
 13 we don’t see. It’s not just the steps. It’s the facial expressions, the **sartorial** details, the  
 14 seemingly irrelevant **minutiae** of the people he encounters. It’s the sizing up of the  
 15 occupants of a house by looking at a single room. It’s the ability to distinguish the  
 16 crucial from the merely **incidental** in any person, any scene, any situation. And, as it  
 17 turns out, all of these abilities aren’t just the handy fictional work of Arthur Conan  
 18 Doyle. They have some real science behind them. After all, Holmes was born of Dr.  
 19 Joseph Bell, Conan Doyle’s mentor at the University of Edinburgh, not some, well, more  
 20 fictional inspiration. Bell was a scientist and physician with a sharp mind, a **keen** eye,  
 21 and a notable **proWess** at pinpointing both his patients’ disease and their personal  
 22 details. Conan Doyle once wrote to him, “Round the centre of deduction and inference  
 23 and observation which I have heard you **inculcate**, I have tried to build up a man who  
 24 pushed the thing as far as it would go.”

25 Over the past several decades, researchers have discovered that mindfulness can lead to  
 26 improvements in **physiological** well-being and emotional **regulation**. It can also  
 27 strengthen **connectivity** in the brain, specifically in a network of the posterior cingulate  
 28 cortex, the adjacent precuneus, and the medial prefrontal cortex that maintains activity  
 29 when the brain is resting. Mindfulness can even enhance our levels of wisdom, both in  
 30 terms of dialectism (being **cognizant** of change and contradictions in the world) and  
 31 intellectual humility (knowing your own limitations). What’s more, mindfulness can  
 32 lead to improved problem solving, enhanced imagination, and better decision making.

33 It can even be a weapon against one of the most disturbing limitations that our attention  
34 is up against: inattentional blindness.

35 When inattentional blindness (sometimes referred to as attentional blindness) strikes,  
36 our focus on one particular element in a scene or situation or problem causes the other  
37 elements to literally disappear. Images that hit our retina are not then processed by our  
38 brain but instead dissolve into the who-knows-where, so that we have no conscious  
39 experience of having ever been exposed to them to begin with. The phenomenon was  
40 made famous by Daniel Simons and Christopher Chabris: In their provocative study,  
41 students repeatedly failed to see a person in a gorilla suit who walked onto a basketball  
42 court midgame, pounded his chest, and walked off.