

Murder on the Orient Express

Agatha Christie

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Part 1 (Chapters 1–4)

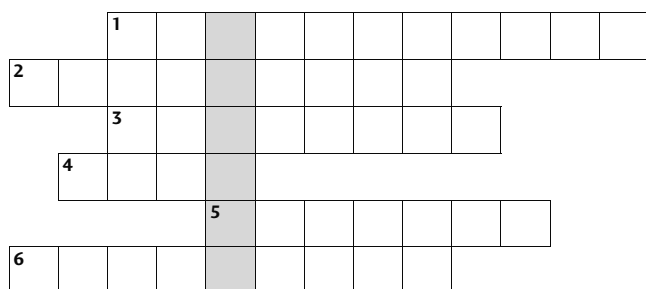
1 Comprehension

Are the following sentences true (T) or false (F)? Can you correct the false ones?

- 1 ___ It is summer.
.....
- 2 ___ The Taurus Express is delayed because of snow.
.....
- 3 ___ Colonel Arbutnot is upset that the Taurus Express is delayed as he does not want to miss the Orient Express.
.....
- 4 ___ Monsieur Poirot is not booked onto the Istanbul–Calais Simplon Orient Express.
.....
- 5 ___ The Istanbul–Calais train is full.
.....
- 6 ___ The train is usually full at this time of year.
.....
- 7 ___ Mr Harris gives Monsieur Poirot his compartment.
.....
- 8 ___ There is a conductor on the train.
.....

2 Vocabulary

Complete the puzzle. What is the mystery word in the grey squares? _____



Clues

- 1 a small room where people sit, and sometimes sleep, in a train
- 2 the person on a train whose job it is to help passengers and to check tickets
- 3 each separate section of a passenger train
- 4 a woman who works for a person or a family
- 5 the train is called the *Simplon Orient* ...
- 6 a woman who lives with a family and teaches their children

3 Grammar

Complete sentences 1–6 from Part 1 using the words in the box. Some words will be used more than once.

which	who	where
-------	-----	-------

- 1 When Poirot reached the Tokatlian Hotel – _____ he was to stay for a few days – he received an unexpected message.
 - 2 ‘The event _____ you predicted in the Kassner Case has suddenly happened.’
 - 3 He had got up early, had breakfast alone, and spent the morning studying the case _____ was taking him back to London.
 - 4 Opposite him there was a neat Englishman _____ looked as if he could be a valet.
 - 5 He has moved into the carriage from Athens _____ has just been attached to the train.
 - 6 She was listening to a large elderly woman _____ was talking without pausing or stopping.
- Which word from the box in can be replaced with *that*. _____
 - Which sentence is an example of a non-defining relative clause? _____

4 Writing

Mr Ratchett believes that he is going to be murdered. He asks Hercule Poirot to help him. Poirot says no.

Ratchett: Mr Poirot, I want you to do a job for me. ...

I want to make completely sure that I am safe.

Poirot: I cannot help you. ... Now I only take cases which interest me. ... I am sorry to be rude – but I do not like your face, Monsieur Ratchett.

Imagine that Mr Ratchett then writes to the police to explain his worries. Complete this letter from Mr Ratchett to the police. Use the words from the box below.

To the Chief of Police,
My name is Mr Ratchett. I am from ¹ _____ and I am travelling on the Istanbul–Calais Simplon ² _____ Express. I am travelling with my ³ _____ Hector MacQueen and my ⁴ _____. I am a very successful ⁵ _____ and I have a lot of money. I recently received a letter in which someone ⁶ _____ to kill me. I have a ⁷ _____ to protect myself, but I am very worried. I demand that the police come to protect me. I can pay a lot of money for this. Come immediately.
Yours sincerely Mr Samuel Ratchett

secretary threatened gun Orient America businessman valet
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STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Part 2 (Chapters 5–8)

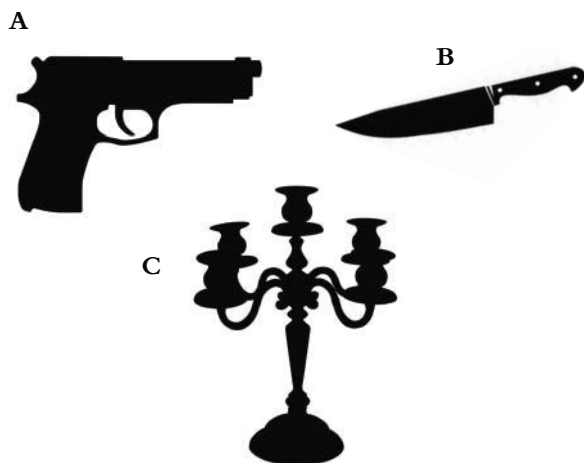
1 Comprehension

Answer the following questions:

- 1 Who has been murdered?
.....
- 2 What was Ratchett's real name?
.....
- 3 Why has the train stopped?
.....
- 4 Why can't Poirot sleep?
.....
- 5 Why did Mrs Hubbard call the conductor?
.....
- 6 How does Poirot know that the murderer did not go out of the window?
.....
- 7 How many times was the victim stabbed?
.....
- 8 What was strange about the blows?
.....

2 Comprehension

Identify the murder weapon.



3 Vocabulary

Poirot says to Dr Constantine:

'... this compartment is full of clues. Are they real or false? I do not know yet.'

Find the **seven** clues that Poirot and Constantine find in the grid.
Then answer the questions about the clues from the grid.

a	g	g	i	b	c	a	p	e	r	m	h
t	l	r	u	n	i	f	d	e	p	a	p
h	a	n	d	k	e	r	c	h	i	e	f
s	s	h	e	b	s	a	u	r	p	e	b
i	s	p	e	r	a	m	t	t	e	m	b
e	r	a	r	g	g	l	h	o	c	a	u
j	d	p	r	j	s	e	s	c	l	m	t
u	p	e	a	m	a	t	c	h	e	s	t
s	i	r	n	y	e	p	e	l	a	u	o
q	p	p	e	p	n	l	o	c	n	r	n
g	o	l	d	w	a	t	c	h	e	e	o
r	t	e	w	t	o	p	i	k	r	d	r

- 1 Which clue showed that Ratchett was drugged?
.....
- 2 Which clue was in Ratchett's pyjama pocket?
.....
- 3 Which clue had been burned?
.....
- 4 Which clue did Mrs Hubbard find?
.....
- 5 Which clue had a letter on it? What was the letter?
.....
- 6 Which clue helped Poirot learn the real name of Mr Ratchett?
.....

4 Listening

Read and listen to Poirot's description of the Armstrong case at the beginning of Chapter 7. Underline the **seven** mistakes written here and write the correct information below.

'Colonel Armstrong was American. He married the sister of Linda Arden, the most famous American singer at the time. They lived in America and had one child. When Daisy was four she was kidnapped. The Colonel paid a huge amount of money to get her back, but sadly the child's body was discovered soon afterwards – she had been dead at least a month. Mrs Armstrong was pregnant. Following the shock of Daisy's death, her child was born dead, and then she herself died. Her husband's heart was broken and he stabbed himself. 'Terrible, terrible,' said Bouc. 'And I think I remember that there was also another death?' 'Yes – a Belgian maid who the police were sure had helped the criminals.'

- | | |
|---------|---------|
| 1 _____ | 5 _____ |
| 2 _____ | 6 _____ |
| 3 _____ | 7 _____ |
| 4 _____ | |

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Part 3 (Chapters 9–12)

1 Comprehension

Match the characters (1–6) to the descriptions of them (a–f).

- 1 — Greta Ohlsson
- 2 — Hildegard Schmidt
- 3 — Count Andrenyi
- 4 — Countess Andrenyi
- 5 — Mr Hardman
- 6 — Antonio Foscarelli

- a She is a maid and doesn't seem very intelligent.
- b He is an American detective who wears bright suits and chews gum.
- c She's 49 years old and doesn't speak English very well.
- d He has lived in America and he is a diplomat.
- e She is young and is travelling with her husband.
- f He is an American citizen even though he is Italian. He works for Ford cars.

2 Comprehension

Who says each of these sentences? Circle the correct option.

- 1 'I haven't lost a button, Monsieur. There must be some mistake.'
Pierre Michel / Mr Hardman
- 2 'Then this murder is not such a bad thing.'
Mrs Hubbard / Princess Dragomiroff
- 3 'It will be unnecessary for my wife to come here. She can't tell you anything more.'
Countess Andrenyi / Count Andrenyi
- 4 'I had taken a drink to help me sleep.'
Countess Andrenyi / Count Andrenyi
- 5 'At 1.15 am I was talking to the American.'
Colonel Arbuthnot / Antonio Foscarelli
- 6 'In spite of me, somebody did get him.'
Hercule Poirot / Mr Hardman
- 7 'I know that type of person. Well-dressed – but underneath, all wrong.'
Mr Hardman / Antonio Foscarelli
- 8 'The rat deserved what he got.'
Hector MacQueen / Colonel Arbuthnot
- 9 'I can't get upset just to prove to you that I have feelings.'
Princess Dragomiroff / Mary Debenham
- 10 'It wasn't the same conductor who woke me. Monsieur. It was another one.'
Greta Ohlsson / Hildegard Schmidt
- 11 'We must search the passengers' luggage.'
Pierre Michel / Monsieur Bouc
- 12 'In my wash-bag. A huge knife – covered with blood!'
Countess Andrenyi / Mrs Hubbard

3 Vocabulary

The mystery conductor is described as:

A ¹small, ²dark-haired man with a moustache. He had a ³weak voice like a woman's.

Think of a synonym for each of the underlined words.

- 1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____

4 Language

On page 30, Masterman tells Poirot that he went to bed, but couldn't sleep because he had toothache. Toothache is a compound noun, made up from the words *tooth* and *ache*. Match a word from List 1 with a word from List 2 to form a compound noun, like 'toothache'.

Then complete the sentences from the story with the correct compound nouns.

List 1	List 2
hand	mother
dressing	storm
snow	man
wash	man
head	kerchief
god	ache
sales	gown
English	bag

1 I take the _____ pill.
Greta Ohlsson

5 There was a _____.
Colonel Arbuthnot

2 Do you have a red silk _____?
Poirot

6 You are Cyrus Hardman, _____?
Poirot

3 I was _____ to Sonia Armstrong.
Princess Dragomiroff

7 What good is a _____ like that to anybody's nose?
Mrs Hubbard

4 I believe she married an _____.
Princess Dragomiroff

8 In my _____, A huge knife – covered with blood.
Mrs Hubbard

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STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Part 4 (Chapters 13–17)

1 Comprehension

Are the following sentences true (T) or false (F)? Can you correct the false ones?

- 1 ___ 12 passengers stabbed Cassetti.
.....
- 2 ___ The only person who didn't stab Cassetti was Pierre Michel, the conductor.
.....
- 3 ___ At the time of the murder, each person on the Istanbul–Calais carriage except for Monsieur Poirot was connected to the Armstrong family.
.....
- 4 ___ They killed Cassetti because he was never punished for his crime in America.
.....
- 5 ___ Linda Arden says that she will take the blame.
.....
- 6 ___ Monsieur Bouc and Dr Constantine agree not to say the complete truth about the murder.
.....
- 7 ___ Mr Harris was the mystery conductor.
.....

2 Comprehension

Four things went wrong in the plan to kill Cassetti. Explain how each of the things in the box changed the plan.

the burned letter	snow	Bouc	Poirot
-------------------	------	------	--------

- 1
.....
.....
- 2
.....
.....
- 3
.....
.....
- 4
.....
.....

3 Language

Imagine that Dr Constantine is explaining what really happened to a friend.

Put the words from the box below in the spaces.

Then read the letter again. Dr Constantine has made **five** mistakes in his letter. Underline the mistakes and rewrite the sentences.

fact also then however when first moment but
--

It was a very difficult case, but Monsieur Poirot is amazingly clever. He solved it very quickly. At ¹_____, he was confused because many people said they had seen a man in a conductor's uniform on the train and Mrs Hubbard found a button from his uniform in her compartment. Poirot ²_____ saw a woman in a blue silk dressing-gown on the night of the murder and he didn't know who she was. The dressing-gown was ³_____ found in my luggage! That was very confusing! I think the ⁴_____ when Poirot really began to understand what had happened was ⁵_____. Mrs Hubbard found the knife in her handbag. Mrs Hubbard had said that she could not see if the door between her room and Mr Ratchett's was bolted because her handbag was over the bolt. ⁶_____, Poirot realised when he looked at the door that in the even-numbered compartments the bolt was above the handle and not below it. It turned out that Mrs Hubbard was in ⁷_____ Linda Arden, Sonia Armstrong's grandmother. Poirot worked out that all the passengers except for the Countess Andrenyi, who was actually Sonia Armstrong's sister, stabbed Ratchett - ⁸_____ no one knows, not even me, which blow killed him.

- 1
.....
- 2
.....
- 3
.....
- 4
.....
- 5
.....

ANSWER KEY (STUDENT ACTIVITIES)

Part 1 (Chapters 1–4)

1 Comprehension

- 1 F – It is winter.
- 2 F – It is delayed because of some trouble under the restaurant carriage.
- 3 F – Mary Debenham is upset not Colonel Arbuthnot.
- 4 T
- 5 T
- 6 F – It is usually quiet at this time of year.
- 7 F – Mr Harris doesn't arrive, so Bouc gives Poirot his compartment.
- 8 T

2 Vocabulary

		1	c	o	m	p	a	r	t	m	e	n	t		
2	c	o	n	d	u	c	t	o	r						
		3	a	r	r	i	a	g	e						
		4	m	a	i	d									
				5	e	x	p	r	e	s	s				
6	g	o	v	e	r	n	e	s	s						

3 Grammar

- 1 where
- 2 which
- 3 which
- 4 who
- 5 which
- 6 who
- which
- Sentence 1

4 Writing

- 1 America
- 2 Orient
- 3 secretary
- 4 valet
- 5 businessman
- 6 threatened
- 7 gun

Part 2 (Chapters 5–8)

1 Comprehension

- 1 Ratchett
- 2 Cassetti
- 3 It's stuck in the snow.
- 4 He can't sleep because the train has stopped moving, it's noisy in the carriage and he is thirsty.
- 5 She thought there was a man in her compartment.
- 6 There are no footprints in the snow.

7 12

- 8 Some were made by a strong person and some were made by a weak person. Some were made by a left-handed person and some were made by a right-handed person. OR They do not all seem to have been made by the same person.

2 Comprehension

B

3 Vocabulary

	g														
	l									p					
h	a	n	d	k	e	r	c	h	i	e	f				
	s									p					
	s	p								e	b				
		a								c	u				
		p								l	t				
		e		m	a	t	c	h	e	s	t				
		r								a	o				
										n	n				
g	o	l	d	w	a	t	c	h	e						
										r					

- 1 the glass
- 2 the gold watch
- 3 the paper
- 4 the button
- 5 the handkerchief; The letter H
- 6 the paper

4 Listening

'Colonel Armstrong was American. He married the sister of Linda Arden, the most famous American singer at the time. They lived in America and had one child. When Daisy was four she was kidnapped. The Colonel paid a huge amount of money to get her back, but sadly the child's body was discovered soon afterwards – she had been dead at least a month. Mrs Armstrong was pregnant. Following the shock of Daisy's death, her child was born dead, and then she herself died. Her husband's heart was broken and he stabbed himself.'

'Terrible, terrible,' said Bouc. 'And I think I remember that there was also another death?'

'Yes – a Belgian maid who the police were sure had helped the criminals.'

- 1 English
- 2 daughter
- 3 actress
- 4 three
- 5 fortnight
- 6 shot
- 7 French

Part 3 (Chapters 9–12)

1 Comprehension

- 1 c
- 2 a
- 3 d
- 4 e
- 5 b
- 6 f

2 Comprehension

- 1 Pierre Michel
- 2 Princess Dragomiroff
- 3 Count Andrenyi
- 4 Countess Andrenyi
- 5 Colonel Arbuthnot
- 6 Mr Hardman
- 7 Antonio Foscarelli
- 8 Colonel Arbuthnot
- 9 Mary Debenham
- 10 Hildegard Schmidt
- 11 Monsieur Bouc
- 12 Mrs Hubbard

3 Vocabulary

- small – short
dark-haired – with brown/black hair
weak – small/quiet

4 Language

- 1 headache
- 2 dressing-gown
- 3 godmother
- 4 Englishman
- 5 snowstorm
- 6 salesman
- 7 handkerchief
- 8 wash-bag

Part 4 (Chapters 13–17)

1 Comprehension

- 1 T
- 2 F – The only person who didn't stab Cassetti was Countess Andrenyi.
- 3 T
- 4 T
- 5 T
- 6 T
- 7 F – Mr Harris did not exist and neither did the mystery conductor.

2 Comprehension

- 1 **The letter** that the 12 sent to Cassetti was meant to be burned but Poirot found a piece of it with the name Daisy Armstrong on it. He realised that Ratchett must be Cassetti. This made

ANSWER KEY (STUDENT ACTIVITIES)

Countess Andrenyi a suspect when Poirot realized she was Sonia Armstrong's sister.

- 2 **The snow** made the train stop between stations. The 12 had planned that they would say they saw a man get off the train at the next station so that everyone would think he had killed Ratchett. But as they never reached the station, Poirot knew the murderer was still on the train.
- 3 **Monsieur Bouc** decides to travel on this train in that carriage. The 12 thought that no one else would be in the same carriage as them as they had booked all the compartments, but one compartment is always kept free for a company director.
- 4 **Poirot** takes the bed of Mr Harris (who was not real), and now the 12 do not have the carriage to themselves – both Bouc and Poirot are with them.

- 1 Poirot also saw a woman in a red dressing-gown.
- 2 The dressing-gown was then found in Poirot's luggage!
- 3 Mrs Hubbard found the knife in her wash-bag.
- 4 In the odd-numbered compartments the bolt was above the handle and not below it.
- 5 It turned out that Mrs Hubbard was in fact Linda Arden, Sonia Armstrong's mother.

3 Language

- 1 first
2 also
3 then
4 moment
5 when
6 However/But
7 fact
8 but/however

It was a very interesting case, but Monsieur Poirot is amazingly clever. He solved it very quickly. At **first**, he was confused because many people said they had seen a man in a conductor's uniform on the train and Mrs Hubbard found a button from his uniform in her compartment. Poirot **also** saw a woman in a blue silk dressing gown on the night of the murder and he didn't know who she was. The dressing gown was then found in my luggage! That was very confusing! I think the **moment** when Poirot really began to understand what had happened was **when** Mrs Hubbard found the knife in her handbag. Mrs Hubbard had said that she could not see if the door between her room and Mr Ratchett's was bolted because her handbag was over the bolt. **However**, Poirot realised when he looked at the door that in the even number compartments the bolt was above the handle and not below it. It turned out that Mrs Hubbard was in **fact** Linda Arden, Sonia Armstrong's grandmother. Poirot worked out that all the passengers except for the Countess Andrenyi, who was actually Sonia Armstrong's sister, stabbed Ratchett – **but** no one knows, not even me, which blow killed him.