The Jefferson Performing Arts Society

Presents

Agatha Christie’s

The Mousetrap

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Teacher’s Notes

• Directed by Keith Thomas

In Agatha Christie’s The Mousetrap a group of strangers is stranded in a boarding house during a snow storm. The Mousetrap is a murder mystery. The suspects include the newly married couple who run the house, and the suspicions in their minds nearly wreck their perfect marriage. Other potential suspects or victims are a spinster with a curious background, an architect who seems better equipped to be a chef, a retired Army major, a strange little man who claims his car has overturned in a drift, a jurist who makes life miserable for everyone and a policeman. Who will be the suspect(s)? Who will be the victim(s)?

The Background portion of this Companion is divided into two sections, background on author and playwright Agatha Christie and background on her play The Mousetrap, the longest running play in the world!

Author and playwright Agatha Christie was a phenomenal woman. Intelligent and determined, she showed perseverance and a commitment to being her own person from the time she was a child. Although Agatha Christie was homeschooled, she never received a degree. In fact, Christie was in real danger of growing up an illiterate. Her mother was said to be against her daughter learning how to read until at age eight Christie taught herself to read. Her mother insisted on home schooling her and refused to let her pursue any formal education until the age of 15, when her family dispatched her to a Paris finishing school. (https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/85723/15-mysterious-facts-about-agatha-christie)

Despite this, in 1961 Christie received an honorary Doctorate from the University of Exeter. The University of Exeter is a leading research university. One of their famous alumna includes J. K. Rowling (Rowling received a BA in French and Classics.)

Christie was as successful a playwright as she was a novelist, a feat that no other crime writer has achieved. However, success came because she persevered. Christie’s first book, The Mysterious Affair at Styles suffered rejection. Six publishers turned it down until 1921, five years after she began submitting it, Bodley Head agreed to publish. Fourteen years later, this
same book that had originally been rejected by so many was one of the 10 titles chosen to launch Penguin books. As of 2018 Penguin Random House is the world’s leading trade book publisher; their total revenue was €3.42 billion ($3.87 billion at current exchange rates.)

The story of The Mousetrap unfolds in the British countryside about a half hour outside London. The first performance of The Mousetrap was in 1952, six years before Great Britain would end its food rationing program. Food rationing was part of life in both World War One and Two as a way to ensure an equitable distribution of resources: https://www.history.com/news/food-rationing-in-wartime-americ The Mousetrap was an adaptation of a radio play Three Blind Mice written in 1947, just two years after the end of World War Two. The radio play was 20 minutes long and written as a birthday present for Queen Mary.

In 1948, the radio play, Three Blind Mice, became a short story. To this day, this short story however has never been published in Great Brittan. Author Agatha Christie didn’t want it to compete with her play and stipulated the story not be published until The Mousetrap closed. So far, it’s been 67 years and counting.

The lessons in this Study Companion explore both the life of Agatha Christie and one of her most celebrated works, The Mousetrap. The first lesson, 7 Up Whodunit includes a variation of the classic game: https://www.funology.com/heads-up-seven-up/. The activity in this lesson can be done multiple times so that many students have an opportunity to portray Agatha Christie, the author of The Mousetrap, and be the “murderers.” This lesson requires Internet access, the ability to watch YouTube and a fancy hat (as close to the style of hat author Agatha Christie wears in the interview video Rare interview with Agatha Christie the class will watch on Youtube.)

Along with plot and character, setting is a critical element of any story. Setting not only includes location, it also encompasses a host of other things, such as time period. Time period and locale are both essential for Agatha Christie’s The Mousetrap.

Whether radio play, short story or stage play, setting the story of The Mousetrap in Great Britain in the years immediately following World War Two shapes the way the story unfolds. The culture of Great Britain is very much present in the way the characters speak, not only their accents, but what they say. The time period is also important as the story opens a window into what life was like in the years immediately following the Second World War. In The Mousetrap Vocabulary Time Period and Phrases, students will review the elements of setting, be introduced to common phrases spoken in Great Britain, phrases and vocabulary spoken by the characters in The Mousetrap, learn about the food rationing program in Great Britain and have an opportunity to use phrases and vocabulary from The Mousetrap in a writing activity.

The cultural and social environments are part of the setting of a story. Cultural and social environments can greatly influence the characters in a story. The cultural and social environments are very much in evidence in The Mousetrap. Mrs. Boyle is full of opinions about other people and her opinions are based on class. At the beginning of the play, she expects Monkswell Manor to have servants. Mollie and Giles Ralston are low on coke to fuel the fire; coke
is a cheaper type of fuel. Mrs. Boyle’s opinions about Mollie and Giles Ralston and their ability to run Monkswell Manor are based on her opinions about class.

In *The Mousetrap: Differences in English and American Culture* students will learn about the similarities and differences between the cultural and social environments of the United Kingdom/Great Britain and the United States and have an opportunity to express their own opinions about these similarities and differences.

In *The Mousetrap: Who Do You Think is the Suspect?*, students attempt to discover the rationale of the murderer(s) pattern by reading descriptions for each character, background on Author Agatha Christie’s inspiration for *The Mousetrap* and an overview of the plot of the play. Students will make their own predictions about the outcome of the play— is there one character or another the majority of the class believes is guilty? Is there one character or another the majority of the class believes is a victim? Do students think there might be more than one suspect? Do students think there might be more than one victim? During this lesson the class will create a tally sheet and discuss how it expresses any opinions students have in common.

In her play *The Mousetrap* Agatha Christie references Lewis Carroll’s character Alice (of *Alice in Wonderland*) by borrowing a phrase from *Through the Looking Glass*—”six impossible things before breakfast.” In *The Mousetrap: Six Impossible Things Before Breakfast*, students will be encouraged to consider six things they have always wanted to do and haven’t attempted yet. They will not only brainstorm about six things they would like to do, they will develop actions steps and a timeline so that they may accomplish these impossible things. A realistic lens of accomplishment can be put on any suggestion, no matter how far-fetched or fantastical. As an example, a student could say one impossible thing they have always wanted to do is fly like Superman. Ways to accomplish this seemingly impossible thing could be learning to hang glide, learning to parachute from an airplane or learning how to fly with a jet pack.

“Alice laughed. 'There's no use trying,' she said. 'One can't believe impossible things.'

I daresay you haven't had much practice,' said the Queen. 'When I was your age, I always did it for half-an-hour a day. Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast.”

— Lewis Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland*
The arts facilitate interconnection. They provide tangible, concrete opportunities for students and teachers to explore academic concepts. Academic concepts are strengthened when learning integrates academic subjects like English language arts with arts. A system of Grade Level Expectations and Standards and Benchmarks is replacing the Common Core standards used since 2010 to measure student achievement. Here is some background information on Louisiana Common Core:

**LOUISIANA STATE STANDARDS**

In March, 2016 The Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) approved the Louisiana State Student Standards in English language arts and mathematics. This action by BESE replaces the Common Core State Standards with unique state standards developed through a collaborative statewide process. Please visit these sites for more information:

http://bese.louisiana.gov/documents-resources/newsroom/2016/03/04/bese-approves-louisiana-student-standards-adopts-2016-17-education-funding-formula

http://www.louisianabelieves.com/academics/louisiana-student-standards-review

All Louisiana State Standards were retrieved from:

https://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/teacher-toolbox-resources/k-12-ela-standards.pdf

http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/teacher-toolbox-resources/louisiana-student-standards-for-k-12-math.pdf?sfvrsn=86bb8a1f_60
Background: Agatha Christie
Agatha Christie, in full Dame Agatha Mary Clarissa Christie, née Miller, (born September 15, 1890, Torquay, Devon, England—died January 12, 1976, Wallingford, Oxfordshire), English detective novelist and playwright whose books have sold more than 100 million copies and have been translated into some 100 languages.

Educated at home by her mother, Christie began writing detective fiction while working as a nurse during World War I. Her first novel, The Mysterious Affair at Styles (1920), introduced Hercule Poirot, her eccentric and egotistic Belgian detective; Poirot reappeared in about 25 novels and many short stories before...
returning to Styles, where, in Curtain (1975), he died. The elderly spinster Miss Jane Marple, her other principal detective figure, first appeared in Murder at the Vicarage (1930). Christie’s first major recognition came with The Murder of Roger Ackroyd (1926), which was followed by some 75 novels that usually made best-seller lists and were serialized in popular magazines in England and the United States.

Christie’s plays include The Mousetrap (1952), which set a world record for the longest continuous run at one theatre (8,862 performances—more than 21 years—at the Ambassadors Theatre, London) and then moved to another theatre, and Witness for the Prosecution (1953), which, like many of her works, was adapted into a successful film (1957). Other notable film adaptations include Murder on the Orient Express (1933; film 1974 and 2017) and Death on the Nile (1937; film 1978). Her works were also adapted for television.

In 1926 Christie’s mother died, and her husband, Colonel Archibald Christie, requested a divorce. In a move she never fully explained, Christie disappeared and, after several highly publicized days, was discovered registered in a hotel under the name of the woman her husband wished to marry. In 1930 Christie married the archaeologist Sir Max Mallowan; thereafter she spent several months each year on expeditions in Iraq and Syria with him. She also wrote romantic nondetective novels, such as Absent in the Spring (1944), under the pseudonym Mary Westmacott. Her Autobiography (1977) appeared posthumously. She was created a Dame of the British Empire in 1971.

RETRIEVED FROM: https://www.britannica.com/biography/Agatha-Christie
11. SHE WROTE A PLAY THAT MAY NEVER STOP RUNNING.
The curtain was first raised on *Mousetrap* in London’s West End in 1952. More than 60 years later, it’s still being performed regularly and passed the 25,000 show mark in 2012. The play—about a group of people trapped in a snowbound cabin with a murderer among them—was originally a radio story, *Three Blind Mice*, that was written at the behest of Queen Mary in 1947.

12. SHE LOVED ARCHAEOLOGY.

traveling. Although she assisted her husband on digs, she never stopped working on her writing: Their preferred method of transport was frequently the Orient Express, a fact that likely inspired her *Murder on the Orient Express*.

13. AT LEAST ONE “VICTIM” WAS INSPIRED BY A REAL-LIFE NUISANCE.

When Mallowan married Christie, he was assistant to renowned archaeologist Sir Leonard Woolley. This fact upset Woolley’s wife, who refused to let Christie stay in a Mesopotamia digging camp; Mallowan was forced to take a train into Baghdad every night to see her. Christie soon wrote *Murder in Mesopotamia*: The victim was the wife of an archaeology field director who was bludgeoned with an antique mace. Christie dedicated the book to the Woolleys, who never joined Mallowan on an expedition again.

14. YOU CAN RENT HER OLD HOME.

If you feel like inhabiting the same real estate as Christie is a bucket-list travel opportunity, her former home in Devonshire, England is available for rent. The centuries-old home was Christie’s summer getaway in the 1950s; portions of it are rented out to individuals or groups for $500 a night. Some furniture and a piano that once belonged to the author remain in residence.

Although her name is shorthand for “murder mystery” and she is the most translated and biggest-selling writer in history, Agatha Christie shunned publicity. She rarely gave print interviews and steadfastly refused to appear on television or radio. Surviving radio documentaries feature mainly other people talking about her and her work. Authorised biographies appeared only long after her death and her own Autobiography is maddeningly offhand about her writing. With Poirot-like diligence I have gathered together these 126 facts about the Queen of Crime to mark what would have been her 126th birthday last month:
1. Christie has been outsold only by Shakespeare and the Bible.
2. It was never Christie’s intention to become a writer, but she was determined to rise to the challenge set by her sister Madge who had dared her to write a detective story.
3. Dead Man’s Folly (1956) uses as setting Christie’s own Greenway House and gardens.
4. Creating not one but two hugely successful and famous detective characters is a feat not matched by any other crime writer.
5. Passenger to Frankfurt (1970) was her 80th book, published on her 80th birthday.
6. In The Mysterious Affair at Styles (1920) Poirot had already retired from the Belgian police; when he died in 1975 he was at least 120!
7. Poirot was “dropped” from four stage adaptations of novels in which he starred: Death on the Nile, Appointment with Death, The Hollow and Five Little Pigs.
8. In 1922 Christie travelled the world accompanying her husband, Archie, and his boss Major Belcher, on the Empire Expedition.
9. Christie’s first book, The Mysterious Affair at Styles suffered rejection by six publishers until, five years after she began submitting it, Bodley Head agreed to publish.
10. The Queen of Crime also wrote six non-crime novels using the pseudonym Mary Westmacott.
11. In Cards on the Table Christie drew on her knowledge of Syria when naming the story’s victim, Shaitana, which is Syrian for Satan.
12. At the Bouchercon World Mystery Convention in May 2000, Christie was named Mystery Writer of the Twentieth Century and the Poirot novels Mystery Series of the Twentieth Century.
13. Although Margaret Rutherford’s portrayal of Miss Marple displeased Christie she dedicated The Mirror Crack’d from Side to Side to the actress.
14. Agatha Christie was a lifelong dog-owner.
15. Her creation Mrs Ariadne Oliver, the detective novelist, is seen as her alter-ego.
17. Christie’s favourite colour was green.
18. Christie has sold over two billion books worldwide.
19. Christie didn’t smoke, or drink alcohol.
20. The US Navy requisitioned Christie’s home Greenway House, in Devon, during the second World War. The house is now a National Trust property and open to visitors.
21. During Christie’s centenary year, 1990, a rose named Agatha was created.
22. She was as successful a playwright as she was a novelist, a feat that no other crime writer has achieved.
23. Christie was the president of the local amateur dramatic society in Wallingford, where she lived.
24. Christie’s parents decided on the name Agatha only minutes before arriving at her christening.
25. Although dropped from many stage adaptations Poirot appears in the play Black Coffee.
26. Theatres in London’s West End dimmed their lights on the day Christie died.
27. Christie’s own grandmother influenced her creation of Miss Marple.
28. Christie’s pet hates included marmalade pudding and cockroaches.
29. Two of Christie’s favourite writers were Elizabeth Bowen and Graham Greene.
30. Christie wrote the part of Clarissa in Spider’s Web especially for the English actress Margaret Lockwood.
31. Charles Laughton was the first stage Poirot.
32. Christie worked in a hospital dispensary during World War One, thereby gaining her knowledge of poisons.
33. Christie claimed that she “saw” Hercule Poirot twice: once while lunching at the Savoy and again while visiting the Canary Islands.
34. Christie mentions herself by name in The Body in the Library, the 1942 Marple novel.
35. Her last public appearance was at the 1974 premiere of the film Murder on the Orient Express.
36. Joan Hickson had a small part in the stage version of Death on the Nile. Christie was impressed and wrote to her, hoping that “one day you will play my Miss Marple”.
37. Christie had originally planned to have Miss Marple as the detective in Death on the Nile.
38. Christie read one of her own stories on BBC radio in 1931.
39. The world’s longest running play The Mousetrap was originally written as a 20-minute radio drama, Three Blind Mice.
40. Two original Christie radio plays, Butter in a Lordly Dish (1948) and Personal Call (1960), have never been published.
41. In 1948 Penguin published a Christie “Penguin Million”: 100,000 copies of 10 titles.
42. Christie spent many years assisting her second husband archaeologist Max Mallowan, during which she became an expert photographer.
43. Among her fellow crime-novelists Christie admired Ngaio Marsh, Elizabeth Daly, John Dickson Carr and Patricia Highsmith.
44. According to An Autobiography she made only £25 from her first book.
45. In the 1960s a musical adaptation of Hickory Dickory Dock, Death Beat, was planned.
47. The Mysterious Affair at Styles was one of 10 titles chosen to launch Penguin books in 1935.
48. The first television Miss Marple was Gracie Fields in a 1956 US TV version of A Murder is Announced.
49. Wagner, Elgar and Sibelius were among her favourite composers.
50. Christie accepted the presidency of the Detection Club in 1958 on the strict understanding that she would never have to make a speech.
51. The Big Four, published in 1927, was a series of early short stories brought together as a novel.
52. Miss Marple first appeared in a 1927 short story.
53. Die Abenteuer G.M.B.H., the first Christie adapted for the screen, was a 1928 German silent film of The Secret Adversary.
54. If you placed every copy of Peril at End House sold in the US, one on top of the other, it would reach the moon.
55. The identity of Mary Westmacott was a secret for over 20 years.
56. The original theatre programme for The Mousetrap did not include a title on its cover, just a picture of a mousetrap on a splash of red.
57. Agatha Christie’s name has appeared in every newspaper with a West End theatre listing for the last 64 years.
58. Travel experiences were used to colour her books. In *The Man in the Brown Suit* the heroine Anne suffers seasickness, just as Agatha had on her 1922 trip to South Africa.


60. Christie received an honorary Doctorate from the University of Exeter in 1961.

61. Christie wrote much of *Lord Edgware Dies* while on holiday in Rhodes in 1931.

62. Agatha Christie never went to school.

63. Hercule Poirot solved a mystery in Connemara in *The Apples of the Hesperides* from *The Labours of Hercules*.

64. Of all her plays, *Witness for the Prosecution* was Christie’s personal favourite.

65. Agatha Christie and her novels have featured as a subject on ‘Mastermind’ on at least five occasions.

66. Lily of the Valley was Christie’s favourite flower.

67. In her 1933 Mary Westmacott novel, *Unfinished Portrait*, Christie based the two central characters, Celia and Dermot, on herself and her first husband Archie.

68. There is a bronze bust of Christie located outside the Torquay Tourist Office.

69. Death on the Nile is the title of a Parker Pyne short story, as well as the better known Poirot novel.

70. In 1972 Madame Tussauds created a waxwork model of Agatha Christie.

71. Christie had originally planned for 12 characters in *And Then There Were None*.

72. Christie created a new record in 1935 when *Three Act Tragedy* sold 10,000 copies in its first year.

73. Of the four films starring Margaret Rutherford, only *Murder She Said* is based on a Marple novel; two are based on Poirot books and the fourth has no connection with Agatha Christie at all.

74. While with her husband Max Mallowan on archaeological digs in Iraq, Christie wrote in a house named Beit Agatha.

75. The Malice Domestic Mystery Convention in the US presents an annual award called *The Agatha*.

76. The Queen of Crime became Dame Agatha Christie in January 1971.

77. Christie’s sister Madge had a play, *The Claimant*, performed in the West End before Agatha.

78. Christie used Major Belcher, head of the 1922 Empire Expedition, as the model, at his own request, for the villain in *The Man in the Brown Suit*.

79. With the money earned from selling the serial rights to *The Man in the Brown Suit*, Christie bought herself her first car.

80. A lifelong swimmer, Christie also surfed during the Empire Expedition through South Africa, New Zealand and Australia.

81. It is possible to read a different Agatha Christie book every month for seven years.

82. In 1947 when the BBC asked Queen Mary what she’d like to hear on her 80th birthday, she asked for an Agatha Christie radio play; this later became *The Mousetrap*.

83. Christie and her first husband Archie named their house at Sunningdale Styles in honour of her first novel *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*.

84. The local school in Torquay named one of their classrooms after Agatha Christie.
85. Despite her mother’s ideas about education, a determined young Agatha taught herself to read and write.
86. Christie never saw her play Akhnaton performed.
87. Christie had her “coming out” season in Cairo.
88. The first Mr Quin short story, The Coming of Mr Quin, was adapted for the screen in 1928 as The Passing of Mr Quinn.
89. Christie borrowed a number of traits from her character Caroline Sheppard in The Murder of Roger Ackroyd for her more famous creation Miss Marple.
90. Curtain: Poirot’s Last Case was written at the start of the second World War but not published until 1975.
91. The opening of Witness for the Prosecution in 1953 was the only first night that Christie actually enjoyed.
92. Christie’s daughter Rosalind told her mother that it would be impossible to adapt The Hollow for the stage; the production ran for over a year.
93. In 1951 US sales of They Came to Baghdad outstripped sales of all her previous novels.
94. The cinema version of Murder on the Orient Express which is in production is the fifth screen adaptation.
95. Christie was an admirer of PG Wodehouse to whom she dedicated Hallowe’en Party.
96. Agatha Christie and Archaeology was a 2001 exhibition in the British Museum which included a number of photographs and home movies shot by Agatha Christie.
97. Marple Hall, an old mansion in Cheshire, near to where Christie’s sister Madge lived, is believed to be the inspiration for Miss Marple’s name.
98. Not content with teaching herself to read, by her early teens Agatha was able to read The Three Musketeers, in French!
99. The A. B. C. Murders (1936) is an early example of a plot featuring a serial killer.
100. Christie’s An Autobiography was published a year after her death, but was written over a period of 15 years between 1950 and 1965.
101. Christie’s first novel, written in 1908, Snow upon the Desert, has never been published.
102. Evil under the Sun used Burgh Island, off the Devon coast and often visited by Agatha Christie, as its setting.
103. In 1954 the Mystery Writers of America bestowed upon her their first ever Grandmaster Award.
104. Chimneys, the play adapted by Christie in the late 1920s from her novel The Secret of Chimneys, received its premiere in Calgary in 2003.
105. The Mystery of the Blue Train was a book so poor that Christie wished, in later life, that she’d never written it.
106. No other female playwright has matched Christie’s record of having three plays running simultaneously in London’s West End.
107. Christie took pleasure at being invited to judge an essay competition at the school local to her home, Greenway.
108. Christie, writing as Mary Westmacott, completed Absent in the Spring, in a weekend.
109. Endless Night is narrated by a young working-class male and was written by Christie at the age of 76.

110. Statistically the medical profession is the most deadly in Christie stories.

111. The 1945 novel Death Comes as the End is set in Egypt 2000 BC.

112. Agatha dedicated her novel Dumb Witness to Peter, her dog, described as “a dog in a thousand”.

113. Agatha Christie Ltd was formed in 1955.

114. Although Captain Hastings appears alongside Poirot in many TV adaptations he appears in only eight novels.

115. Christie was an excellent pianist but stage fright prevented her pursuing it as a career.

116. And Then There Were None has sold over one hundred million copies.

117. In order to avoid confusion with a real train, Christie changed the time in the title 4.50 from Paddington several times before deciding on 4.50.

118. Christie selected a symbol of three intertwined fish for the 1960s Collins’ “Greenway Edition” of her work. It’s a symbol used in the short story The House of Lurking Death from Partners in Crime.

119. Tiglath Pileser was an Assyrian warrior king whose artifacts were discovered by Max Mallowan at Nimrud; and the name of the vicarage cat in A Murder is Announced.

120. On Agatha’s death her husband Max Mallowan wrote “Few men know what it is to live in harmony beside an imaginative, creative mind which inspires life with zest.”

121. She was a Times crossword fan.

122. In 1934 she published five books: four Christie titles and a Mary Westmacott

123. She has been portrayed on screen by Vanessa Redgrave, Anna Massey, Peggy Ashcroft and Olivia Williams.

124. Like Miss Marple in Nemesis, Agatha Christie toured the Great Gardens of Ireland in the 1950s.

125. Many of her stories have been adapted for Japanese TV as an anime series.

126. The film rights to The Mousetrap were sold shortly after the play opened but with the proviso that the play must close before filming began... 

Agatha Christie’s Complete Secret Notebooks by John Curran is published by HarperCollins, £30

Unpublished Works by Agatha Christie

Unpublished material

- Eugenia and Eugenics (stage play)
- Snow Upon the Desert (romantic novel)
- The Greenshore Folly (detective novella, featuring Hercule Poirot, expanded into the novel Dead Man's Folly)
- Personal Call (supernatural radio play, featuring Inspector Narracott - a recording is in the British National Sound Archive)
- The Woman and the Kenite (horror) An Italian translation is available on the internet La moglie del Kenita
- Butter in a Lordly Dish (horror/detective radio play, adapted from The Woman and the Kenite)
- The Green Gate (supernatural)
- The War Bride (romantic/supernatural)
- The Case of the Dog's Ball (short story, featuring Poirot, expanded to the novel Dumb Witness and related to the short story How Does your Garden Grow?)
- Stronger than Death (supernatural)
- Being So Very Wilful (romantic)
- The Last Seance (stage play)
- Someone at the Window (detective stage play, adapted from the short story The Dead Harlequin)

Gönderen mustafa zaman: 14:19

Agatha Christie: World’s first historical whodunnit was inspired by 4,000-year-old letters

by The Conversation Published May 23, 2018

■ Nicky Nielsen, lecturer in egyptology, University of Manchester

WHEN the ancient Egyptian priest and landowner Heqanakhte wrote a series of rather acerbic letters to his extended family sometime during the 12th Dynasty (1991-1802BC), he could not have known that he was creating the framework around which the British crime writer Agatha Christie (1890-1976) would, some 4,000 years later, weave one of the world’s first historical crime novels.

Death Comes As The End (1944) is the only one of Christie’s novels not to be set in the 20th century and not to feature any European characters. The death of a priest’s concubine sets off a series of murders within the family and, as in Christie’s more familiar 20th-century whodunnits, the scene is soon littered with bodies. The book is due to be adapted for the screen by the BBC in 2019.

While there are numerous plot parallels in the Heqanakhte Letters (as these papyri would come to be known), the letters themselves provide an unparalleled glimpse into land management and everyday family life in ancient Egypt. In the letters, Heqanakhte provides his children with meticulous calculations of crop yields and instructions for land investments followed by the stern injunction that he would consider any deviation from his instructions akin to theft.
The letters also contain allusions to some disharmony within the family caused by the recent addition of Heqanakhte’s second wife to the household, much like in the novel where the arrival of Imhotep’s concubine Nofret provokes murderous hatred.

Inspiration: Heqanakht Letter I, Rogers Fund and Edward S. Harkness Gift, 1922 PICTURE: NEW YORK METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

The Heqanakhte Letters are trivial in their content but unique in their form: It is very rare for this level of detail concerning the family dynamics to survive the thousands of years that separate us from Middle Kingdom Egyptians. The letters were found in the 1920s by American archaeologists from the Metropolitan Museum of Art while excavating the tomb of the Middle Kingdom vizier Ipi near modern-day Luxor. Translations of the papyri and scholarly investigations followed shortly afterwards, a study that continues to this day.

Christie in Egypt

Christie certainly knew a thing or two about both ancient and modern Egypt. She first visited the country as a young woman in the winter of 1910, staying with her mother Clara for three months at Cairo’s glitzy Gezirah Palace Hotel. The experience had a clear impact on her — her first (unpublished) novel Snow Upon The Desert (1910) was set in Cairo.

Later, she drew further on her experience of life in Egypt and the experience of tourists visiting the country during the first half of the 20th century when writing the short story The Adventure Of The Egyptian Tomb (1923) and, 14 years later, Death On The Nile, which follows the orotund Belgian
detective Hercule Poirot as he attempts to solve the (some might argue needlessly complicated) murder of a wealthy heiress honeymooning in the Land of Pharaohs. In other words, peak Christie.

Adventures abroad: Agatha Christie with Max Mallowan at Tell Halaf in Syria

Christie’s marriage to British archaeologist Max Mallowan in 1930 reinforced her fascination with the ancient Near East and ancient Egypt. The marriage — and the financial success of her novels — provided her with ample opportunity to travel both as a tourist and an archaeologist in the region, experiences that in turn resulted in the autobiographical Come Tell Me How You Live (1946) and inspired further travels for her fictional Belgian detective in Murder In Mesopotamia (1936) and Appointment With Death (1938).

Bringing Egypt to life

However, it was her friendship with the Egyptologist Stephen Glanville, a professor at University College London who served with Mallowan during World War II, that prompted her to explore the possibility of writing a historical whodunnit, moving her narrative from Art Deco drawing rooms to the dusty desert on the Theban West bank. Death Comes As The End was written by Christie during the height of war and, as Christie herself states in the author’s note, ‘the inspiration of both characters and plot was derived’ from the Heqanakhte letters. Glanville served as a historical sounding board and consultant, a role for which he was eminently suited, having written the seminal book Daily Life in Ancient Egypt in 1930.

While the book received praise from critics upon its publication in 1944, it did cause some ructions in Christie’s own family life. Mallowan was not altogether happy that she had collaborated with Glanville. He wrote to Glanville expressing concern about the work, to which Glanville rather pointedly replied: ‘I am not clear whether you are afraid that the book will damage her reputation
as a detective story writer, or whether you think that archaeology should not demean itself by masquerading in a novel.’

Death Comes As The End is not among Christie’s most famous works, but it remains a fascinating experiment: a marriage between archaeology, Egyptology and fiction writing, a formula many later authors have dutifully followed. Along with Christie’s other works set in Egypt and the Near East it is also a tangible testament to the enduring fascination Western societies have for these ancient cultures.

RETRIEVED FROM: https://www.metro.news/agatha-christie-worlds-first-historical-whodunnit-was-inspired-by-4000-year-old-letters/1067932/
Strychnine at the Savoy: was Agatha Christie’s Mysterious Affair at Styles inspired by an Indian murder?

March 2, 2017 2.51am EST

Agatha Christie, here with husband Colonel Archibald Christie (left) and friends in 1922. Many stories she wrote were inspired by travels. Wikimedia
Agatha Christie’s first novel, *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*, was written more than a hundred years ago. It remains one of her most popular works. In the novel, members of an estate in Essex wake up one night, during World War I, to find the proprietor, Emily Inglethorp, convulsing to death from strychnine poisoning.

The novel introduced readers to the punctilious detective, Hercule Poirot. It also introduced a new form of murder. Very rarely, until its publication, had strychnine featured as a murder weapon in literature.

Two prominent Victorian novels had earlier featured scenes of death by strychnine. Alexandre Dumas’ *The Count of Monte Cristo* (1844) and Arthur Conan Doyle’s *The Sign of Four* (1890). Hitherto, strychnine was more often seen poisoning mice, as in Charles Reade’s *Hard Cash* (1864), or being a used as sleep-inducing “grand tonic” in H G Wells’ *The Invisible Man* (1897). In Arnold Cooley’s *A Cyclopædia of Practical Receipts* (1846) and Robley Dunglison’s *New Remedies* (1839), strychnine is said to be extracted from the rectified spirit of wine. Both the Invisible Man and Emily Inglethorp suffered from insomnia. An admixture of diluted strychnine compounds acted as a cure for sleeplessness, in both cases, and thus as a spirit. However, strychnine may not be the only spirit that inspired Christie’s first novel.

**Death by strychnine**

Strychnine was first isolated from the plant *Strychnos nux vomica* in 1818, by French chemist Joseph Bienaimé Caventou. Its career as a poison is much shorter than that. “Having strychnine in your house today would be suspicious,” writes Kathryn Harkup, but it would not have been so back in 1920.
Strychnine acquired early celebrity in the hands of Dr Thomas Neill Cream. Cream was executed in 1892 for the serial-strychnine-murders of women in Canada and Britain. Allegedly, his last words were, “I am Jack the...”

Inglethorp’s death was not so different from any of Cream’s victims. Christie writes:

The convulsions were of a violence terrible to behold ... A final [one] lifted her from the bed, until she appeared to rest upon her head and her heels, with her body arched in an extraordinary manner.

During her nursing-tenure at the Torquay War Hospital, at the time of the Great War, Christie had learned a great deal about chemicals, and conceived fabled prescription that led to Inglethorp’s death.

Accordingly, a mixture of potassium bromide added to strychnine sulfate left a precipitate of the free alkali to crystallise at the bottom of the container. Anyone consuming the crystallised grains of strychnine without shaking the contents ran the risk of instant cyanosis and asphyxiation.

Did Christie really pick up the idea from a pharmacy textbook as her hero Hercule Poirot does in the novel? Or did she gather it from the British Empire’s “autonomous networks of social communicators”?

Ruskin Bond, the Anglo-Indian author, believes she was inspired by the story of a British spiritualist, murdered in India.
‘S’ is for strychnine (and Savoy)

In the summer of 1911, two British female spiritualists arrived in Musssoorie – an Indian hill-station founded by the British in 1820s.

They stayed at the Savoy Hotel. Opened in 1902, the hotel had been built by an Irish barrister from Lucknow, Cecil D Lincoln. He gave the Savoy its spires, lancet-windows and Gothic architecture. The dining hall was varnished with flooring made of oak trunks. Billiard tables, grand pianos, cider and wine barrels, crates of champagne and Edwardian fixtures were lumbered up the mountain roads.

Savoy Hotel, Mussoorie, India. ITC Fortune, Savoy, Mussoorie

One of the two guests was a 49-year-old spinster, Frances Garnett-Orme. The other, Eva Mountstephen, her friend from Lucknow. Garnett-Orme was once engaged to a British officer from the United Provinces, who died before the wedding. In later life, she became a practitioner of séances and crystal-gazing, and sought to communicate with the dead.

One day Garnett-Orme was found dead upon her bed. The door of her room was locked from inside. Mountstephen had left for Lucknow that morning, but the facts of the case made her the prime suspect. Garnett-Orme’s autopsy revealed traces of prussic acid (hydrogen cyanide) in her blood.
The poison was believed to have been administered through her bottle of sodium bicarbonate, possibly tampered with by someone close to her. Mountstephen was brought to trial at the Allahabad High Court, before Justices Rafiq and Tudball. Due to a lack of evidence against her, she was exonerated. Within a few months of the acquittal, the doctor who had carried out the deceased’s post-mortem was found poisoned to death by strychnine.

The Ghosts of Savoy

Today the hotel is a heritage property and is believed to be haunted: the spirit of Garnett-Orme is said to still linger in the mansion.

Savoy’s Writer’s Bar, which the LA Times describes as “where Britain’s colonial elite once toasted their empire in Victorian splendour,” was the setting for the unforeseen intertwining of histories. The bar hosted writers from Jim Corbett, to Lowell Thomas, to John Masters (the writer of Bhowani Junction, who served for the Gurkha Regiment at Dehra Dun) to the Nobel Laurate, Pearl S Buck.

The hotel’s guests, including Garnett-Orme, have left behind their echoes in the lobbies of the hotel. Their spirits are said to haunt the place in supernatural manifestations. Apart from historical personalities, the hotel is haunted by tourists throughout the year.

The real ghosts, says Bond, “are those who manage to slip away without paying for their drinks.” Garnett-Orme or Inglethorpe were certainly not those.
The man who would be Poirot

In 1913, when the trial in the Garnett-Orme case was underway, Rudyard Kipling, another Anglo-Indian author, came to know of it. Although Kipling had left India, by 1890, he continued to have his sources. He had acquaintances in one Allen family, who told him about the case. They were owners of respectable newspapers and publications in which Kipling’s stories had appeared.

Kipling, by now a Nobel Laureate, pitched the idea to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the creator of the resident of 221B Baker Street, Sherlock Holmes. The scene is said to have occurred in the billard’s room of Doyle’s house, in Windlesham, Surrey, as confirmed by Peter Costello, in the book Conan Doyle, Detective (1991).

The sources Costello cites are the India Office documents and a Times report from October 1912. In some interpretations of the case, it appears that a lover-doctor had administered the poison into the lady’s bottle of cough-pills. Bond later wrote a fictional narrative of the account, In a Crystal Ball: A Mussoorie Mystery (2007). In the story, Kipling writes to Doyle, There has been a murder in India ... A murder by suggestion at Mussoorie ... one of the most curious things in its line on record. Everything that is improbable and on the face of it impossible is in this case.
In real life, Doyle took great interest in India. A part of *The Sign of Four* was set in the Andaman Islands. Yet he refused to write a story on the case from Mussoorie, for “the risk of libel.” And here a new theory intervenes.

Bond claims that the case was then passed on to Christie, who used the details for *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*, changing the setting to Essex. If this is true, the question arises whether the man who became Poirot, could well have been Holmes himself, had Doyle not declined the case.

Around the same time, Christie’s friend and neighbour, Eden Philpotts, had offered to help her with her novel, *Snow Upon the Desert*. He showed it to his literary agent. But Christie had no luck then. Philpotts who was born in Mount Abu, Rajasthan, was familiar with the India that Kipling knew. Philpotts was also a friend of Doyle. It is likely that he may have played the envoy for the passage of the case to Christie.

In the novel, Poirot tells Hastings, “a lady in England lost her life by taking a similar mixture,” as that which had poisoned Inglethorp. Poirot’s words are not his own, nor Christie’s. They were taken verbatim from Joseph Price Remington’s legendary treatise, *The Practice of Pharmacy* (1886). Remington’s book had been in circulation for over a decade and half, when Garnett-Orme was murdered. There is uncanny similarity in the way she died and the death that Remington’s describes. Later, Christie devised nearly the same death for Inglethorp.
Did Christie conceive the fatal formula in Torquay, indeed? Or was it after hearing of Garnett-Orme’s case from Philpotts? Did Remington’s book only serve to provide her the chemical solution to a murder that she had already plotted in her mind?

These questions are clouded beneath the mist of the Mussoorie hills. And they will remain so, until more details about the death of Garnett-Orme are unearthed.

RETRIEVED FROM: https://theconversation.com/strychnine-at-the-savoy-was-agatha-christies-mysterious-affair-at-styles-inspired-by-an-indian-murder-73326
Background: The Mousetrap
In Honour of Queen Mary's Eightieth Birthday

A programme of music, dance, and society approved by Her Majesty

7.45 BBC THEATRE ORCHESTRA
and BBC THEATRE CHOIRS
Conductor: Walter Gore
Guest Conductor: Donald Houston

Medley: "The Blue Danube," "Johann Strauss" (Conducted by Walter Gore)

7.45 MUSIC OF SCOTLAND
AND NORTHERN IRELAND
"Highland Laddie," played by the pipes and drums of the Highland Infantry Training Centre
Traditional pipe music, played by the "Wade" for the "Wade" (Conducted by "Wade"

5.0 "THREE BLIND MICE"
An original mystery thriller
by Agatha Christie
Produced by Martin J. Webster

8.30 MUSIC OF THE NORTH COUNTRY
AND THE NORTH COUNTRY
The Ballad of Scotland, etc. by Andrew Lloyd Webber
"The Ballad of the White Hart," etc. by Andrew Lloyd Webber

8.30 "THOSE WERE THE DAYS!"
with Harry Davidson and his Orchestra
Produced by Martin J. Webster

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The Telegraph

The Mousetrap: Agatha Christie’s adult masterpiece

About to enter its 60th anniversary year, 'The Mousetrap’ is steeped in gentility. Yet it has a darker side, says Christie’s biographer Laura Thompson.

By Laura Thompson
8:00AM GMT 28 Dec 2011

When The Mousetrap premiered in Nottingham in October 1952, one month prior to its opening at the Ambassador’s Theatre, its author, Agatha Christie, took a modest view of its prospects. Despite the presence in the cast of Richard Attenborough, still the biggest name ever to feature in The Mousetrap, Christie believed that her play would run in the West End for about eight months.

She wasn’t unduly bothered by her own tepid prognosis. The Mousetrap was merely one of six plays that she wrote between 1943 and 1953, a decade in which she was probably keener on the theatre than on fulfilling her publisher's yearly demand for detective fiction.

“I enjoyed writing plays,” she would later declare. The Mousetrap was squeezed between The Hollow in 1951, which, according to her literary agent Edmund Cork, “almost burst the Fortune Theatre” and her 1953 hit, Witness for the Prosecution, the work that above all others turned her from a successful author into a worldwide phenomenon. It was a sensation in the West End, on Broadway and later in the cinema.

The Mousetrap was never given a chance to compete. When the question was raised of a transfer to America, Cork resisted it lest the play damage his client’s reputation.

His judgment, it should be said, was not always acute when it came to Agatha Christie. Her rampant popularity seems to have taken him constantly aback. She, on the other hand, had a generally clear-eyed opinion of what she wrote; and she considered The Mousetrap to be a perfectly decent offering, although not in the same league as Witness.

So she would, undoubtedly, have been amazed by the fact that The Mousetrap is now sailing grandly into its 60th year, having transferred to the (admittedly tiny) St Martin’s Theatre in 1974. At
the same time, she would have stood up to those who believe that the play now exists in a state of indefinite coma and should be put out of its misery.

Christie believed in her own worth, in her ability to give people what they want. If audiences still pay to go to her play – even if it simply forms part of a tired old tourist trail – then who, she would have argued, has the right to deny them their pleasure?

The play that became a legend started life as a 30-minute piece for radio. In 1947 the BBC had the idea of presenting Queen Mary with a special broadcast for her 80th birthday. In staunchly middle-brow style, the Queen requested a new play by Agatha Christie. The result was originally called Three Blind Mice (the stage title, that of the play-within-a-play in Hamlet, was the inspired idea of Christie’s son-in-law). Christie was always fascinated by nursery rhymes, by their lurking folkloric hint of the macabre: she herself, after all, wrote what might be called fairy tales for adults. So although her play was a classic thriller, its smooth surface concealed something deep and dark. Indeed that jolly joke The Mousetrap is underpinned by no less a theme than the catastrophic effects of childhood neglect.

The imponderable fate of unwanted children, a question that is taken to an extreme in The Mousetrap, always nagged away at Christie. Almost certainly this was because her own mother, the person whom she loved more than any other, was given away to an aunt at the age of nine and suffered a lifelong sense of rejection.

Nobody now thinks of The Mousetrap in terms of this central theme. Nevertheless for the first 10 years the play was billed as “for adults only”, and in truth its subject matter – interred though it is within the country-house murder genre – is extremely powerful. This is typical of Agatha Christie. She is dismissed with tedious regularity as a mere purveyor of “animated algebra”, yet what really lies at the heart of her work is a clear-eyed understanding of the human condition, especially its baser side. She had no desire to parade that knowledge – her style is deceptively concrete – but it is there, all the time, guiding the geometry of her plots. Even in The Mousetrap.

That said, the play would now be a half-forgotten curio were it not for Peter Saunders, the man who created its legend. A dynamic producer, greatly liked and admired by Christie, Saunders was the architect of her theatre career, and intertwined his fortunes with hers to their mutual benefit – although Christie actually handed over The Mousetrap to her adored grandson, Mathew Prichard, when he was still in short trousers. This later caused her some anguish. She spent 30 years fighting a rapacious Inland Revenue – at the height of her earning powers she was twice advised to go bankrupt – and letters to Cork show that she was, at times, tormented by the forfeiture of that reassuring income stream from the Ambassador’s Theatre.
It was Saunders who intuited that The Mousetrap could become a living symbol of Agatha Christie’s appeal, which in itself was a symbol of Englishness. He conceived the idea of turning a West End play into a London landmark.

What a brilliant salesman he was! Every milestone achieved was a new marketing opportunity. In April 1958, when The Mousetrap became the longest-running production in the history of British theatre, Saunders staged an extravagant party that enshrined the play’s status as a national treasure.

“See you at Hell at the Savoy!” Christie wrote to her agent, a statement in keeping with her reputation as a shy semi-recluse. In fact, she rather enjoyed the brouhaha around her play, and made her last public appearance at the annual party for The Mousetrap in 1974. By then she was 84 and had become very frail (she died just over a year later). Saunders wrote to her daughter: “I had heard that you were a bit upset at me getting your mother to come.” Yet perhaps Christie had recognised that, if this were to be her final outing in the guise of “Agatha Christie”, it was a fitting one.

So what now for her apparently indestructible little play? This year will see a series of celebrations – a tour of 60 different venues has already been announced – and thus The Mousetrap will receive a new lease of life; or stay of execution, whichever you prefer. I should say, however, that when I saw the play very recently, expecting it to be about as theatrically buoyant as an amateur dramatic production of Charley’s Aunt, it was in remarkably good shape. In marked contrast to the last time I attended – clearly the impending Jubilee had concentrated minds – I found the performances strong, the directorial eye acute. The central theme was treated with some of the dignity that it merits.

As an advocate of Agatha Christie, I am delighted by such signs that she is being taken seriously: those who regard her as nothing more than a reactionary old dear with a gift for legerdemain are now, I think, rather more hidebound in their views than the woman herself. Has her appeal endured simply because she could pull the wool over millions of eyes? There is rather more to it than that.

'The Mousetrap’ is at St Martin’s Theatre (0844 499 1515). 'Agatha Christie: An English Mystery’ by Laura Thompson (Headline, £8.99)

RETRIEVED FROM: https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/theatre/theatre-features/8975426/The-Mousetrap-Agatha-Christies-adult-masterpiece.html
The 25 November sees the 59th birthday and the beginning of the 60th anniversary year of The Mousetrap, Agatha Christie's whodunnit play. It is the longest running play in the West End. Marcel Bruneau as Detective-Sergeant Trotter and Lottie Latham as Miss Casewell in the current cast of Agatha Christie's The Mousetrap.
True story behind Agatha Christie's 'The Mousetrap' to be published

A non-fiction book based on the events that inspired Agatha Christie's *The Mousetrap* is due to be published by HarperCollins, announced *The Bookseller* on February 17. Written by Terence O'Neill, whose story and court testimony inspired Christie's play, *Someone to Love Us* will be published on March 4 (April 1 in Australia).
Terence O'Neill and his brother, Dennis, were taken to a foster home in 1945 on the Shropshire, England farm of Reginald and Esther Gough. The two suffered from beating and neglect, and later that year, Dennis died at the age of 12 from injuries he had sustained.

When he was ten years old, Terence O'Neill testified in the manslaughter case against his foster parents. The Goughs were given prison sentences, and the case made national and international headlines and led to the creation of provisions to protect children from neglect and cruelty.

The case also became the inspiration for Agatha Christie's radio play *Three Blind Mice*, which Christie later altered and developed into the full-length murder-mystery stage play *The Mousetrap*. Known for its twist ending, *The Mousetrap* has been running continuously since 1957, the longest initial run of any play in history.

Now in his 70s, Terence O'Neill posted his writings about the events on HarperCollins's Authonomy website for unpublished authors, where it was found by editors. According to HaperCollins, O'Neill now lives with his family in South Wales.

http://www.harpercollins.co.uk/Titles/51157/someone-to-love-us-terence-oneill-9780007350186

Mousetrap Theatre Projects 'give something back' to disadvantaged children

Rupert Christiansen takes his hat off to the Mousetrap Theatre Projects scheme that avoids dumping uninitiated children in a row of theatre seats and expecting them to enjoy a play.

A deaf and hard-of-hearing workshop at Victoria Palace Theatre before a performance of 'Billy Elliot'

Photo: Alex Rumford

By Rupert Christiansen

4:24PM BST 24 Sep 2012

As someone whose youthful passion for the stage was almost entirely self-motivated, I've always been a bit sceptical of well-intentioned adults who jump up and down trying to enthuse children with the
magic of theatre. My opinion is that too much special pleading can end up turning the little darlings off, rather than on.

But I take my hat off to the wonderful Mousetrap Theatre Projects – a scheme that started in 1997 when producer Stephen Waley Cohen acquired the rights to Agatha Christie’s apparently immortal thriller from her grandson Matthew Prichard and decided to use part of the royalties to “give something back”.

Since this inception, Mousetrap has been run by a blazing comet of an American called Susan Whiddington, who is clearly one of those invaluable people to whom one just cannot say no. Even more importantly, she understands that simply dumping uninitiated children in a row of theatre seats and expecting them to enjoy a play isn’t going to get anyone very far – you’ve got to give them context.

Mousetrap works largely with state secondary schools in the Greater London area, focusing on those with a high proportion of pupils taking free meals.

With the active support of the Society of London Theatres and theatrical producers, Mousetrap offers such schools visits to the widest variety of shows – from the Bush to the National to the Palladium – at minimal cost (usually met out of the school budget, rather than parents’ pockets).

But it’s not just a matter of cheap tickets: the play (or opera or ballet) is introduced beforehand with chats and participatory workshops and followed by an after-show discussion, usually led by the show’s stars. And once you’ve been on one of these excursions, you can be fed into clubs that encourage and subsidise teenagers who want to become regular independent theatregoers.

There are other strands of Mousetrap’s work, too. One programme allows A-level students to try their hands at being critics (I was once a mentor at a session for this, and came away impressed and exhilarated by the enthusiasm and insight displayed). Another offers struggling families an introductory theatre visit for a token £5.

“It’s important that people pay something,” Susan rightly insists, “although we find that the barriers are related just as much to fear of the rituals of theatre-going as they are to cost. We don’t mollycoddle people, but we do try to explain the form in simple language.”

This year’s hugely successful innovation, which Susan is hoping to repeat, was a “relaxed” performance of the hit musical Shrek at Drury Lane for children with special needs. Extra wheelchair places, bean bags, reduced sound and light levels and an easy attitude to noise and movement all made the show an enjoyable rather than an alarming experience. “But it wasn’t a watered-down version,” Susan adds. “They got the whole Shrek experience and they loved it.”
Mousetrap will be fund-raising for its inspiring activities with a gala on November 18. At St Martin’s Theatre, London WC2, a “surprise” reading of the play that gave the project its name will be directed by Phyllida Lloyd (a Mousetrap trustee) with a stellar cast including Julie Walters and Hugh Bonneville, followed by a live auction and then a slap-up party at the Garrick Club.

It sounds like huge fun, and Theatreland hasn’t got a better cause.

RETRIEVED FROM: https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/culturenews/9563220/Mousetrap-Theatre-Projects-give-something-back-to-disadvantaged-children.html
Agatha Christie was profoundly affected by an actual case of child abuse and child murder. So profound in fact was the affect she wrote *Three Blind Mice* as a radio play. *Three Blind Mice* went on to become *The Mousetrap*, the longest running play in the history of theater.

The figures related to childhood abuse are absolutely astonishing and of epidemic, if not pandemic, proportions. So are the facts about Domestic Violence, a closely related issue.

Of the children who experienced maltreatment or abuse, three-quarters suffered neglect; 17.2% suffered physical abuse; and 8.4% suffered sexual abuse. (Some children are polyvictimized—they have suffered more than one form of maltreatment.) About four out of five abusers are the victims' parents.


A complete list of child abuse statistics in the United States. The most astonishing stat is annually over 3 million children are victims of child abuse.

RETRIEVED FROM: https://www.childhelp.org/child-abuse-statistics/

In its final report, published in 2016, the federal Commission to Eliminate Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities points out that “Some researchers estimate that the actual number is more than double the NCANDS total, but at least 3,000 children per year.”

RETRIEVED FROM: https://www.childhelp.org/blog/child-maltreatment-latest-report/

85% of child abuse victims never report their abuse.

RETRIEVED FROM: https://www.indianaprevention.org/child-abuse-statistics

Survivors of multiple types of child abuse more likely to experience domestic abuse in later life.

RETRIEVED FROM:
https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/peoplewhowereabusedaschildrenaremoredlikelytobeabusedasanadult/2017-09-27

These resources present statistics and data on the different types of abuse and neglect as well as the abuse and neglect of children with disabilities:
https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/statistics/can/

…a review of the research literature concluded that an estimated one-third of children who are subjected to child abuse and neglect go on to repeat patterns of abusive parenting towards their own children. Although this is a significant number, it is also important to note that Oliver’s estimations indicate that a majority of maltreated children do not go on to maltreat their own children: https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/effects-child-abuse-and-neglect-adult-survivors
Welcome to DoSomething.org, a global movement of millions of young people making positive change, online and off! The 11 facts you want are below, and the sources for the facts are at the very bottom of the page. After you learn something, Do Something! Find out how to take action here.

1. Approximately 5 children die every day because of child abuse.[1]
2. 1 out of 3 girls and 1 out of 5 boys will be sexually abused before they reach age 18.[2]
3. 90% of child sexual abuse victims know the perpetrator in some way. 68% are abused by a family member.[3]
4. In 2012, 82.2% of child abuse perpetrators were found to be between the ages of 18-44, of which 39.6% were recorded to be between the ages of 25-34.[4]
5. In the United States, more than 4 children die from child abuse and neglect on a daily basis. Over 70% of these children are below the age of 3.\footnote{5}
6. Boys (48.5%) and girls (51.2%) become victims at nearly the same rate.\footnote{6}
7. 2.9 million cases of child abuse are reported every year in the United States.\footnote{7}
8. Children who experience child abuse and neglect are 59% more likely to be arrested as a juvenile, 28% more likely to be arrested as an adult, and 30% more likely to commit violence crime.\footnote{8}
9. About 80% of 21-year-olds who were abused as children met criteria for at least one psychological disorder.\footnote{9}
10. 14% of all men and 36% of all women in prison were abused as children.\footnote{10}
11. Abused children are less likely to practice safe sex, putting them at greater risk for STDs. They’re also 25% more likely to experience teen pregnancy.\footnote{11}


Cultural Exchange: Agatha Christie’s ‘The Mousetrap’ endures


By HENRY CHU, LOS ANGELES TIMES
NOV. 25, 2012 12 AM

LONDON — Has anyone built a better “Mousetrap”? 
Britons just getting over celebrations of Queen Elizabeth II’s diamond jubilee are now in the throes of another: the 60th anniversary of the world’s longest-running play, “The Mousetrap” by Agatha Christie, England’s “queen of crime” (or, with less royal pretension, “duchess of death”).

What began as a BBC radio drama, at a time when postwar Brits carried around ration books and stared agog at television sets, has since become a West End phenomenon that shows no sign of stopping, though critics carp about signs of age. Sunday marks the official birthday, achieved after more than 25,000 performances, 400 actors and two dozen directors.

At this point, the play practically runs on its own inertia and reputation, on the must-see list for visitors to London along with the crown jewels and Madame Tussauds’ waxworks.

But Stephen Waley-Cohen, its producer since 1994, brushes off suggestions that only foreign tourists are keeping the world’s most famous theatrical whodunit alive. On average, he says, half the audience is British, even if it seems there could hardly be anyone left on this island who hasn’t made the pilgrimage to St. Martin’s Theatre, near Trafalgar Square.

“In 60 years, only about 10 million people have seen it,” Waley-Cohen says. “That’s about the number that watch a good episode of ‘Downton Abbey’ or ‘The X Factor.’ So there’s huge numbers of people who’ve never seen it in Britain.”

Proof of that has followed the unusual decision, as part of the diamond anniversary extravaganza, to mount productions of “The Mousetrap” in regional theaters across the country this year, something that the original producer, Peter Saunders, shied away from doing for fear it would eat into the West End box-office receipts.

Those performances have attracted strong audiences — sellouts, in some cases — yet business for the London show is up compared with last year, Waley-Cohen said. In all, 60 new productions were licensed around the world, including the U.S., China, Russia and Mozambique, where the play was put on by an American school.
More serious are complaints that “The Mousetrap” is a tired museum piece squatting on valuable real estate, space that would be better used to promote new works or promising writers desperate for a crack at the big time. An irritated director once called for “The Mousetrap” to be abolished by an act of Parliament.

“The St. Martin’s Theatre is one of the most attractive playhouses in the West End, and it is tragic that it has been filled with such tedious tosh for so long,” drama critic Charles Spencer wrote in the Daily Telegraph last year. “It is time the curtain came down on this dusty whodunit and the huge profits generated by the piece over the years were plowed into exciting new plays that have something to say about the way we live now.”

But Waley-Cohen challenges critics to cite an example of a play that had both buzz and backing but that failed to make it on to the West End for lack of a venue. And do audiences really need another movie-turned-musical to go with “Shrek,” “The Lion King,” “Singin’ in the Rain,” the just-closed “Ghost” and new arrival “The Bodyguard”?

Certainly the current West End lineup doesn’t hurt for critically acclaimed productions. Veteran actors Michael Gambon and Eileen Atkins star in Samuel Beckett’s “All That Fall,” while Tony Award winner Mark Rylance plays Olivia in a hilarious all-male production of Shakespeare’s “Twelfth Night.” Rupert Everett has captivated audiences as an emotionally devastated Oscar Wilde in David Hare’s “The Judas Kiss,” scheduled to open in the West End in January after a brief tour.

Christie, whose detective novels have sold more than 2 billion copies worldwide, making her the bestselling author of all time, once enjoyed an even greater hold on the London theater scene than she does now. She is the only female playwright to have had three of her works running in the West End simultaneously. (She died in 1976.)

No one, though, anticipated the record-breaking success of “The Mousetrap,” including Christie herself, who thought it would last about a year. She famously gave the rights to the play to her grandson as a present for his 9th birthday, little suspecting that it would set him up handsomely for life.

The radio version, “Three Blind Mice,” was written for Queen Mary and re-dubbed “The Mousetrap” for its stage premiere Nov. 25, 1952. Winston
Churchill was prime minister, and Harry Truman president. (Fans joke that the play actually dates back to Shakespeare’s day: In “Hamlet,” an acting troupe puts on a show called “The Mouse-trap,” which the Danish prince declares “a knavish piece of work.”)

Like Christie’s books, the play assembles a small cast of characters, this time in a snowbound guesthouse, among whom the bodies — and the coincidences — soon pile up like cars in a fog. After the killer is unmasked and the curtain comes down, the actor who plays the detective asks the audience to keep “whodunit” a secret, a corny but effective gimmick that began decades before the words “spoiler alert” were first uttered. (A fight to make Wikipedia remove its revelation of the ending has proved futile, however.)

“We are constantly surprised by the wonderful reaction at the curtain call,” says Michael Fenner, a member of the current cast, which changes yearly. “We do often get shouts of approbation…. It always works.”

Mathew Prichard, Christie’s lucky grandson, agrees with his grandmother’s own assessment that the “The Mousetrap” appeals because it contains something for everyone. “There are comparatively few plays in the West End which are suitable for all members of the family,” Prichard says. “It’s comparatively short. It’s got good humor in it, terrific suspense, a great twist at the end.”

Perhaps most entitled to complain about “The Mousetrap’s” durability are the movie studio executives who, decades ago, bought the rights to a film version, which can only be made six months after the theatrical run ends. They’re still waiting — if, of course, they’re still alive.

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Mousetrap opens in London

“The Mousetrap,” a murder-mystery written by the novelist and playwright Agatha Christie, opens at the Ambassadors Theatre in London. The crowd-pleasing whodunit would go on to become the longest continuously running play in history, with more than 10 million people to date attending its more than 20,000 performances in London’s West End.

When “The Mousetrap” premiered in 1952, Winston Churchill was British prime minister, Joseph Stalin was Soviet ruler, and Harry Truman was president. Christie, already a hugely successful English mystery novelist, originally wrote the drama for Queen Mary, wife of the late King George V. Initially called “Three Blind Mice,” it debuted as a 30-minute radio play on
the queen’s 80th birthday in 1947. Christie later extended the play and renamed it “The Mousetrap”—a reference to the play-within-a-play performed in William Shakespeare’s “Hamlet.”

On November 25, 1952, 453 people took their seats in the Ambassadors Theatre for the London premiere of Christie’s “Mousetrap.” The drama is played out at “Monkswell Manor,” whose hosts and guests are snowed in among radio reports of a murderer on the loose. Soon a detective shows up on skis with the terrifying news that the murderer, and probably the next victim, are likely both among their number. Soon the clues and false leads pile as high as the snow. At every curtain call, the individual who has been revealed as the murderer steps forward and tells the audience that they are “partners in crime” and should “keep the secret of the whodunit locked in their heart.”

Richard Attenborough and his wife, Sheila Sim, were the first stars of “The Mousetrap.” To date, more than 300 actors and actresses have appeared in the roles of the eight characters. David Raven, who played “Major Metcalf” for 4,575 performances, is in the “Guinness Book of World Records” as the world’s most durable actor, while Nancy Seabrooke is noted as the world’s most patient understudy for 6,240 performances, or 15 years, as the substitute for “Mrs. Boyle.”

“The Mousetrap” is not considered Christie’s best play, and a prominent stage director once declared that “The Mousetrap” should be abolished by an act of Parliament.” Nevertheless, the show’s popularity has not waned. Asked about its enduring appeal, Christie said, “It is the sort of play you can take anyone to. It is not really frightening. It is not really horrible. It is not really a farce, but it has a little bit of all these things, and perhaps that satisfies a lot of different people.” In 1974, after almost 9,000 shows, the play was moved to St. Martin’s Theatre, where it remains today. Agatha Christie, who wrote scores of best-selling mystery novels, died in 1976.

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Movies

The audience did it

Movie-makers have been trying to get their hands on The Mousetrap for decades. But they never bargained for that record theatrical run. Geoffrey Macnab reports

Geoffrey Macnab

Mon 31 Dec 2001 20.29 EST

Back in the mid-1950s the British producer John Woolf bought an option to film an Agatha Christie play that had opened in the West End a few years before. Under the terms of the deal he wouldn't be able to bring the play to the screen until six months after the theatre run had ended, but that seemed nothing more than an inconvenience.

That play was The Mousetrap. Almost half a century on, it is Britain's longest-running play - and the film version is still little more than a pipe dream.

You can't blame Woolf for assuming that by 1956 The Mousetrap was already in its death throes. The longest-running West End production to date, Chu Chin Chow by Oscar Ashe, had stalled after a mere 1,998 performances.

As David Turner, artistic director of The Mousetrap, puts it: "He had absolutely no idea that The Mousetrap was going to last at least 50 years. He probably thought it was just a matter of a few months. You've got to put your mind back to the 1950s, when nothing had ever run for more than a couple of years."

John Woolf, who set up his celebrated production outfit Romulus Films with his brother James in 1948, had quite an eye for new material. He bought the rights to John Braine's Room at the Top on a hunch after hearing a group of Bradford housewives talking on TV about the racy novel their local librarian had just written.
Defying the advice of Alexander Korda, who had warned him that nobody in their right mind would want to see a movie about a couple of old-timers "going up and down a river on a boat in Africa", he had earlier optioned CS Forester's novel The African Queen.

Warner Bros, which had developed this as a vehicle for Bette Davis, had long ago written off the project as unfilmable. In Woolf's hands, though, it became a box-office hit, winning its star, Humphrey Bogart, his only Oscar and its director John Huston some of the best reviews of his career.

Woolf was similarly successful with his next Huston project, Moulin Rouge, which picked up three Oscars. He was also extraordinarily quick of mark in buying the film rights to Frederick Forsyth's then-unpublished novel, The Day of the Jackal, and then making into a classy thriller with Fred Zinnemann as director.

Given his extraordinary record, it's a fair assumption that Woolf would have fashioned an excellent movie out of The Mousetrap, but by the time he died in 1999 he had long since abandoned hopes of ever filming the Agatha Christie play.

The story might have ended there, but in the late 1990s Woolf's son Jonathan decided to relaunch Romulus as a production outfit - with The Mousetrap. He enlisted his friend Stuart Urban (Our Friends in the North, An Ungentlemanly Act) to write and direct a screen version. "Stuart updated the creaky script darkly and brilliantly," Jonathan Woolf recalls. At that stage he was sure that Romulus would be allowed to make the movie, but it soon became apparent that the company faced a formidable legal battle to get the project under way. "It's a very complicated situation and I don't particularly want to go into it," is all he will say about the ongoing case.

The stage producers are adamant that a movie will not be made while The Mousetrap remains in the theatre. Any film version would give away one of the West End's most fiercely guarded secrets - just who strangled Mrs Boyle. Audiences are still entreated every night before the curtain rises not to divulge the identity of the killer.

Earlier this month, as if to underline the play's continuing popularity, Richard Attenborough (the original Detective Sergeant Trotter) joined The Mousetrap's audience for the very first time. He and other former cast members are likely to be wheeled out again in November, when the production celebrates its 50th anniversary.

The statistics are daunting. The play premiered at the Ambassadors Theatre in November 1952, became the longest running British show of any kind as early as
1958, moved to St Martin's Theatre in the early 1970s, and has been a fixture there ever since. It has already been performed more than 20,100 times.

Urban says that the film proposal "has attracted a lot of finance and interest from other people, and I've no doubt it could be made immediately once the rights are sorted out".

But even he concedes he may have to wait until the theatrical run comes to an end - which could take another 50 years. "Put it this way: there are millions of people who want to see a film of The Mousetrap, and at the moment the continuation of the play prevents that."

RETRIEVED FROM: https://www.theguardian.com/film/2002/jan/01/artsfeatures
On this day in 1952, Agatha Christie's The Mousetrap began its run in London. Sixty-three years later, it looks unlikely ever to stop.

In her autobiography, Christie recalled a conversation that she had with the play's first producer, Peter Saunders. "Fourteen months I am going to give it", Saunders said. "It won't run that long," she replied. "Eight months perhaps. Yes, I think eight months."

Christie, born 125 years ago, would no doubt be surprised at the play's continued success. When it transferred from The Ambassadors Theatre to the nearby St Martin's in 1974, it didn't skip a single night. In December 2000 the whodunit celebrated its 20,000th consecutive performance. Continuing at its current rate, it will pass its 30,000th in autumn 2024.

Here are 10 things that you didn't know about the West End's longest-running play:
1. One of the original cast members is still in the show

The late Deryck Guyler has been part of The Mousetrap since its first London performance. Guyler, who died in 1999, provided the pre-recorded voice of the newsreader in the first act. One prop also survives from the opening night: the clock above the fireplace in the main hall.

2. You might know whodunit, but not who'sinit

More than 400 actors have appeared in the play since 1952, including a handful of household names. When it first opened in London, it starred Richard Attenborough and his wife Sheila Sim. For the play’s 60th anniversary, St Martin’s Theatre held a one-off all-star performance, with Hugh Bonneville, Miranda Hart, Sir Patrick Stewart and Tamsin Grieg among the cast.

Natasha Rickman, a 2011 RADA graduate, has an unusually personal relationship with the play. When she appeared as Miss Casewell in 2013, she took over a role filled in 1985 by her mother, Miranda Bell (who appeared last year in The Imitation Game, alongside Benedict Cumberbatch).

The show has also attracted a number of notable audience members, including Sir Winston Churchill, Quentin Tarantino and Queen Elizabeth II, who began her reign six months before the play first opened.
3. It was written for Queen Mary as a birthday gift

In 1947, to celebrate Queen Mary’s 80th birthday, the BBC offered the queen consort a special broadcast of her choice. Ever a populist, she asked for a new play by Agatha Christie, and the writer obliged, turning out a 30-minute radio drama called Three Blind Mice. Five years, and several rewrites later, the play had its stage premiere at the Theatre Royal, Nottingham, under its current title (suggested by Christie’s son).

4. There have been two film versions (but not in English)

This most British of murder mysteries has been adapted for film twice – in Russian and Bengali. The Russian director Samson Samsonov’s 1990 adaptation, Myshelovka (“Mousetrap”), follows the script closely. Meanwhile, Chupi Chupi Aashay (“Silently he comes”, a 1960 film by Premendra Mitra) takes its inspiration from Christie’s original radio play.

5. It prompted a telegram from Noel Coward

In 2011, a Gloucestershire furniture restorer discovered a long-lost telegram, tucked beside a lingerie bill at the back of an 18th-century desk: “Much as it pains me I really must congratulate you on The Mousetrap breaking the long-run record. All my good wishes. Noel Coward”.

Coward had written to Christie in 1957, when The Mousetrap became the longest-running play in the West End. He was “pained” by the news as the record had previously been held by his own play, Blithe Spirit.
6. It led to a feud between Agatha Christie’s grandson and Wikipedia

"My grandmother always got upset if the plots of her books or plays were revealed in reviews – and I don’t think this is any different," Mathew Prichard told The Independent in 2010.

Shortly after writing the play, Christie had granted the performance rights to the play to her grandson. Prichard, who takes an active interest in the play’s success, was “dismayed” to learn that The Mousetrap’s famous plot-twist is revealed in the play’s Wikipedia article. Fans launched a campaign to have the revelation removed, or at least to include a warning.

In response, a Wikipedia spokesman told the Daily Mail, “Our purpose is to collect and report notable knowledge. It’s exceedingly easy to avoid knowing the identity of the murderer: just don’t read it.”

As a compromise, the final twist remains in the article, but is set apart from the rest of the plot synopsis under a large bold heading reading “Identity of the murderer”.

7. Not that many people have seen it

Theatrical success is always relative. In a 2012 interview, producer Sir Stephen Waley-Cohen glumly noted the play’s limited reach. "Even with very good houses for the last 59 years, only about 10m people have seen the play in London," he said. “That’s about the number for one episode of a good soap or Downton Abbey.”

8. It’s not Agatha Christie’s best play

The Mousetrap is – at least, in the author’s opinion – hardly her finest stage-play.

At one time, Christie had three different plays running in the West End – a feat that has yet to be matched by any other female writer.
Across her career, she wrote 16 works for the stage, but was particularly proud of 1953’s Witness for the Prosecution, later adapted for the screen by Billy Wilder, in a film starring Tyrone Power and Marlene Dietrich.

The original poster for Witness for the Prosecution (1957) CREDIT: UNITED ARTISTS

9. **Agatha Christie made her last public appearance at The Mousetrap**

Aged 84, the author appeared in public for the last time at The Mousetrap’s annual party, in 1974. She died just over a year later, on January 12, 1976.

10. **The play ends with a promise from the audience**

Each night, one actor from the company finishes the performance with a direct address to the audience: “Now you have seen The Mousetrap you are our partners in crime, and we ask you to preserve the tradition by keeping the secret of whodunit locked in your hearts.” In return, the audience promises not to reveal the twist. Having recited the speech at its London premiere, Richard Attenborough returned to give it again at the play’s Golden Jubilee performance half a century later.

RETRIEVED FROM: https://www.telegraph.co.uk/theatre/what-to-see/10-things-you-didnt-know-about-the-mousetrap/
Very few of us are what we seem.

-Agatha Christie
Agatha Christie, Japanese Anime
名探偵ポワロとマープル

解けない謎はない！
数々の難事件にポワロ、マープル、そしてメイベルが挑む！！
The Game Clue Was Borne of Boredom During WWII Air-Raid Blackouts

ALICE POPOVICI

As the war dragged on, creator Anthony Pratt longed for the fun of English country-estate murder-mystery parties, where guests would skulk the hallways, shriek and fall ‘dead’ on the floor.

Before Professor Plum, Miss Scarlett and Colonel Mustard gathered on a game board to claim their first victim—wielding a revolver, a rope or a lead pipe—a British musician named Anthony Pratt was watching murder-mystery scenarios unfold in European country mansions, where he played piano. Long before that game board became a global multi-million-seller and was inducted into the Toy Hall of Fame, Pratt was taking mental notes.
as guests in these elegant homes play-acted dastardly crimes involving skulking, shrieking and falling “dead” to the floor.

Years later, during World War II, Pratt recreated those murder-mystery parlor games in miniature, as a board game called Murder! (later Clue). The longtime Birmingham resident, who worked in a local munitions factory during the war, invented the suspects and weapons between 1943 and 1945, as a way to pass the long nights stuck indoors during air-raid blackouts. His wife, Elva, assisted, designing the game board on their dining-room table.

By that time, Pratt had become something of a crime aficionado. In a 2009 interview, his daughter Marcia Davies said her father was an avid reader of murder fiction by Raymond Chandler and others. (Certainly his game carried strong echoes of novels like Agatha Christie’s 1942 *The Body in the Library*, in which the staid Colonel and Mrs. Bantry of “Gossington Hall” are informed by their maid of a comely blonde corpse in their dusty library.) “He was fascinated by the criminal mind,” Davies said of her father. “When I was little he was forever pointing out sites of famous murders to me.”

In 1947, Pratt patented the game and sold it to a U.K.-based game manufacturer named Waddington’s and its American counterpart, Parker Brothers (now owned by Hasbro). But because of post-war shortages the game was not released until 1949—as Cluedo in England and Clue in the United States. In both versions, the object is for players to collect clues to figure out the murder suspect, weapon and location. The game took place in a Victorian mansion. The victim’s name? Mr. Boddy.
Updates: Losing the hypodermic syringe and adding a ‘modern woman’

Although the idea behind Clue hasn’t changed over the years, the board game has undergone countless updates.

Pratt’s original patent, which included 10 characters and additional weapons such as the shillelagh (an Irish walking stick) and hypodermic syringe, was streamlined for efficiency; in the released version of Clue, only six characters and six weapons remained. Of those weapons, the rope token has since been updated from an actual piece of string to a plastic facsimile. And the lead pipe token, made from a piece of actual (poisonous) lead in the original version of Clue, was updated to steel in 1965, then to pewter. A baseball bat and gun with silencer have since been added.

Characters have evolved through the decades to keep up with fashion, hairstyles and pop-culture trends. “The first (1949) version would look very old-fashioned now,” says Nicolas Ricketts, curator of table games at the Strong Museum of Play in Rochester, New York. Versions sold in the 1960s had animated-looking characters, mirroring the growing popularity of Saturday morning cartoons, and the 1980s versions adopted the slick style of the decade.

In 2008, suspects received updated 21st-century identities; among them, Colonel Mustard the military man became Jack Mustard the soccer star, and Professor Plum the archaeologist became Victor Plum, a smartypants billionaire video-game-designer. The mansion, meanwhile, got a spa and home theater.

One of the most significant changes to Clue in the last 70 years, says Ricketts, came with the introduction of a rare new character. In 2016, Hasbro’s Clue killed off the housekeeper Mrs. White, replacing her with the more accomplished Dr. Orchid, the adopted daughter of the mansion’s owner. Dr. Orchid has a fancier career—she’s a working scientist with a Ph.D.—but she comes with a sinister background, having been expelled from her Swiss boarding school after a (dun dun dun!) near-fatal daffodil-poisoning incident.
Missed Opportunity for Riches

In addition to inspiring a 1985 film, a touring musical, and a handful of game shows, Clue has spawned dozens of international editions and numerous pop-culture spinoff versions. Film-related riffs include a Star Wars Clue, with a three-dimensional game board, and an Alfred Hitchcock version that allows players to assume the roles of characters from The Birds or Psycho. TV spinoffs include a “Simpsons” version, which features a poisoned donut as a weapon, and a “Golden Girls” version, in which the suspect did not commit murder, but ate the last piece of cheesecake.

Game curator Ricketts says Agatha Christie’s bestselling mystery novels, which came out around the same time as Clue, likely boosted the game’s appeal. And the game’s simplicity makes it broadly appealing to adults as well as children. “You might get away with saying it’s the fourth- or fifth-most-popular game,” after Chess, Checkers, Monopoly and Scrabble, Ricketts said—though figures vary and manufacturers are loath to disclose the total number of units sold. (Some estimates top 150 million.) “It’s still a steady seller.”

But despite Clue’s enduring success—it earned its spot in the National Toy Hall of Fame in 2017—neither Anthony Pratt nor his family reaped a significant financial reward. In 1953, Clue’s creator sold the foreign rights to the game to Waddington’s after the game manufacturer told him that it was not selling well. In return, he received 5,000 pounds.

RETRIEVED FROM: https://www.history.com/news/clue-game-origin-wwii
Lessons
7 Up Whodunnit

By Karel Sloane-Boekbinder

This activity will require Internet access, the ability to watch YouTube and a fancy hat (as close to the style of hat author Agatha Christie wears in the interview video Rare interview with Agatha Christie the class will watch on Youtube.)

This activity includes a variation of the classic game: https://www.funology.com/heads-up-seven-up/

This activity can be done multiple times so that many students have an opportunity to portray Agatha Christie, the author of The Mousetrap, and be the “murderers.”

Begin this activity by explaining that students will be learning about the author and playwright Agatha Christie and playing a game inspired by Agatha Christie’s play The Mousetrap. Students will have the opportunity to portray the author and also be the “murderers.”

As a class, read Agatha Christie’s biography: https://www.biography.com/writer/agatha-christie

As a class, watch the interviews with Agatha Christie:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G-I52NS-fEk
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PY4hMPmCwls
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rnXOFET06xc

Once the class has read the biography and watched the interviews, explain the rules of this version of the game 7 Up: One of the students will be selected to portray author and playwright Agatha Christie. Agatha Christie will choose 3 “murderers.” Students will put their heads down on their desks and put a hand thumb up on their desk (like they are giving the “thumbs up” sign.) The 3 “murderers” will move through the class and choose “victims.” Each “murderer” will move to each of their “victims,” one at a time, and gently push down their thumb (so their thumb goes from “thumbs up” to thumb folded over.) Explain the element of stealth will be the most important aspect of this game, the ability to move as soundlessly as possible throughout the classroom.

Next, choose someone to be the author. Give them their costume and ask them to put it on (a fancy hat similar to the style of hat Agatha Christie wears in the interview video Rare interview with Agatha Christie.) Ask them also, as long they remain in costume, to speak like Agatha Christie to the best of their ability.

Without giving them away, ask the “author” to look around the class and choose 3 “murderers.” Once they have made their selections, ask the class to put their heads down, close their eyes.
and cover their ears (no cheating!) Ask the “author” to walk up to the 3 people she has chosen to be the “murderers” and lightly tap them on the shoulder. Each of the chosen students will rise from their seat and without speaking, Agatha Christie will instruct each of the 3 “murderers” to move through the performance area and choose 3 “victims” each. Then, without speaking, using great stealth, each of the 3 “murderers” will move through the class and choose 3 “victims” each. Each “murderer” will move to each of their “victims,” one at a time, and gently push down their thumb (so their thumb goes from “thumbs up” to thumb folded over.)

When each of the three “murderers” has selected three “victims,” the 3 “murderers” will return to their seats. Once all three “murderers” have returned to their seats, Agatha Christie will ask all the students to sit up and open their eyes. She will then begin to interview the class to find out A) who the “victims” are and B) who the “victims” suspect is the person who “murdered” them. To do this, she will first ask all nine “victims” to stand and come to the front of the class. One by one, she will ask the “victims” who they suspect “murdered” them, however, each “victim” will be asked to state their suspicions using the statement, “Mine is/has __________.” Each statement should describe the appearance of the person they suspect. As a few examples, “Mine is wearing a red shirt,” “Mine is wearing black sneakers,” OR, “Mine has brown hair;” “Mine has long hair.”

After each statement “Mine is/has __________,” the author will ask the whole class which suspect fits the description, i.e., using the examples above, “Who is wearing a red shirt today? or “Who in class has brown hair?” or “Who has long hair?” The author will continue to do this until someone correctly guesses the “murderers.” If no one is able to correctly guess the identity of any of the 3 “murderers,” the “author” will invite the 3 “murderers” to come to the front of the room and reveal their identities.
K-12 Student Standards for English Language Arts » Grade 1

Reading Standards for Literature

Key Ideas and Details

1. Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
2. b. Recognize and understand the central message or lesson.
3. Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10. With prompting and support read informational texts appropriately complex for grade 1.

K-12 Student Standards for English Language Arts » Grade 4

Reading Standards for Literature

Key Ideas and Details

1. Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

3. Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. Make connections between the text of a story or drama and a visual or oral presentation of the text.

K-12 Student Standards for English Language Arts » Grade 7

Reading Standards for Literature

Key Ideas and Details

1. Cite several pieces of relevant textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

3. Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events).

2. Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.
The Mousetrap Vocabulary

Time Period and Phrases

By Karel Sloane-Boekbinder

Along with plot and character, setting is a critical element of any story. Setting not only includes location, it also encompasses a host of other things, such as time period. Time period and locale are both essential for Agatha Christie’s The Mousetrap.

The story of The Mousetrap unfolds in the British countryside about a half hour outside London. The first performance of The Mousetrap was in 1952, six years before Great Britain would end its food rationing program. Food rationing was part of life in both World War One and Two as a way to ensure an equitable distribution of resources: https://www.history.com/news/food-rationing-in-wartime-america The Mousetrap was an adaptation of a radio play Three Blind Mice written in 1947, just two years after the end of World War Two. The radio play was 20 minutes long and written as a birthday present for Queen Mary.

In 1948, the radio play, Three Blind Mice, became a short story. To this day, this short story however has never been published in Great Brittan. Author Agatha Christie didn’t want it to compete with her play and stipulated the story not be published until The Mousetrap closed. So far, it’s been 67 years and counting.

Whether radio play, short story or stage play, setting the story of The Mousetrap in Great Britain in the years immediately following World War Two shapes the way the story unfolds. The culture of Great Britain is very much present in the way the characters speak, not only their accents, but what they say. The time period is also important as the story opens a window into what life was like in the years immediately following the Second World War. In this lesson, students will review the elements of setting, be introduced to common phrases spoken in Great Britain, phrases and vocabulary spoken by the characters in The Mousetrap, learn about the food rationing program in Great Britain and have an opportunity to use phrases and vocabulary from The Mousetrap in a writing activity.

Begin this lesson by explaining that students will be learning about how setting shapes a story and in particular how setting helps to shape the story in the stage play The Mousetrap. Explain students will use what they learn about setting to do a little writing of their own. As a class, read and discuss EXCERPT: Discover The Basic Elements of Setting In a Story. Place the excerpt on an ELMO, Promethean Board or a SMART board where it can be visible to the whole class. Read and discuss the excerpt.

Expand the discussion. Explain that the locale of The Mousetrap is the British countryside about a half hour outside London and that the culture of Great Britain is very much present in the way the characters speak, not only their accents, but what they say. As a class read the
Mental Floss **EXCERPT: 8 British Expressions, Explained.** Place the excerpt on an ELMO, Promethean Board or a SMART board where it can be visible to the whole class. Read and discuss the excerpt.

Connect this discussion about British dialect directly to the phrases and vocabulary spoke by characters in *The Mousetrap*. Place *The Mousetrap Vocabulary and Phrases* on an ELMO, Promethean Board or a SMART board where it can be visible to the whole class. As a class, read and discuss the Vocabulary and Phrases spoken in *The Mousetrap*.

Deepen the class discussion about setting to include time period. Ask students if they are familiar with the food rationing programs the United States participated in during and after both WWI and WWII. Explain other countries also participated in food rationing programs during this time period and students will be learning more about this program as it is another important aspect of the setting of *The Mousetrap*. Place *Rationing in World War Two* on an ELMO, Promethean Board or a SMART board where it can be visible to the whole class. As a class, read and discuss the article.

Next, explain that students will now have an opportunity to use what they have learned. Distribute a copy of *The Mousetrap Vocabulary Time Period and Phrases* sheet and a pencil to each student. Return the Vocabulary and Phrases spoken in *The Mousetrap* back to the ELMO, Promethean Board or a SMART board where they can be visible to the whole class. Ask students to choose from the phrases and the vocabulary on the sheet to complete the handout. Explain that they may not use every term AND that several terms may be used more than once. Ask students to complete their handout by filling in the blanks with phrase and vocabulary from *The Mousetrap*. Once students have completed their *The Mousetrap Vocabulary Time Period and Phrases* sheet, review and discuss the answers as a class.
EXCERPT: Discover The Basic Elements of Setting In a Story

By: Courtney Carpenter | May 2, 2012

Fiction has three main elements: plotting, character, and place or setting. While writers spend countless hours plotting and creating characters and then imagining their character’s arcs and dilemmas, often too little attention is paid to place. This is a fatal mistake, since the place fiction is staged provides the backdrop against which your dramas ultimately play out.

But setting is more than a mere backdrop for action; it is an interactive aspect of your fictional world that saturates the story with mood, meaning, and thematic connotations. Broadly defined, setting is the location of the plot, including the region, geography, climate, neighborhood, buildings, and interiors. Setting, along with pacing, also suggests passage of time. Place is layered into every scene and flashback, built of elements such as weather, lighting, the season, and the hour.

The Fundamental Elements of Setting

Here is a list of the specific elements that setting encompasses:

1. **Locale.** This relates to broad categories such as a country, state, region, city, and town, as well as to more specific locales, such as a neighborhood, street, house or school. Other locales can include shorelines, islands, farms, rural areas, etc.

2. **Time of year.** The time of year is richly evocative and influential in fiction. Time of year includes the seasons, but also encompasses holidays, such as Hanukkah, Christmas, New Year’s Eve, and Halloween. Significant dates can also be used, such as the anniversary of a death of a character or real person, or the anniversary of a battle, such as the attack on Pearl Harbor.

3. **Time of day.** Scenes need to play out during various times or periods during a day or night, such as dawn or dusk. Readers have clear associations with different periods of the day, making an easy way to create a visual orientation in a scene.

4. **Elapsed time.** The minutes, hours, days, weeks, and months a story encompasses must be somehow accounted for or the reader will feel confused and the story will suffer from a lack of authenticity. While scenes unfold moment by moment, there is also time to account for between scenes, when a flashback is inserted, and when a character travels a long distance.

5. **Mood and atmosphere.** Characters and events are influenced by weather, temperature, lighting, and other tangible factors, which in turn influence the emotional timbre, mood, and atmosphere of a scene.
6. **Climate.** Climate is linked to the geography and topography of a place, and, as in our real world, can influence events and people. Ocean currents, prevailing winds and air masses, latitude, altitude, mountains, land masses, and large bodies of water all influence climate. It’s especially important when you write about a real setting to understand climatic influences. Harsh climates can make for grim lives, while tropical climates can create more carefree lifestyles.

7. **Geography.** This refers to specific aspects of water, landforms, ecosystems, and topography in your setting. Geography also includes climate, soil, plants, trees, rocks and minerals, and soils. Geography can create obvious influences in a story like a mountain a character must climb, a swift-running river he must cross, or a boreal forest he must traverse to reach safety. No matter where a story is set, whether it’s a mountain village in the Swiss Alps or an opulent resort on the Florida coast, the natural world with all its geographic variations and influences must permeate the story.

8. **Man-made geography.** There are few corners of the planet that have not been influenced by the hand of humankind. It is in our man-made influences that our creativity and the destructiveness of civilization can be seen. Readers want visual evidence in a story world, and man-made geography is easily included to provide it. With this in mind, make certain that your stories contain proof of the many footprints that people have left in its setting. Use the influences of humankind on geography to lend authenticity to stories set in a real or famous locale. These landmarks include dams, bridges, ports, towns and cities, monuments, burial grounds, cemeteries, and famous buildings. Consider too the influences of mankind using the land, and the effects of mines, deforestation, agriculture, irrigation, vineyards, cattle grazing, and coffee plantations.

9. **Eras of historical importance.** Important events, wars, or historical periods linked to the plot and theme might include the Civil war, World War II, medieval times, the Bubonic Plague, the gold rush in the 1800s, or the era of slavery in the South.

10. **Social/political/cultural environment.** Cultural, political, and social influences can range widely and affect characters in many ways. The social era of a story often influences characters’ values, social and family roles, and sensibilities.

11. **Population.** Some places are densely populated, such as Hong Kong, while others are lonely places with only a few hardy souls. Your stories need a specific, yet varied population that accurately reflects the place.

12. **Ancestral influences.** In many regions of the United States, the ancestral influences of European countries such as Germany, Ireland, Italy, and Poland are prominent. The cities and bayous of Louisiana are populated with distinctive groups influenced by their Native American, French-Canadian, and African American forebears. Ancestral influences can be depicted in cuisine, dialogue, values, attitudes, and general outlook.

The British have many delightful and colorful expressions that often make no sense to those of us on this side of the pond. Luckily, Christopher J. Moore has decoded a number of them in *How to Speak Brit: The Quintessential Guide to the King's English, Cockney Slang, and Other Flummoxing British Phrases*. Here are a few of our favorites.

2. **HOW’S YOUR FATHER?**

Brits are all about keeping things proper, so they’ve come up with many fantastic slang terms for referring to stuff that would be considered untoward in polite company. "How’s your father?" is one of these phrases. According to Moore, this turn of the century phrase was probably coined by comedian Harry Tate, who used it to change the subject when something he didn’t want to talk about came up.

3. **ALL MOUTH AND NO TROUSERS**

Hailing from the north of England, this phrase is “used to describe a man whose sense of self-importance is in inverse proportion to his actual relevance,” Moore writes. The mouth refers to brash talk; trousers, of course, are pants.
4. **BOB’S YOUR UNCLE**

It means “and there you are!” or “it’s that simple!” According to Moore, it’s thought to have originated in the late 1880s, when Arthur Balfour—nephew of the Victorian Prime Minister Robert Cecil—was appointed to be the Chief Secretary in Ireland though he had no qualifications. “So he got the job purely because Bob was his uncle,” Moore writes. “A nice theory, and no one has come up with anything convincingly better.”

5. **BY HOOK OR BY CROOK**

“A very old phrase meaning to use any means possible and bearing no relation to criminals,” Moore writes. First used in the 14th century, it refers to peasants pulling down branches for firewood using either a bill-hook or a shepherd’s crook.

7. **SPEND A PENNY**

This slang phrase for a visit to the bathroom “comes from the old practice, literally, of having to put a penny in the door of a public bathroom to use it,” Moore writes. It's only appropriate for informal settings, so don’t use it to ask where the restrooms are in a restaurant!

RETRIEVED FROM: [https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/59549/8-british-expressions-explained](https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/59549/8-british-expressions-explained)
The Mousetrap Vocabulary and Phrases

Hooked it early – To leave; to leave work early

Daily woman – A part-time maid (formerly charwoman)

Tins – Canned food

Bank it up – Put something in a pile; to put a lot of coal onto a fire so that it will burn slowly and for a long time (https://www.macmillandictionary.com/us/dictionary/american/bank-up)

Mugs at this game – Not very successful

Memsahibish – A white foreign woman of high social status living in India especially: the wife of a British official (https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/memsahib)

Bilking – To bilk someone out of something, especially money, means to cheat them out of it (https://www.collinsdictionary.com/us/dictionary/english/bilk)

Regular tabbies’ delight – A spinster; a prying woman; a gossip (https://www.thefreedictionary.com/tabby)

Half stone or stone – A unit of weight equal to 14 pounds or 6.35 kilograms, used especially when talking about a person’s weight: I weigh ten and a half stone (https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/stone)

Coke – A fuel made from coal used in blast furnaces, blacksmithing and stoves

The fifteenth instant – The 15th of the current month

Spiv – A man, especially one who is well-dressed in a way that attracts attention, who makes money dishonestly (https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/spiv)

Ration books – A book issued by a government that allows a person to buy particular foods in times of food shortages, especially during or after a war (https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/ration-book)

Torch – A flashlight

Barmy – Slightly crazy or very foolish (https://www.collinsdictionary.com/us/dictionary/english/barmy)
Rationing in World War Two

by Stephen Wilson

Ever wondered how much food a person was entitled to during World War Two?

Rationing began on 8th January 1940 when bacon, butter and sugar were rationed. By 1942 many other foodstuffs, including meat, milk, cheese, eggs and cooking fat were also 'on the ration'.

This is a typical weekly food ration for an adult:

- **Bacon & Ham** 4 oz
- **Other meat** value of 1 shilling and 2 pence (equivalent to 2 chops)
- **Butter** 2 oz
- **Cheese** 2 oz
- **Margarine** 4 oz
- **Cooking fat** 4 oz
- **Milk** 3 pints
- **Sugar** 8 oz
- **Preserves** 1 lb every 2 months
- **Tea** 2 oz
- **Eggs** 1 fresh egg (plus allowance of dried egg)
- **Sweets** 12 oz every 4 weeks

Yes, I know what you are thinking…This doesn’t look like much, right?

In fact, ordinary people survived on such rations, although those who produced their own food were able to have that little bit extra.

You might be wondering how this was even possible.

Rationing was a means of ensuring the fair distribution of food and commodities when they were scarce. It began after the start of WW2 with petrol and later included other goods such as butter, sugar and bacon. Eventually, most foods were covered by the rationing system with the exception of fruit and vegetables.
Ration books were given to everyone in Britain who then registered in a shop of their choice. When something was purchased the shopkeeper marked the purchase off in the customer’s book. Special exceptions made allowing for some groups of people who required additional food like underground mine workers, members of the Women’s Land Army and members of the Armed forces.
The Ministry of Food was a government department set up from the start of the war to the end of all rationing in 1958. Its aim was to regulate food production and usage. The Ministry of Food used numerous ways to help people make the most of their rations without wasting food, while at the same time giving them ideas to help make mealtimes more interesting. They introduced various campaigns, television and radio broadcasts as well as literature to educate the public.

As someone who was fascinated by the simplicity of the meal recipes the Ministry of Food encouraged the public to make, I began to collect leaflets and pamphlets produced for the Ministry of Food.

The ‘ABC of Cookery’ and ‘Fish Cookery’ were books published by H.M.S.O. These booklets a quite interesting as they brought the typical home cook back to basics by talking the reader through cookery and food terms, measurements and preservation some of which we would take for granted today with all tinned and vacuum packed products readily available.

Along with this article I wanted to include a recipe leaflet for some insight into rationing. I looked through my collection to select one to include. I thought that I would want to include one that sums up rationing and I feel the leaflet on ‘Potatoes’ does exactly that.
POTATOES

There is no vegetable more useful than the homely potato. Potatoes are a cheap source of energy, and they are one of the foods that help to protect us from illness. They contain the same vitamin as oranges and 4 lb. of potatoes daily will give over half the amount of this vitamin needed to prevent fatigue and help fight infection.

Potatoes save Shipping

Potatoes, which are home-grown, give us the same kind of energy-food as cereals, which are imported. Eat them in place of bread and other cereals wherever possible, and you help to save shipping space.

So don’t think of potatoes merely as something to serve with the meat. They can be much more than that. A stuffed, baked potato can be a course in itself. Potatoes can be used, too, for soups, bread-rolls, pastry, puddings and even cakes, as the following recipes show.
By Stephen Wilson. Over the past few years I have collected a number of leaflets, pamphlets, and books produced by the Ministry of Food around and during World War 2.

RETRIEVED FROM: https://www.historic-uk.com/CultureUK/Rationing-in-World-War-Two/
She crept into the living room. She was not very tall, weighed maybe______________________. It was dark. She searched for a _____________________ so she could see a little better. The living room was cold. She wanted to start a fire but the fuel was low; she needed to __________________ more ________________________ before she could even strike a match. The____________________ of food she had bought were running low. She was down to a few _______________________ of vegetables and one __________________________ of spaghetti. Her husband had __________________________ for work. Today was the_______________________________, two more days before she could go shopping. She had two ______________________; she’d been saving one so that she could buy butter, milk and sugar to make her husband a cake. His birthday was this coming weekend. The cake was going to be a surprise. In two days, she’d also be able to buy some sweets to go with the cake. The man at the grocery store was kind. He never tried to ____________ her out of something. Sometimes, he even gave her a little extra, unlike the butcher. That man was a ______________ and a____________________; he made his money by cheating, and everybody knew it. And he was rude. He always made her feel a little ________________ when she would question him about the price. If she could just catch him pressing his finger on the scale! The butcher was sly though and so far, although everyone suspected him, nobody had proof. She reached for the ______________ above the fireplace, switched it on and headed for the door to get the ______________ so she could start the fire.
She crept into the living room. She was not very tall, weighed maybe 8 or 9 stone (a number between 8 and 10). It was dark. She searched for a __torch__ so she could see a little better.

The living room was cold. She wanted to start a fire but the fuel was low; she needed to __bank up__ more __coke__ before she could even strike a match. The __tins__ of food she had bought were running low. She was down to a few __tins__ of vegetables and one __tin__ of spaghetti. Her husband had __hooked it early__ for work. Today was the __fifteenth instant__, two more days before she could go shopping. She had two __ration books__; she’d been saving one so that she could buy butter, milk and sugar to make her husband a cake. His birthday was this coming weekend. The cake was going to be a surprise. In two days, she’d also be able to buy some sweets to go with the cake. The man at the grocery store was kind. He never tried to __bilk__ her out of something. Sometimes, he even gave her a little extra, unlike the butcher. That man was a __spiv__ and a __regular tabbies’ delight__; he made his money by cheating, and everybody knew it. And he was rude. He always made her feel a little __barmy__ when she would question him about the price. If she could just catch him pressing his finger on the scale! The butcher was sly though and so far, although everyone suspected him, nobody had proof. She reached for the __torch__ above the fireplace, switched it on and headed for the door to get the __coke__ so she could start the fire.
K-12 Student Standards for English Language Arts » Grade 1

Reading Standards for Literature

Key Ideas and Details

1. Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
2. a. Retell stories, including key details.
   b. Recognize and understand the central message or lesson.
3. Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10. With prompting and support read informational texts appropriately complex for grade 1.

Writing Standards

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

8. With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

K-12 Student Standards for English Language Arts » Grade 4

Reading Standards for Literature

Key Ideas and Details

1. Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
2. Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.
3. Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character’s thoughts, words, or actions).
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. Make connections between the text of a story or drama and a visual or oral presentation of the text.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

7. Conduct short research projects that build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.

8. Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; take notes and categorize information, and provide a list of sources.

9. Draw relevant evidence from grade-appropriate literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. Make connections between the text of a story or drama and a visual or oral presentation of the text.

Writing Standards

d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.

K-12 Student Standards for English Language Arts » Grade 7

Reading Standards for Literature

Key Ideas and Details

1. Cite several pieces of relevant textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

3. Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events).

2. Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

3. Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).

Craft and Structure
6. Analyze how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a text.

**Integration of Knowledge and Ideas**

9. Compare and contrast a fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period as a means of understanding how authors of fiction use or alter history.

**Writing Standards**

3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

d. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.
K-12 Student Standards for Social Studies » Grade 4

History

Standard 1 – Chronological and Historical Thinking

4.1.1 Construct timelines of historical events

4.1.6 Define and distinguish between primary and secondary sources

4.1.7 Summarize primary resources and explain their historical importance

K-12 Student Standards for Social Studies » Grade 7

History

Standard 1: Historical Thinking Skills

7.1.1 Produce clear and coherent writing for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences by completing the following tasks:

- Conducting historical research

- Evaluating a broad variety of primary and secondary sources

- Determining the meaning of words and phrases from historical texts

- Using technology to research, produce, or publish a written product

7.1.2 Explain patterns and recurring themes in United States history

7.1.3 Analyze the causes and effects of key events and ideas in the development of the United States

Geography

Standard 5: Geography Skills

7.5.1 Analyze the physical and political features of the United States
K-12 Student Standards for Social Studies » World History

History

Standard 1 – Historical Thinking Skills

Students use information and concepts to solve problems, interpret, analyze, and draw conclusions from historical events.

WH.1.1 Produce clear and coherent writing for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences by:

• conducting historical research

• evaluating a broad variety of primary and secondary sources

• comparing and contrasting varied points of view

• determining the meaning of words and phrases from historical texts

• using technology to research, produce, or publish a written product

WH.1.2 Compare historical periods in terms of differing political, social, religious, and economic issues

WH.1.4 Analyze historical events through the use of debates, timelines, cartoons, maps, graphs, and other historical sources
The Mousetrap:
Differences in English and American Culture

By Karel Sloane-Boekbinder

The cultural and social environments are part of the setting of a story. Cultural and social environments can greatly influence the characters in a story. The cultural and social environments are very much in evidence in The Mousetrap. Mrs. Boyle is full of opinions about other people and her opinions are based on class. At the beginning of the play, she expects Monkswell Manor to have servants. Mollie and Giles Ralston are low on coke to fuel the fire; coke is a cheaper type of fuel. Mrs. Boyle’s opinions about Mollie and Giles Ralston and their ability to run Monkswell Manor are based on her opinions about class.

In this lesson students will learn about the similarities and differences between the cultural and social environments of the United Kingdom/Great Britain and the United States and have an opportunity to express their own opinions about these similarities and differences.

Begin this lesson by explaining that students will be learning about how setting shapes a story and in particular how the cultural and social environments that are aspects of setting help to shape the story in the stage play The Mousetrap. Explain students will use what they learn about setting to do a little writing of their own.

Introduce the stage play The Mousetrap by explaining that it is set in the United Kingdom/Great Britain. Ask students which countries are part of the United Kingdom/Great Britain. Record student responses where they can be seen by the whole class, such as on a Promethean board, a SMART board or a dry erase board (responses will include England, Wales, Scotland and part of Ireland.)

Explain that the setting for The Mousetrap is in the United Kingdom/Great Britain, specifically in the British countryside about a half hour outside London. One of the characters in The Mousetrap, Mrs. Boyle, is full of opinions about other people. At the beginning of the play, she expects Monkswell Manor to have servants. Mollie and Giles Ralston, two other characters in The Mousetrap, are low on coke to fuel the fire; coke is a cheaper type of fuel. Mrs. Boyle’s opinions about Mollie and Giles Ralston and their ability to run Monkswell Manor are based on her opinions about class. Explain that historically class and the class a person is in have been very important in the United Kingdom/Great Britain.

Distribute a copy of The Mousetrap: Differences in English and American Culture Compare and Contrast sheet and a pencil to each student. As a class, read and discuss Outclassed: the secret life of inequality What Americans can learn from British class guilt. Place the article on an ELMO, Promethean Board or a SMART board.
where it can be visible to the whole class. Read and discuss the article. As the reads and discusses the article, ask students to fill in their **Culture Compare and Contrast** sheet.

Once the class has finished reading and discussing the article, distribute a copy of **The Mousetrap: Differences in English and American Culture** *Opinionnaire* sheet to each student. Ask students to consider the article and to use their **Culture Compare and Contrast** sheet to help them complete their *Opinionnaire*. When students have completed their *Opinionnaire* have them take turns reading their *Opinionnaires* aloud to the class.
What Americans can learn from British class guilt

America is supposed to have greater social mobility. In the UK, everyone ostensibly has a rung but they are also trapped in that position. But these once-clear binaries are muddled.

Rodrigo seems like many of the bright young men of Silicon Valley. He graduated from one of the best universities in the world, and at 36, he now works for a tech startup. In his free time, he likes earnest chats – one of his favorite topics is how to improve urban infrastructure.

But Rodrigo’s story is unusual in a way that offers some perspective on class mobility in America versus that of the UK.

Rodrigo is Welsh and grew up on the dole, living in a council flat (the UK’s equivalent to social housing). He, his siblings and his single mother dwelled on the edge of a mining community that has been in economic decline since the 1980s. Rodrigo excelled in school, though, so he ultimately left his town and his neighborhood, which people “made jokes about”, and where his family “didn’t have a car, rode the bus a lot”.

He attended Oxford University with grants, which he thinks was “super lucky”. His mother initially worried about her son going the Oxbridge route, wondering if he would be able to make that cultural transition or thrive there. In the end, he
found the university to be a supportive place, despite the “pockets that conform to stereotypes” about public school boys (we call them private school in the US).

In England, Rodrigo was initially somewhat ashamed of his origins, “trying to pass as much as I could”. This is no longer the case.

I sought Rodrigo out because I wanted to see how the cliches around American and British class identity play out on a person’s life today. In both countries, people may feel uncomfortable talking about their class position publicly – which was part of why Rodrigo asked me not to use his last name.

A hackneyed storyline is that we in the US have a covert class system: we supposedly measure people on merit, but we actually measure people on their skills, credentials, college educations and earning power. Meanwhile, the UK has an overt one: everyone knows who is a toff and who is a yob, and British people’s ears are supersonic when it comes to accents, and class markers are carefully noticed: the wine a person drinks, how they cut their food.

America is supposed to have greater social mobility. In the UK, everyone ostensibly has a rung but they are also trapped in that position.

Nowadays, these once-clear binaries are muddled. By some measures, America’s class mobility has foundered in recent decades. According to a 2015 Pew study, only 64% of Americans now believe that opportunities for mobility are broadly accessed, the lowest rate in around three decades.

Numbers bear out this pessimism. As economist Raj Chetty explained in a 2016 lecture at the London School of Economics, the probability of a child born to parents in the bottom fifth of the incomes reaching the top fifth is 7.5% in America. In the UK, this number is 9%, according to research by economists Jo Blanden and Stephen Machin.

There is, in short, less mobility in the US, says Richard Reeves, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution as well as the author of the book Dream Hoarders. Reeves, who is British, describes “the big focus of his work” the comparison of the two countries’ attitudes towards and expressions of social class.

I myself am acutely aware that something has changed. I grew up in New York City and in London. In the local state school I attended in England, I saw and heard far more awareness of where a person stood in the social hierarchy than I had ever heard stateside. Some of my British classmates would say they wanted to do exactly what their fathers did; none of the kids I knew at school back in New York shared this sentiment. Thirty years later, many of the American kids I grew
up with, despite their best efforts, have not reached the level of financial comfort of their parents.

That lack of mobility is something Eliot Bamford, a New Hampshire-dwelling Englishman and public school teacher, can see in his adopted home. Some of his fellow rural teachers are squeezed economically, he says – they drive Uber during the summer holidays, for instance – though he and his wife “squeak by”.

Bamford says that despite the fact that he encounters a great deal of poverty among the Special Education students he teaches – some of who live in trailer parks or come to school hungry – few discuss or label themselves in class terms.

Bamford, who left England 20 years ago, grew up living on the edge of a council estate in Nottingham. He says that the Americans he interacts with socially in New Hampshire are also less diverse economically than his range of friends in Britain, where he was the first in his family to go to college. In England, Bamford feels you are “up against different kinds of people more often, living in closer communities”. He also spoke of extreme inequality expressed openly and through physical adjacency – like affluent houses nextdoor to these trailer parks – that he never saw in England.

For Reeves, the biggest shocker has been that in America, people convince themselves that the system is meritocratic “and thus they don’t feel any shame about broadcasting the internships they got through nepotism, or that they got into colleges as legacies, or that they paid for private SAT prep for their kids”.

Reeves argues there is a cognitive dissonance at play. In one captivating and acrid riff, he describes parents who “may be Rachel-Maddow-all-in-no-toy-guns-in-the-house kind of people, but they send all three of their kids to pricey Georgetown Day School without any moral perturbation”.

“The UK, with all of it class consciousness, brings class guilt, which is a good thing. But the agonizing discussions over whether British liberal parents should send their children to public [private] schools doesn’t happen here. In the US, parents are aware of structural unfairness but with a total lack of moral queasiness.”

While the British middle class remains one of the smallest and poorest in Europe – according to the Pew Research Center, a middle-class family of four in the UK is one of the poorest in Europe, with a disposable income of between $29,000 and $87,300 – the share of adults living in middle-income households has increased in the UK, from 61% to 67% between 1991 and 2010, according to Pew Global in 2017.
This uptick is not true in the US. America’s middle-class share was a mere 59% in 2010 (with the caveat that middle-class people’s salaries in the US tend to be higher than in the UK).

Meanwhile, wealth inequality in the US today also resembles that before the Great Depression. Social networks matter greatly, and our class calibrations are often around what college one attended, leading to gruesome institutional divisions between those who attend, say, community colleges and those who attend top-tier universities. In England, despite the recent rise in student fees, university is far cheaper. The epidemic of student loans that has weighed down young Americans and older American alike simply doesn’t exist.

It was no accident that a saving grace for Rodrigo – who eventually moved to California and married an American – was the lack of copious student debt from his days at Oxford. And paradoxically, he feels that America’s attitude towards English people has given him a lift up when he moved to the US, as some Americans’ understanding of England is entirely derived from the aristocrats of imported television.

Few Americans would admit to this or, of course, talk about class at all. As Reeves says, “a bit of [British] class consciousness, on balance, would be better for the US”.

RETRIEVED FROM: https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/mar/28/which-country-has-the-worst-class-system-the-uk-or-us
The Mousetrap: Differences in English and American Culture

Compare and Contrast

Name____________________

United States cultural and social environment

United Kingdom cultural and social environment
The Mousetrap: Differences in English and American Culture

Opinionnaire

Name______________________

The Mousetrap: Differences in English and American Culture, Exploring Your Opinions

Directions: After each statement, write SA (strongly agree), A (agree), D (disagree), or SD (strongly disagree). Then, in the space provided, briefly explain the reasons for your opinions.

1. People are mainly judged based on merit in the United States. _______
   Your reasons:

2. In the United States, accents and how people speak matter. _______
   Your reasons:

3. The college a person goes to can tell a lot about a person. _______
   Your reasons:
K-12 Student Standards for English Language Arts » Grade 1

Reading Standards for Literature

Key Ideas and Details

1. Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
2. a. Retell stories, including key details.
   b. Recognize and understand the central message or lesson.
3. Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10. With prompting and support read informational texts appropriately complex for grade 1.

Writing Standards

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

8. With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

K-12 Student Standards for English Language Arts » Grade 4

Reading Standards for Literature

Key Ideas and Details

1. Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
2. Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.
3. Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character’s thoughts, words, or actions).
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. Make connections between the text of a story or drama and a visual or oral presentation of the text.

Writing Standards

d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

7. Conduct short research projects that build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.

8. Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; take notes and categorize information, and provide a list of sources.

9. Draw relevant evidence from grade-appropriate literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. Make connections between the text of a story or drama and a visual or oral presentation of the text.

9. Compare and contrast the treatment of similar themes and topics (e.g., opposition of good and evil) and patterns of events (e.g., the quest) in stories, myths, and traditional literature from different cultures.

K-12 Student Standards for English Language Arts » Grade 7

Reading Standards for Literature

Key Ideas and Details

1. Cite several pieces of relevant textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

3. Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events).

2. Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

3. Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).
Craft and Structure

6. Analyze how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a text.

Writing Standards

3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

d. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

9. Compare and contrast a fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period as a means of understanding how authors of fiction use or alter history.
K-12 Student Standards for Social Studies » Grade 4

History

Standard 1 – Chronological and Historical Thinking

4.1.6 Define and distinguish between primary and secondary sources

4.1.7 Summarize primary resources and explain their historical importance

K-12 Student Standards for Social Studies » Grade 7

History

Standard 1: Historical Thinking Skills

7.1.1 Produce clear and coherent writing for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences by completing the following tasks:

• Conducting historical research

• Evaluating a broad variety of primary and secondary sources

• **Comparing and contrasting** varied points of view

• Determining the meaning of words and phrases from historical texts

• Using technology to **research**, produce, or publish a written product

7.1.3 Analyze the causes and effects of key events and ideas in the development of the United States

7.5.1 Analyze the physical and **political** features of the United States
K-12 Student Standards for Social Studies » World History

History

Standard 1 – Historical Thinking Skills

Students use information and concepts to solve problems, interpret, analyze, and draw conclusions from historical events.

WH.1.1 Produce clear and coherent writing for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences by:

- conducting historical research
- evaluating a broad variety of primary and secondary sources
- comparing and contrasting varied points of view
- determining the meaning of words and phrases from historical texts
- using technology to research, produce, or publish a written product

WH.1.2 Compare historical periods in terms of differing political, social, religious, and economic issues

WH.1.3 Use a variety of sources to analyze the validity of information in terms of facts, opinions, or propaganda

WH.1.4 Analyze historical events through the use of debates (opinions,) timelines, cartoons, maps, graphs, and other historical sources
The Mousetrap: Who Do You Think is the Suspect?

By Karel Sloane-Boekbinder

In Agatha Christie’s The Mousetrap a group of strangers is stranded in a boarding house during a snow storm. The Mousetrap is a murder mystery. The suspects include the newly married couple who run the house, and the suspicions in their minds nearly wreck their perfect marriage. Other potential suspects or victims are a spinster with a curious background, an architect who seems better equipped to be a chef, a retired Army major, a strange little man who claims his car has overturned in a drift, a jurist who makes life miserable for everyone and a policeman. Who will be the suspect(s)? Who will be the victim(s)? In this lesson, students attempt to discover the rationale of the murderer(s) pattern by reading descriptions for each character, background on Author Agatha Christie’s inspiration for The Mousetrap and an overview of the plot of the play. The Mousetrap is WORLD’S longest running play!

Begin this lesson by explaining that The Mousetrap is a murder mystery and that there is at least one victim and at least one suspect. Students are going to have opportunities to consider the following questions: Who do you think is the suspect? Who do you think is the victim? They will also have opportunities to express their opinions about who they think the victim(s) and the suspect(s) might be.

As a class, read and discuss The Mousetrap Character Descriptions. Place the descriptions on an ELMO, Promethean Board or a SMART board where they can be visible to the whole class. Read and discuss the descriptions. As the class reads and discusses each character description, ask students to consider: Is this character a suspect or a victim? Why?

Next, as a class, read and discuss The Mousetrap play synopsis. Place the synopsis on an ELMO, Promethean Board or a SMART board where it can be visible to the whole class. Read and discuss the synopsis.

As a class, read and discuss Notes On The Mousetrap, EXCERPT. Place the excerpt on an ELMO, Promethean Board or a SMART board where it can be visible to the whole class. Read and discuss the excerpt.

Once the class has finished reading and discussing the excerpt, distribute a copy of The Mousetrap: Who Do You Think is the Suspect? Opinionnaire 1 and Opinionnaire 2 sheets to each student and a pencil. Ask students to consider everything the class has read about the characters and the plot to help them complete their Opinionnaire 1 and Opinionnaire 2. Review The Mousetrap Character Descriptions as needed while students are completing
their Opinionnaires. When students have completed their Opinionnaires have them take turns reading their Opinionnaires aloud to the class.

As students take turns reading, create a class tally sheet. Tally how many students believe each character is either a suspect or a victim. Is there one character or another the majority of the class believes is guilty? Is there one character or another the majority of the class believes is a victim? Do students think there might be more than one suspect? Do students think there might be more than one victim? As a class, discuss the tally sheet and how it expresses any opinions students have in common.
The Mousetrap Character Descriptions

Characters (in order of appearance)

**Mollie Ralston** – co-owner with her husband Giles and brand new proprietress of Monkswell Manor; tall, pretty young woman; a bit modest and guileless on the surface, but smart, underneath, not afraid to be feisty or confrontational when necessary; good business woman; more "in charge" than her husband; knows what needs to be done; continually asks her husband to execute the chores and business of running the inn; empathetic; quick to defend the defenseless underdog; confident in her marriage, but susceptible to the seeds of doubt when convincingly planted; harbors an unresolved secret.

Female: 27-29. Excellent British dialect skills. Well spoken – received pronunciation.

**Giles Ralston** – co-owner with his wife Mollie and brand new proprietor of Monkswell Manor; likeable and plain but attractive, English polite, but occasionally arrogant young man; a bit entitled and somewhat hapless.

Male: 27-29. Excellent British dialect skills. Well spoken – received pronunciation.

**Christopher Wren** – wild-looking, neurotic young man described as others as "ill mannered, neurotic"; "helpless, unhappy"; confiding, almost childish manner; eye for antiques, architecture, art, food; particularly knowledgeable about and a bit obsessed with furniture and antiques; intelligent with a need for love and acceptance underneath the surface.


**Mrs Boyle** – a critical older woman who is pleased by nothing she observes. Former magistrate, imposing woman; bad tempered, plays by the book and by the rules; has a clear sense of standards and the way things should be done; something of a classist; quick to judge and to express her discontent; can be condescending, irritating, outspoken, a bit militant. Harbors a secret.

Female: 50-60. Excellent British dialect skills. Well spoken – received pronunciation.

**Major Metcalf** – Retired from the army, little is known about Major Metcalf (by everyone else in the Inn.) Middle aged, square shouldered; military in manner and bearing, very good at his job; excellent observer; keen eye; equally keen wit. Harbors a secret.

Male: 55-60. Excellent British dialect skills – archetypal English upper middle class, public school boy (but not Eton).

**Miss Casewell** – A strange, aloof, masculine woman who speaks offhandedly about the horrific experiences of her childhood. A manly type (more like Katherine Hepburn than a cliched "mannish woman"); smart, somewhat inscrutable, while worldly; can be sardonic and passive aggressive; a little brazen and unpredictable. Harbors a secret.

Female: 25-30. Excellent British dialect skills – she is well spoken but not posh.

**Mr Paravicini** – A man of unknown provenance, who turns up claiming his car has overturned in a snowdrift. He appears to be affecting a foreign accent and artificially
aged with make-up. Seems to be older than he is (trying to disguise his identity, described as foreign and dark and elderly); charming and occasionally diabolical; amusing; possessed of European airs, continental manners; the occasional odd laugh. Male: 40-50. Affected Italian accent.

**Detective Sergeant Trotter** – The detective role. He arrives in a snow storm and questions the proprietors and guests about the recent murders and threat of potential murders at the Inn. Cheerful when necessary, but mainly serious and business-like, commonplace (Londoner) with a slight London east end accent. Harbors a secret. Male: 25-30. Accent of English working class (slightly put-on) could be London east end accent.
THE MOUSETRAP

by Agatha Christie
Full Length Play, Melodrama / 5m, 3f
A snowstorm traps a group of strangers with an unknown killer in the world’s longest running play!

Additional Info
The world's longest running play!

A group of strangers is stranded in a boarding house during a snow storm, one of whom is a murderer. The suspects include the newly married couple who run the house, and the suspicions in their minds nearly wreck their perfect marriage. Others are a spinster with a curious background, an architect who seems better equipped to be a chef, a retired Army major, a strange little man who claims his car has overturned in a drift, and a jurist who makes life miserable for everyone. Into their midst comes a policeman, traveling on skis. He no sooner arrives, when the______is killed. Two down, and one to go. To get to the rationale of the murderer's pattern, the policeman probes the background of everyone present, and rattles a lot of skeletons. Another famous Agatha Christie switch finish! Chalk up another superb intrigue for the foremost mystery writer of her time.

RETRIEVED FROM: https://www.samuelfrench.com/p/898/the-mousetrap
Notes On The Mousetrap, EXCERPT

posted in child abuse by Christie's Fan
Rating: four out of five

Year of Release: 25th November 1952
Motive for Murder: Revenge

Plot:

It is the first day Monkswell Manor opens its door for the guests. The newly-married Giles and Mollie Ralstons’ business venture is about to prove its worthwhile. Five guests are present amidst the heavy snow; four have booked their rooms in advance. The last guest, an Italian man, turns up after he abandons his car which has been stuck in the snowdrift. Nonetheless, he is not the last to come as a detective sergeant knocks the door later in the evening to investigate a murder case. Afterwards, the snow storm makes the road impassable.

Mrs. Maureen Lyon was strangled in her home in Paddington, London a day before. The main suspect is a man wearing a dark overcoat, light scarf and a soft felt hat. Police’s attention is drawn to the guest house as two people therein are linked to the death. What relates the demise of a middle-aged woman and a child abuse case at the Longridge Farm nearby?

The next day, a guest is found dead in the lounge after lunch.

Highlights:
Act I: Scene 1 The Great Hall at Monkswell Manor. Late Afternoon

Scene 2 The same. The following day after lunch

Act II: The same. Ten minutes later.

Time: the present

Eight people confined in a house- theRalstons, five guests and a police man-strangers to one another, or so they thought. The plot deploys Christie’s often-quoted adage in her books: old sins have long shadows. Hence the motive of the crime: revenge. More importantly is not just one, but three targets. Two of them have been ‘done.’

Over ten years before Mrs. Lyon and her husband lived in the Longridge Farm fostering three children: James (little Jimmie), George and Katherine. They were abused under the farmers’ care and Jimmie died from starvation as a result. After being released and the Lyons were imprisoned, the other two were then separated; the girl was adopted and has been known to live abroad whilst George stayed in England and had another foster parent.

Years later the Lyons were released from jail. The husband has died already but the wife was not, not until she was tracked down and recently killed.

In ‘Tape-Measure Murder’ (Miss Marple’s Final Cases) the female sleuth must think of a clue that will put the murderer on the crime scene. Much to Inspector Slack’s astonishment, she suggests that the stabbing of Mrs. Spenlow is an ‘old-fashioned crime.’ The clue? A pin on Constable Palk’s top, the first person arrived to examine the body.

In the play an old habit known intimately only by another person gives away the murderer’s identity. Something which is rather difficult to realize by the audience, given its subtleness and other red-herrings that follow. All the same, the killings have been carried out owing to the circumstances of a tragic event occurred dated years beforehand.

The O’Neill children (from left): Terence, Dennis and Tom.
It is said that Christie was affected by Dennis O’Neill’s death in the hands of the Goughs whilst his two other brothers, Terence and Tom were miraculously survived. In the reality, despite only spent six years in prison, the Goughs died naturally and Tom pinpoints the downside of foster care in *A Place Called Hope*. In Christie’s world, however, the dramatization highlights the extent of the emotional scars for the siblings concerned and the survivor’s guilt…

RETRIEVED FROM:
https://knowingchristie.wordpress.com/2014/01/17/notes-on-the-mousetrap/
The Mousetrap: Who Do You Think is the Suspect?

**Opinionnaire, 1**

Name______________________

Directions: After each statement, write SA (strongly agree), A (agree), D (disagree), or SD (strongly disagree). Then, in the space provided, briefly explain the reasons for your opinions.

1. Giles Ralston is the murderer._______
   Your reasons:

2. Mollie Ralston is the murderer._______
   Your reasons:

3. Christopher Wren is the murderer._______
   Your reasons:

4. Mrs Boyle is the murderer._______
   Your reasons:

5. Major Metcalf is the murderer._______
   Your reasons:
The Mousetrap: Who Do You Think is the Suspect?

Opinionnaire, 2

Name______________________

Directions: After each statement, write SA (strongly agree), A (agree), D (disagree), or SD (strongly disagree). Then, in the space provided, briefly explain the reasons for your opinions.

6. Miss Casewell is the murderer.________
Your reasons:

7. Mr. Paravicini is the murderer.________
Your reasons:

8. Detective Sergeant Trotter is the murderer.________
Your reasons:
K-12 Student Standards for English Language Arts » Grade 1

Reading Standards for Literature

Key Ideas and Details

1. Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.

2. a. Retell stories, including key details.
   
b. Recognize and understand the central message or lesson.

3. Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10. With prompting and support read informational texts appropriately complex for grade 1.

Writing Standards

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

8. With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

K-12 Student Standards for English Language Arts » Grade 4

Reading Standards for Literature

Key Ideas and Details

1. Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

2. Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.

3. Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character’s thoughts, words, or actions).
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. **Make connections between the text of a story** or drama and a visual or oral presentation of the text.

Writing Standards

d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.

**K-12 Student Standards for English Language Arts » Grade 7**

Reading Standards for Literature

**Key Ideas and Details**

1. Cite several pieces of relevant textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as **inferences** drawn from the text.

3. Analyze the interactions between **individuals**, **events**, and ideas in a text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events).

2. Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

3. Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the **characters** or **plot**).

**Craft and Structure**

6. Analyze how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a text.

**Writing Standards**

3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant **descriptive details**, and well-structured event sequences.

   d. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.
The Mousetrap: Six Impossible Things Before Breakfast

By Karel Sloane-Boekbinder

Author and playwright Agatha Christie was a phenomenal woman. Intelligent and determined, she showed perseverance and a commitment to being her own person from the time she was a child. Although Agatha Christie was homeschooled, she never received a degree. In fact, Christie was in real danger of growing up an illiterate. Her mother was said to be against her daughter learning how to read until at age eight Christie taught herself to read. Her mother insisted on home schooling her and refused to let her pursue any formal education until the age of 15, when her family dispatched her to a Paris finishing school. (https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/85723/15-mysterious-facts-about-agatha-christie)

Despite this, in 1961 Christie received an honorary Doctorate from the University of Exeter. The University of Exeter is a leading research university. One of their famous alumna includes J. K. Rowling (Rowling received a BA in French and Classics.)

Christie was as successful a playwright as she was a novelist, a feat that no other crime writer has achieved. However, success came because she persevered. Christie’s first book, The Mysterious Affair at Styles suffered rejection. Six publishers turned it down until 1921, five years after she began submitting it, Bodley Head agreed to publish. Fourteen years later, this same book that had originally been rejected by so many was one of the 10 titles chosen to launch Penguin books. As of 2018 Penguin Random House is the world's leading trade book publisher; their total revenue was €3.42 billion ($3.87 billion at current exchange rates.)

In her play The Mousetrap Agatha Christie references Lewis Carroll’s character Alice (of Alice in Wonderland) by borrowing a phrase from Through the Looking Glass—“six impossible things before breakfast.” In this lesson, students will be encouraged to consider six things they have always wanted to do and haven’t attempted yet. They will not only brainstorm about six things they would like to do, they will develop actions steps and a timeline so that they may accomplish these impossible things.

A realistic lens of accomplishment can be put on any suggestion, no matter how far-fetched or fantastical. As an example, a student could say one impossible thing they have always wanted to do is fly like Superman. Ways to accomplish this seemingly impossible thing could be learning to hang glide, learning to parachute from an airplane or learning how to fly with a jet pack.

Begin this lesson by explaining students will be learning about author and playwright Agatha Christie, reflecting on an inspiration Agatha Christy used in her writing and considering ways they can use determination to accomplish things that may seem impossible at first.
Share with students that author and playwright Agatha Christie was a phenomenal woman. Intelligent and determined, she showed perseverence and a commitment to being her own person from the time she was a child. Although Agatha Christie was homeschooled, she never received a degree. In fact, Christie was in real danger of growing up an illiterate. Her mother was said to be against her daughter learning how to read until at age eight Christie taught herself to read. Her mother insisted on home schooling her and refused to let her pursue any formal education until the age of 15, when her family dispatched her to a Paris finishing school. (https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/85723/15-mysterious-facts-about-agatha-christie)

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Christie was as successful a playwright as she was a novelist, a feat that no other crime writer has achieved. However, success came because she persevered. Christie’s first book, The Mysterious Affair at Styles suffered rejection. Six publishers turned it down until 1921, five years after she began submitting it, Bodley Head agreed to publish. Fourteen years later, this same book that had originally been rejected by so many was one of the 10 titles chosen to launch Penguin books. As of 2018 Penguin Random House is the world’s leading trade book publisher; their total revenue was €3.42 billion ($3.87 billion at current exchange rates.)

Share with students that in her play The Mousetrap Agatha Christie references Lewis Carroll’s character Alice (of Alice in Wonderland) by borrowing a phrase from Through the Looking Glass. As a class, read and discuss quotes from The Mousetrap and Through the Looking Glass. Place the quotes sheet on an ELMO, Promethean Board or a SMART board where it can be visible to the whole class. Read and discuss the quotes.

Next, as a class, read and discuss the article Why Making Six Impossible Wishes Before Breakfast Improves Your Life In Crazy Ways. Place the article on an ELMO, Promethean Board or a SMART board where it can be visible to the whole class. Read and discuss the article.

Follow this by reading Agatha Christie surfed waves in 1924 as a class. Place the article on an ELMO, Promethean Board or a SMART board where it can be visible to the whole class. Read and discuss the article.

Read A Mysterious Life: 20 Agatha Christie Facts as a class. Place the article on an ELMO, Promethean Board or a SMART board where it can be visible to the whole class. Read and discuss the article.

Distribute a copy of The Mousetrap: Six Impossible Things Before Breakfast sheet and a pencil to each student. Ask students to consider six things they have always wanted to do and haven’t attempted yet. Encourage students not only brainstorm about six things they would like to do, ask them to develop actions steps and a timeline so that they may accomplish these impossible things.
As students are writing, explain that a realistic lens of accomplishment can be put on any suggestion, no matter how far-fetched or fantastical. As an example, a student could say one impossible thing they have always wanted to do is fly like Superman. Ways to accomplish this seemingly impossible thing could be learning to hang glide, learning to parachute from an airplane or learning how to fly with a jet pack. Make as many copies of The Mousetrap: Six Impossible Things Before Breakfast sheet as needed so that students have space to brainstorm about what they would like to do and how they will make what they would like to do into a reality.

Once students have completed their The Mousetrap: Six Impossible Things Before Breakfast sheet, have them take turns reading them aloud to the class. What action steps will they take to complete each impossible thing? How long will each action step take?
The Mousetrap

Trotter. It's impossible...I can't believe it...

Christopher. What can't you believe? Six impossible things before breakfast like the Red Queen.

Trotter. Oh yes. It's rather like that.

Christopher. Dear me—you look as though you'd seen a ghost.

Trotter. (resuming his usual manner) I've seen something I ought to have seen before.

Alice In Wonderland Quotes

“Alice laughed. 'There's no use trying,' she said. 'One can't believe impossible things.'

I daresay you haven't had much practice,' said the Queen. 'When I was your age, I always did it for half-an-hour a day. Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast.”
— Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland

“If I had a world of my own, everything would be nonsense. Nothing would be what it is, because everything would be what it isn't. And contrary wise, what is, it wouldn't be. And what it wouldn't be, it would. You see?”
— Lewis Carroll, Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland & Through the Looking-Glass

RETRIEVED FROM: https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/alice-in-wonderland

https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/9467-alice-laughed-there-s-no-use-trying-she-said-one-can-t
Why Making Six Impossible Wishes Before Breakfast Improves Your Life In Crazy Ways

By Tanvi Deshmukh, May 18th 2017

We grow up listening to fairy tales, happy endings and wishes that come true. And for us, the enchantment of the other side, a world just beyond the reach of time and space settles deep within our souls.

We believe. We believe in true happiness, we believe in the triumph of good over evil, we believe in the beauty of others, we believe in freedom, we believe that someday love will save us all – we believe in ourselves. When we grow older though, the magic dissipates. It never really goes away, but that sense of wonder, the fascination of pushing boundaries, of attaining the impossible becomes a childish exercise of no real consequence. We forget too soon, though, that real magic only happens we let ourselves feel that surge of energy. The boundless, transcendental, expansive feeling that overwhelms us, wraps us from head to foot in something. We can’t quite name it yet, but at some point, it transmutes into an almost tangible entity. One that leaves a sweet aftertaste, like you’ve just swallowed a little bit of magic. It is what we can’t get out of systems, it is what lies beneath our skin like an itch we cannot scratch, it is what lurks in the deepest recesses of our minds like a glimmer of light in the darkness. It what comes back to us in ways we haven’t really wrapped our heads around, through gestures we can’t wholly comprehend. Hope.

Bright, burning, beautiful hope. As long as there’s hope, there is life. Or the will to make the best of it, at the very least.

Lewis Carroll, master of all things whimsical and harbinger of hope to many, including me throughout my childhood, wrote and practiced in a really Zen philosophy: believing the impossible, or to be more specific, making six impossible wishes before breakfast.

In “Through the Looking Glass,” when Alice says, “There’s no use in trying since one can’t believe impossible things,” the Queen famously replies saying, “Sometimes, I’ve believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast!” The symbols of Alice and the Queen are, in so many ways, an embodiment of our own struggle between
rationality and hope. Alice is our voice of reason. The sceptic, the realist, the grounded, level-headed anchor to our tempestuous, unbalanced ship of dreams. What we forget sometimes, is the fact that anchors weigh us down, drag us in deeper and sometimes are the very cause of the demise of our brave little ships. We need the Queen. We need imagination, we need the crazy, we need the irrational, the heart shatteringly scary, the limitless breath of fresh air that will set our ship afloat high on the seven seas. Maybe we’ll drift a little, but imagine the thrill of the ride, the adventures, the excitement. Oh, we need Hope. We need to wish for six impossible things before breakfast, and then believe that they will come true.

Because if we truly believe in them, they will.

If you could ask for six impossible wishes to be fulfilled instantaneously, unconditionally, and without any consequences, what would they be?

I’d wish to be less rigid and more accepting. I’d wish for self love and wish to learn the difference between falling in love and falling prey to it. I’d wish to be more grateful, and less selfish. I’d wish for calmness on the days when my world is a blur of chaotic pain. I’d wish for forgiveness for the times I didn’t deserve any, and wish for the strength to walk away from the things I should have left behind long ago. I’d wish I had better control over my temper and wish that I’d never hesitate to acknowledge and apologize for my mistake. I’d wish that I’d somehow make a difference to someone someday and wish that I’d truly believe in the inherent goodness in people.

More than anything else, I’d wish for the wisdom to recognize that all these wishes are not really impossible, that although they lie elusively out of my reach right now, there is this one thing I can do in order to make them possible…

And so, I’d believe.

Agatha Christie, the famous British crime novelist who created Hercule Poirot and Miss Jane Marple, learned to surf in 1924, when riding waves was the privilege of only a few.

A collection of previously unpublished letters and photos has revealed that Christie set off on a year-long round-the-world trip, as part of a trade mission of the British Empire Expedition.

The master of suspenseful plots visited Hawaii, Canada, America, New Zealand, Australia and South Africa and took photos with her portable
camera. Agatha Christie described her adventures in diaries and letters sent to her mother.

"It was occasionally painful as you took a nosedive down into the sand, but on the whole it was an easy sport and great fun," the novelist wrote. When she finally took off on her first stand-up ride, she was delighted.

"Oh, it was heaven! Nothing like it. Nothing like that rushing through the water at what seemed to you a speed of about two hundred miles an hour; all the way in from the far distant raft, until you arrived, gently slowing down, on the beach, and foundered among the soft flowing waves."

"The Grand Tour," a new book published by Harper Collins, delivers some of the original letters, postcards, newspaper cuttings and memorabilia collected by Agatha on her trip.

The British crime fiction writer sold over a billion copies of her 80 novels, short story collections and plays. Agatha Christie, a true pioneer, not only in novels but also in surfing.
A Mysterious Life: 20 Agatha Christie Facts

Agatha Christie behind her desk with towers of her own books
Source: theguardian.com
On the anniversary of her death, we reveal twenty things you might not know about doyenne of crime fiction, Agatha Christie

JANUARY 12, 2015
TEXT Daisy Woodward

Dylan Thomas once declared, "Poetry is not the most important thing in life... I'd much rather lie in a hot bath reading Agatha Christie and sucking sweets." And in the midst of a typically cold and dreary January, we're rather inclined to agree.

Christie's legacy is remarkable – she is thought to have sold more books than any other fiction writer, with the possible exception of Shakespeare; her works have been translated into 103 languages, making her the most translated author to date; and she is the only crime novelist to have achieved equal and international fame as a dramatist. Moreover, her work is just as popular and enthralling today as it ever was – The Mousetrap remains the longest running West End play, while the continuous stream of Poirot and Miss Marple television reruns prove that a brilliantly written murder mystery never grows old.

Today marks the 39th anniversary of the great Dame's death, and so, in celebration of her incredible life, we present twenty things you might not know about Christie.
1. In her early years, Christie didn't go to school but was educated at home by her mother and various governesses.

2. She wrote her first book as the result of a challenge from her sister, Madge.
3. In her late teens she studied to be a classical musician but was too nervous to perform.

4. Her first book waited five years before publication, having been rejected by six publishers.
5. She wrote six novels under the name Mary Westmacott, one of which – Absent in the Spring – she wrote over the course of a single weekend.

6. On 13th April 1917 she qualified as a dispenser, thus acquiring her inside knowledge of poisons.

The Daily Sketch front cover, December 15, 1926
7. She married her first husband Archibald Christie in 1914 but the marriage was unhappy. She vanished in 1926, and was only found ten days later, living under an assumed name in a spa hotel in Harrogate. Her vanishment caused a media whirlwind and was front page news, and Christie herself was never able to fully explain what happened. A 2006 biography argued that the author had entered a period of out-of-body amnesia induced by stress – resulting in a sort of trance.

8. Christie was a teetotaller and non-smoker. She tried unsuccessfully to make herself like cigarettes by smoking one after lunch and one after dinner every day for six months but to no avail.
9. Christie had a lifelong interest in archaeology, and it was on a trip to the excavation site at Ur that she met her second husband, Max Mallowan, who she married in 1930. She wrote many of her novels while on digs, many of them in a specially built house called ‘Beit Agatha’. Their marriage was always happy, and it continued until Christie's death in 1976.
10. Miss Marple was modelled on her maternal grandmother.

11. She was a dog lover and owned many dogs throughout her lifetime.

12. She hated marmalade pudding and cockroaches but loved the colour green and flowers – her favourite was Lily of the Valley.
The Agatha Christie Rose

13. She has a rose named after her.

14. Christie claimed to have "seen" Hercule Poirot twice in her lifetime: once lunching in the Savoy and once on a boat in the Canary Islands.
15. By 1930, Agatha Christie found Poirot "insufferable", and by 1960 described him as a "detestable, bombastic, tiresome, ego-centric little creep". But because the public loved him, Christie refused to kill him off, claiming that it was her duty to appease her readers.
16. A pile of all of the US editions of Peril at End House would stretch to the moon.

17. When he died, Hercule Poirot was given a full-page obituary in The New York Times.

18. In 1972 Christie was immortalised in wax for Madame Tussauds.

19. On the day she died, the West End theatres dimmed their lights for an hour in her memory.
Agatha Christie's grave
20. Christie's gravestone at St Mary's, Cholsey, includes a quotation from Spenser's Fairie Queen, beginning ‘sleepe after toyle, port after stormie seas’.

RETRIEVED FROM: https://www.anothermag.com/art-photography/4239/a-mysterious-life-20-agatha-christie-facts
The Mousetrap:  
Six Impossible Things Before Breakfast

NAME: ____________________________

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<tr>
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K-12 Student Standards for English Language Arts » Grade 1

Reading Standards for Literature

Key Ideas and Details

1. Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.
2. a. Retell stories, including key details.
   b. Recognize and understand the central message or lesson.
3. Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10. With prompting and support read informational texts appropriately complex for grade 1.

Writing Standards

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

8. With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

K-12 Student Standards for English Language Arts » Grade 4

Reading Standards for Literature

Key Ideas and Details

1. Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. Make connections between the text of a story or drama and a visual or oral presentation of the text.

Writing Standards

d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
K-12 Student Standards for English Language Arts » Grade 7

Reading Standards for Literature

Key Ideas and Details

1. Cite several pieces of relevant textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

3. Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events).

2. Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

Writing Standards

3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

  d. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.
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