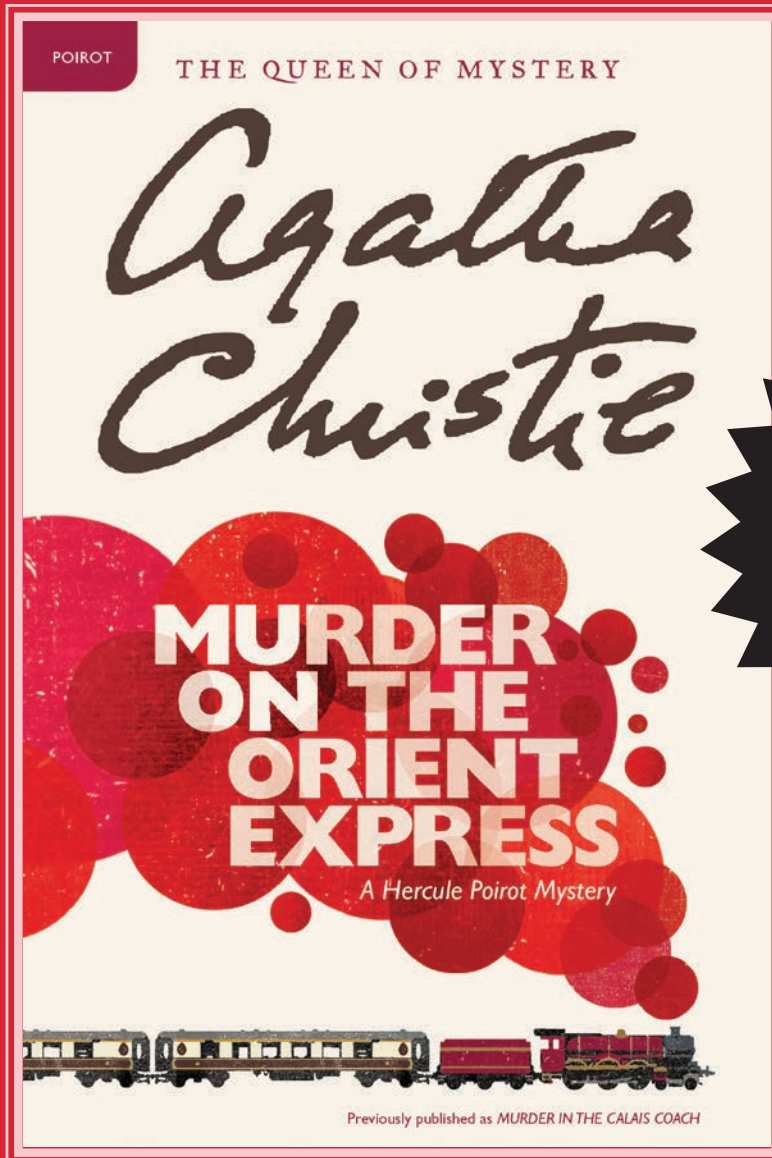


A TEACHER'S GUIDE TO



ALIGNED
TO THE
COMMON
CORE

The Queen of Mystery

Wm
MORROW

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Note to Teachers

The questions and activities in this teaching guide are written to support standards-based instruction. *Murder on the Orient Express* meets the standard for **Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity** for grade 8. Its structure, pacing, and universal appeal make it an appropriate reading choice for reluctant readers, and this guide could be adapted for grades 6-7. The book offers students an excellent opportunity to study the conventions of suspense and the murder mystery genre.

A complete list of the Common Core State Standards can be found at <http://www.corestandards.org/the-standards>.

This Teacher's Guide is divided into three sections. The first, "**Guided Reading Questions**," will help students with reading comprehension and appreciation. A list of vocabulary words and a glossary of French phrases used in each chapter can be found at the beginning of each chapter's questions. These questions can be used as a guide for annotating the text, journal responses, or discussion. Many of these questions ask students to examine how clues about characters serve to drive the plot of the mystery forward.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.10

The second section, "**Writing and Discussion Prompts**," consists of analytical writing and discussion prompts and is subdivided into genres based on the writing standards. The third section, "**Topics for Research Projects**," requires students to conduct and synthesize significant outside research on topics related to the novel. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.10**

Before You Read

Ask students to consider the idea of a “perfect crime.” What constitutes a perfect crime? What factors would need to be taken into consideration in order to plan a perfect crime? Is committing a crime ever justified?

If students are unfamiliar with the mystery genre, you may want to begin by showing a classic mystery movie or playing a mystery game like *Clue*. Use this experience to begin talking about the elements of the mystery genre.

Guided Reading Questions

PART ONE: THE FACTS

CHAPTER ONE: AN IMPORTANT PASSENGER ON THE TAURUS EXPRESS

Vocabulary: resplendent, tensely, averted, acceding, disclaiming, kindred, delegated, zeal, ardour, surreptitious, altercations, pre-occupation, valise, assent, sallied, pallor, peremptory, repressive **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.4a-d**

Glossary:

jolie femme – pretty woman

enfin – finally

mon cher – my dear

comme ça – just like that

en voiture – all aboard (colloquial)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.6

1. Examine the structure of the novel. Agatha Christie separates her book into three sections: “The Facts,” “The Evidence,” and “Hercule Poirot Sits Back and Thinks.” How would you explain the difference between facts and evidence? Are all facts evidence? Is all evidence a fact? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.4**
2. The opening scene of the novel contains an exchange between Lieutenant Dobosc and Hercule Poirot. Based on this exchange, what service do you think Hercule Poirot performed for the General? Why would this make him “an important passenger”? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.3**
3. What are the first details that Christie reveals to create a first impression of Mary Debenham? Use specific quotes from the text to support your answer. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
4. Mary Debenham’s first impression of Hercule Poirot is that he is, “A ridiculous-looking little man. The sort of little man one could never take seriously” (6[pb]/7[mm]). Does Mary Debenham’s first impression of Poirot contradict your first impression of Poirot? Explain your answer. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.3**
5. How many passengers are on the Taurus Express with Poirot? Is this number unusual? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
6. Consider Hercule Poirot’s first impression of Mary Debenham. Are there any words repeated in the description? Find an image or draw a sketch that you think matches the description of Mary. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1**
7. What is your first impression of Colonel Arbuthnot? What do you think Poirot means when he notes, “He is susceptible, our Colonel”? Why would he say that the train is “as dangerous as a sea voyage”? What type of danger is he referring to? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.3 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.4**
8. How does Agatha Christie foreshadow that the conversations between Mary and the Colonel will be important later? Cite specific textual evidence in your answer. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.6**
9. Why is Mary Debenham concerned about the train being delayed? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**

CHAPTER TWO: THE TOKATLIAN HOTEL

Vocabulary: concierge, modest, bland, philanthropist, benevolent, malevolence, tensivity, sallow, berth, munificent, melancholy
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.4a-d

Glossary:

voilà ce qui est embêtant – that's what's annoying

très bien – very well

mon vieux – friend

tout à fait au bout – at the very end

Je crois que vous avez un erreur – I think you have made an error

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.6

1. Why does Hercule Poirot have to book a ticket on the Simplon Orient train? Does the concierge anticipate any difficulty booking a coach at the last minute? Support your answer with quotes from the text. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1**
2. Who is M. Bouc? How does he know Poirot? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
3. Examine the description of Mr. Ratchett on page 16 (pb)/19 (mm). What details do you find particularly significant? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.4**
4. What simile does Poirot use to describe his impression of Mr. Ratchett? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.4**
5. Why is M. Bouc surprised to find that the entire train, including the No. 16, is booked? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
6. Why does Poirot think that the name of the missing passenger is a good omen (20 [pb]/23 [mm])? (Hint: Christie is making an illusion to a character in a novel by Charles Dickens – you will need to research the answer to this question). **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.4 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.7**
7. Why is MacQueen surprised when the conductor brings Poirot to share his room? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
8. How long is the journey on the Orient Express supposed to take? How long will it take the train to reach its first connecting point? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**

CHAPTER THREE: POIROT REFUSES A CASE

Vocabulary: gesticulated, summoned, morsels, morbid, unerring, swarthy, courteous, autocratic, nonchalance, indolent, demurred, discreet, coquetry, benevolence, shrewd, caprices **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.4a-d**

Glossary:

elle est jolie—et chic – she is pretty and chic

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.6

1. In your own words, explain why M. Bouc considers train travel a perfect setting for romance? In addition to romance, what does Poirot suggest that a train could be the setting for? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.3**
2. Poirot notes that the train is occupied by passengers of “all classes and nationalities” (24 [pb]/28 [mm]). Create a list of the passengers on the train, noting each character's socioeconomic class and nationality. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
3. As Poirot surveys the passengers in the dining car, he makes mental notes about their appearance and behavior. Identify the details that you find significant about each passenger. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**

4. Why does Ratchett approach detective Poirot? What reason does Poirot give for turning down his offer? What do you think Poirot's real reason is? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1**
5. At this point in the book, who do you predict will be the victim of murder? Who do you think has the potential to be a murderer? Support your answer with evidence from the text. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1**

CHAPTER FOUR: A CRY IN THE NIGHT

Vocabulary: protestation, punctually, intuitive, presumably **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.4a-d**

Glossary:

Ce n'est rien. Je me suis trompé – It's nothing. I was wrong

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.6

1. Since the Calais coach was initially full, how does Poirot end up in a private, first-class cabin? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
2. What do you think Christie means when she notes, "On this, the second day of the journey, barriers were breaking down" (32 [pb]/38 [mm]). Give an example of a barrier breaking down. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.3**
3. Summarize Mrs. Hubbard's comments to Poirot about Mr. Ratchett. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
4. What wakes Poirot in the middle of the night? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
5. Summarize everything that Poirot observes after he is awoken. Are there any details that you think might be especially significant? Explain your answer. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**

CHAPTER FIVE: THE CRIME

Vocabulary: deferential, insistent, voluble, altercation, spruce, dandified, lamentations, commence, calamity, ferocity, sagely, amateurishly, antecedents, intrigue **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.4a-d**

Glossary:

bonne nuit – good night

de l'eau minérale, s'il vous plait – Mineral water, please.

la Dame Américaine – the American lady

là là – oh dear

bon soir – good evening

Vous êtes un directeur de la linge, je crois, Monsieur. Vous pouvez nous dire – You are a line manager, I believe, Sir. You can tell us.

chef de train – conductor

déjeuner – breakfast

c'est un femme – this is a woman

c'est entendu – it is understood

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.6

1. Summarize everything Poirot hears when he is unable to get back to sleep? Explain your answer. Do you think his assumptions about the noises he hears are correct? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
2. What does the conductor tell Poirot about Mrs. Hubbard? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
3. Why has the train stopped? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**

4. What wakes Poirot up for the second time? What does he observe after he is awoken? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
5. In the morning, what are the passengers in the dining car upset about? What does Poirot notice about Mary Debenham's level of anxiety about the delay? Why is this strange? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.3**
6. Why does M. Bouc enlist Poirot's help? Why can't he have the local police investigate the murder? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
7. Why does the conductor suspect that a woman committed the crime? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
8. Explain what Dr. Constantine means when he says that the crime is "unscientific" (45 [pb]/54 [mm]). **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.4**
9. According to M. Bouc, what are Poirot's methods of investigating a crime? Why does he think the murder on the Orient Express is an ideal case for the detective? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1**
10. What does Poirot ask for in order to begin his investigation? Why do you think he requests these things? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1**
11. Explain how Christie's use of italics and ellipsis in the last line of this chapter helps create suspense. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.2A CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.6**
12. Up until this point, do you think any of the passengers has acted particularly suspiciously? Explain your answer, using specific textual evidence to support your position. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1**

CHAPTER SIX: A WOMAN?

Vocabulary: vigorous, relapsing, pursed, distaste, hampered, courier, perplexed, monotonous, memoranda, vexatious, obliged, enlist, pronounce, jovially, reproach **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.4a-d**

Glossary:

qu'est ce qu'il y a – what is there to

pourquoi – why

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.6

1. Explain why it makes sense for Poirot to question MacQueen first. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1**
2. How does MacQueen respond when he learns that Ratchett is dead? Is anything about his response suspicious? Explain your answer. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1**
3. Summarize MacQueen's interview with Poirot. Did MacQueen provide any information that you think could be important to the investigation? Explain your answer using specific evidence from the text. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1**
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2
4. After interviewing MacQueen, does Poirot consider him a likely suspect? Why or why not? Do you agree with Poirot's conclusion? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE BODY

Vocabulary: disarranged, grimace, absurd, manifestly, inconsistencies, feeble, vigorous, inertia, scrutiny, cambric, elucidation, incriminating, assailant, resurrect **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.4a-d**

Glossary:

que pensez vous de ça – what do you think of it

c'est rigolo, tout ça – it is funny, all of it

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.6

1. What does Poirot conclude about the open window in Ratchett's compartment? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
2. Describe the extent of Ratchett's injuries. What does the doctor note as being unusual about Ratchett's wounds? What hypothesis does Poirot come up with to explain the way that Ratchett was killed? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
3. Why didn't Ratchett struggle during the attack? Cite the line from the text that explains your answer. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1**
4. What physical evidence does Poirot discover? Why do you think he uses the word "convenient" to describe the evidence? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.3 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.6**
5. What piece of physical evidence does the doctor discover when he examines Ratchett's pajamas? What hypothesis does this evidence appear to confirm? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1**
6. What evidence is Poirot able to extract from the charred scrap of paper? Why is this evidence significant to his investigation? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**

CHAPTER EIGHT: THE ARMSTRONG KIDNAPPING CASE

Vocabulary: intricacies, indignation, complicity, acquitted, redolent, vengeance **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.4a-d**

Glossary:

mon Dieu – my God

quel animal – what an animal

tout de meme – still

après vous – after you

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.6

1. Summarize the key details of the Armstrong kidnapping case. What role did Ratchett play in the crime? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
2. The word "ratchett" is a slang term with rich connotations. In your opinion, does Samuel Ratchett embody these connotations? Explain your answer. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.4 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.5c**
3. Once he realizes Ratchett's true identity, what two possible scenarios does Poirot offer as potential motives for the murder? Which one do you think is most likely? Explain your answer. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1**
4. What is Poirot implying when he remarks that the dented watch is a "very convenient" piece of evidence (72 [pb]/85 [mm])? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.4 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.6**
5. What "fact" does both the dented watch and the time that Poirot reports hearing a voice from Ratchett's compartment seem to corroborate? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**

PART TWO: THE EVIDENCE

CHAPTER ONE: THE EVIDENCE OF THE WAGON LIT CONDUCTOR

Vocabulary: elicited, negligent, descend, summon, gratified **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.4a-d**

Glossary:

cauchemar – nightmare

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.6

1. What questioning technique does Poirot use to put the Wagon Lit conductor at ease? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
2. Examine the sketch of the passengers' rooms on page 77 (pb)/91 (mm). Does anything strike you as unusual or significant? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1**
3. What details in the Wagon Lit conductor's testimony seem to confirm the existing evidence? What new information does he add to the investigation? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
4. Why do you think Poirot asks about the possibility that someone entered or left the Calais coach portion of the train? How does the conductor respond to his questions? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
5. At the end of the interview, do you think Poirot considers the conductor a potential suspect? Do you? Cite specific textual evidence to support your answer. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**

CHAPTER TWO: THE EVIDENCE OF THE SECRETARY

Vocabulary: alias, utter, incriminating, inordinate, decess, unduly **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.4a-d**

1. Why does Poirot decide to question MacQueen a second time? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
2. What does MacQueen reveal about his connection to the Armstrong kidnapping case? Does Poirot seem to find it believable that MacQueen did not know Ratchett's true identity? Do you find it believable? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
3. Who does MacQueen's testimony provide an alibi for? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
4. What existing evidence seems to be corroborated by MacQueen's testimony? What new evidence does he introduce into the investigation? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
5. Does MacQueen appear to have a motive for killing Ratchett? If so, what is it? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
6. At the end of the interview, do you think Poirot considers MacQueen a potential suspect? Do you? Cite specific textual evidence to support your answer. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**

CHAPTER THREE: THE EVIDENCE OF THE VALET

Vocabulary: inexpressive, instigator, deprecating, voluble, snub, pacify CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.4a-d

1. Who does the testimony of the valet, Masterman, appear to provide an alibi for. Cite specific textual evidence to support your answer. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2
2. What existing evidence seems to be corroborated by Masterman's testimony? What new evidence does he introduce into the investigation? CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2
3. Does Masterman appear to have a motive for killing Ratchett? If so, what is it? CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2
4. At the end of the interview, do you think Poirot considers Masterman a potential suspect? Do you? Cite specific textual evidence to support your answer. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2

CHAPTER FOUR: THE EVIDENCE OF THE AMERICAN LADY

Vocabulary: articulate, wavering, fluctuated, plight, anticlimax, murmured, abstracted, plunged, adjoining, convulsively, burrow, wretch, muddled, adroitly CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.4a-d

1. Christie uses the word "dramatic" more than once in the description of Mrs. Hubbard's testimony. What do you think she is implying by this choice of words? CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.3 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.4
2. Why does Mrs. Hubbard remove all of the contents of her purse? Do the contents seem consistent with the purse of an American tourist? CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2
3. What "evidence" does Mrs. Hubbard offer to corroborate her story about a man being inside her compartment? Do you think her evidence is convincing? Explain your answer. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2
4. What does Mrs. Hubbard say to insinuate that Mr. Ratchett was involved with a woman? CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.3 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.6
5. Who does the testimony of Mrs. Hubbard appear to provide an alibi for? Cite specific textual evidence to support your answer. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2
6. What existing evidence seems to be corroborated by Mrs. Hubbard's testimony? What new evidence does she introduce into the investigation? CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2
7. Does Mrs. Hubbard appear to have a motive for killing Ratchett? If so, what is it? CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2
8. At the end of the interview, do you think Poirot considers Mrs. Hubbard a potential suspect? Do you? Cite specific textual evidence to support your answer. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2

CHAPTER FIVE: THE EVIDENCE OF THE SWEDISH LADY

Vocabulary: transpired, matron, tactfully, amiable, indignant, quivered, suffused, enamored CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.4a-d

1. What "possibilities" do you think Poirot is referring to when he tells M. Bouc that Mrs. Hubbard's button "suggests possibilities" (105 [pb]/124 [mm])? CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.3
2. Christie repeatedly uses the description "sheep-like" to describe Greta Ohlsson. What do you think this description suggests about Ohlsson? CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.3 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.4
3. Why do you think Poirot asks each passenger to write something down? CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2
4. Who does M. Bouc suspect? Is his suspicion based on any facts or evidence? Does Poirot agree with him? CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2

5. Who does the testimony of Greta Ohlsson appear to provide an alibi for? Cite specific textual evidence to support your answer. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
6. What existing evidence seems to be corroborated by Ohlsson's testimony? What new evidence does she introduce into the investigation? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
7. Does Greta Ohlsson appear to have a motive for killing Ratchett? If so, what is it? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
8. At the end of the interview, do you think Poirot considers Ohlsson a potential suspect? Do you? Cite specific textual evidence to support your answer. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**

CHAPTER SIX: THE EVIDENCE OF THE RUSSIAN PRINCESS

Vocabulary: implore, posthaste, intact, peal, imperious, latent, abrupt, acute, biased, obliged **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.4a-d**

Glossary:

voilà une grande dame – what a great lady

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.6

1. How does the Wagon Lit conductor respond to M. Bouc's suggestion that the button Mrs. Hubbard found belongs to him? Do you believe that he is innocent? Explain your answer. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
2. What does M. Bouc realize about how the murderer managed to "disappear" after killing Ratchett? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
3. Who does the testimony of Princess Dragomiroff appear to provide an alibi for? Cite specific textual evidence to support your answer. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
4. What existing evidence seems to be corroborated by the Princess's testimony? What new evidence does she introduce into the investigation? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
5. Does Princess Dragomiroff appear to have a motive for killing Ratchett? If so, what is it? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
6. What do you think Dragomiroff means when she tells Poirot that "this is Destiny" (118 [pb]/139 [mm])? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.3 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.4**
7. At the end of the interview, do you think Poirot considers Dragomiroff a potential suspect? Do you? Cite specific textual evidence to support your answer. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE EVIDENCE OF THE COUNT AND COUNTESS ANDRENYI

Vocabulary: formality, grudgingly **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.4a-d**

Glossary:

mon vieux – pal

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.6

1. What reasons could Count Andrenyi have for trying to keep Poirot from interviewing his wife? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
2. What does Poirot notice about the Countess's passport? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
3. Who do the testimonies of the Count and Countess Andrenyi appear to provide alibis for? Cite specific textual evidence to support your answer. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**

4. What existing evidence seems to be corroborated by their testimony? Do they introduce any new information to Poirot? CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2
5. Do the Andrenyis appear to have a motive for killing Ratchett? If so, what is it? CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2
6. At the end of the interview, do you think Poirot considers the Andrenyis potential suspects? Do you? Cite specific textual evidence to support your answer. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2

CHAPTER EIGHT: THE EVIDENCE OF COLONEL ARBUTHNOT

Vocabulary: ascertained, gratified, implicated, abash, furtive CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.4a-d

Glossary:

pukka sahib – true gentleman/true gentlewoman, first-class

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.6

1. Why do you think Poirot questions Arbuthnot about his relationship with Mary Debenham? CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1
2. Who does the testimony of Colonel Arbuthnot appear to provide an alibi for? Cite specific textual evidence to support your answer. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2
3. What existing evidence seems to be corroborated by Arbuthnot's testimony? What new information does he introduce to the case? CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2
4. Does Arbuthnot appear to have a motive for killing Ratchett? If so, what is it? CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2
5. At the end of the interview, do you think Poirot considers Colonel Arbuthnot to be a potential suspect? Do you? Cite specific textual evidence to support your answer. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2

CHAPTER NINE: THE EVIDENCE OF MR. HARDMAN

Vocabulary: reticent, proffered CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.4a-d

1. Why do you think Poirot questions Hardman about traveling first-class? What parts of his story about who he is and where he's been don't seem to add up? CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2
2. What does Hardman reveal about his identity? CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2
3. Who does the testimony of Hardman appear to provide an alibi for? Cite specific textual evidence to support your answer. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2
4. What existing evidence seems to be corroborated by Hardman's testimony? What new information does he introduce to the case? CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2
5. Does Hardman appear to have a motive for killing Ratchett? If so, what is it? CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2
6. At the end of the interview, do you think Poirot considers Hardman to be a potential suspect? Do you? Cite specific textual evidence to support your answer. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2

CHAPTER TEN: THE EVIDENCE OF THE ITALIAN

Vocabulary: voluble, reminiscence, acute, demur, animus, sojourn **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.4a-d**

Glossary:

ça se voit – it shows

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.6

1. Why does M. Bouc suspect the Italian, Antonio Foscarelli? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
2. Who does the testimony of Foscarelli appear to provide an alibi for? Cite specific textual evidence to support your answer. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
3. What existing evidence seems to be corroborated by Foscarelli's testimony? What new information does he introduce to the case? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
4. Does Foscarelli appear to have a motive for killing Ratchett? If so, what is it? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
5. At the end of the interview, do you think Poirot considers Foscarelli to be a potential suspect? Do you? Cite specific textual evidence to support your answer. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**

CHAPTER ELEVEN: THE EVIDENCE OF MISS DEBENHAM

Vocabulary: unruffled, keenly, contemptuous, abominable, impertinent, indiscretion, aback **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.4a-d**

Glossary:

vous n' éprouvez pas d'emotion – you do not experience any emotion

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.6

1. How is Poirot's method for questioning Mary Debenham different from the way he has questioned any one else? Why do you think he treats her differently? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
2. What does Mary's response to Poirot's question about the scarlet dressing gown seem to reveal? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.3**
3. Who does the testimony of Mary appear to provide an alibi for? Cite specific textual evidence to support your answer. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
4. What existing evidence seems to be corroborated by Mary Debenham's testimony? What new information does she introduce to the case? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
5. Does Mary Debenham appear to have a motive for killing Ratchett? If so, what is it? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
6. At the end of the interview, do you think Poirot considers Mary to be a potential suspect? Do you? Cite specific textual evidence to support your answer. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**

CHAPTER TWELVE: THE EVIDENCE OF THE GERMAN LADY'S MAID

Vocabulary: sangfroid, unpremeditated, placid, eminently, genial, nuance, stout, burly **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.4a-d**

1. What reasons does Poirot give for suspecting Mary Debenham? What facts seem to complicate his suspicion?
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2
2. Who does the testimony of Hildegarde Schmidt appear to provide an alibi for? Cite specific textual evidence to support your answer. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
3. What existing evidence seems to be corroborated by Schmidt's testimony? What new information does she introduce to the case? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
4. Does Hildegarde Schmidt appear to have a motive for killing Ratchett? If so, what is it? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
5. At the end of the interview, do you think Poirot considers Schmidt to be a potential suspect? Do you? Cite specific textual evidence to support your answer. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**

CHAPTER THIRTEEN: SUMMARY OF THE PASSENGERS' EVIDENCE

Vocabulary: unperturbed, intuition, deduction, reprovably, fabrication, ingenuity, spurious **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.4a-d**

1. How does Poirot respond to Bouc's request that he explain, "how the impossible can be possible" (160 [pb]/189 [mm])?
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.3
2. According to Poirot, what are the "certain indisputable facts" (161 [pb]/190 [mm])? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
3. What three possibilities does Poirot offer regarding the time that the crime was committed? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
4. According to Poirot, what makes the case so interesting? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
5. How many passengers corroborated the story of the small man with a womanish voice? Why is the existence of this man problematic? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
6. How many passengers corroborated the story of the woman in the red silk kimono? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
7. What prophecy does Poirot make regarding the search of the passengers' luggage? Why do you think he suspects that the Wagon Lit uniform will be found in Hildegarde Schmidt's luggage? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.3**
8. Who interrupts the investigation? What new evidence have they found? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**

CHAPTER FOURTEEN: THE EVIDENCE OF THE WEAPON

Vocabulary: vigor, chivalry, teetotaler, abstain, rotundity, obstructing, sham, furrowed, perplexity, unwitting, cavalierly, reproach, quay, fidgeting, cunning **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.4a-d**

Glossary:

mais il n'y a rien à voir – but there is nothing to see

ma foi – my faith

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.6

1. What could be significant about Christie's comment that, "It is possible that Mrs. Hubbard revived rather quicker with these methods than she might otherwise have done" (168 [pb]/199 [mm])? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.3**
2. Why is Poirot hesitant to agree with the doctor's conclusion that the knife Mrs. Hubbard discovered is the murder weapon? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
3. Why do you think the question of whether or not the communicating door in Mrs. Hubbard's compartment was locked so important to Poirot? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.3**

CHAPTER FIFTEEN: THE EVIDENCE OF THE PASSENGERS' LUGGAGE

Vocabulary: affably, savoring, quaint, demur, implicitly, flog, impetuously, truculent, meager, pretext, perfunctory, sordid, rousing, agitated, portmanteau, inclined, pleadingly, acquiesce, rueful, apt, linguist, bequest, defiance **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.4a-d**

Glossary:

tout de meme – still

dans son caractère – in character

c'est impayable – this is priceless

canaille – dishonorable man

vous êtes bien amiable – you are very friendly

qui s'excuse s'accuse – the one who apologizes accuses himself

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.6

1. What does Poirot find in Hardman's luggage? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
2. Why do you think Poirot makes small talk about the type of women he prefers while he searches Hardman's compartment? Is there anything unusual about Hardman's response to Poirot's questions? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.3**
3. What evidence-related item does Poirot discover in Colonel Arbutnot's luggage? Why is this suspicious? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
4. What does Princess Dragomiroff reveal about her willingness to kill Ratchett? What does Poirot note about her strength? Quote specific textual evidence in your answer. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.3**
5. Why do you think Poirot comments about the wet label of the Countess's suitcase? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.3**
6. How does Mary Debenham challenge Poirot? What conversation does Poirot ask her about? Why do you think she refuses to answer Poirot's question? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
7. How does Mary respond when Poirot asks her why she does not seem as agitated about the current delay as she was about the delay that would have caused her to miss her connection to the Orient Express? Do you find anything about her response suspicious? Explain your answer, citing evidence from the text. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**

8. What are the connotations of Mary's description of the crime as "a theatrical kind of crime" (187 [pb]/222 [mm])? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.3 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.4**
9. Explain the meaning of Poirot's idiomatic expression: "if you wish to catch a rabbit you put a ferret into the hole, and if the rabbit is there he runs" (188 [pb]/223 [mm]). **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.4 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.5a**
10. Why does Poirot ask Hildegarde Schmidt if she is a good cook? How does she answer? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
11. When M. Bouc and Poirot find the Wagon Lit uniform, what do they realize about how the murderer was able to enter rooms that may have been locked? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
12. According to MacQueen, why was he useful to Ratchett? What important service did he provide? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
13. Explain Poirot's final comment in this chapter: "A defiance. Very well. I will take it up" (192 [pb]/228 [mm])? Which character (or characters) seems capable of challenging or defying Poirot? Who do you think owns the kimono? Support your answer with specific evidence from the text. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.3**

PART THREE: HERCULE POIROT SITS BACK AND THINKS

Note to Teachers: At the beginning of this section, Hercule Poirot asks M. Bouc and Dr. Constantine to examine “the evidence of the passengers and the evidence of our own eyes” (196 [pb]/232 [mm]). In groups or as a class, ask students to look back over their answers to the guided questions and create two large charts—one containing the evidence of the passengers and one containing the evidence that Poirot, M. Bouc, and the doctor have witnessed.

Instruct students to look at the evidence, and then give them 5-10 minutes to “sit back and think” quietly. After contemplating the evidence, ask students to silently formulate a hypothesis about how the murder was committed and place their hypothesis in a sealed envelope that will be opened at the end of class. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.1a-d**

CHAPTER ONE: WHICH OF THEM?

Vocabulary: devise, idiomatic, deprecating, convey, complicity **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.4a-d**

Glossary:

le voilà – behold

Ce n'est rien. Je me suis trompé – No problem. It's my mistake.

précis – accurate

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.6

1. According to Poirot, why is the fact that Ratchett did not speak any languages other than English important? What conclusion do M. Bouc and the doctor immediately jump to when Poirot explains this? Why does Poirot hesitate to draw the same conclusion? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
2. Compare Poirot's list of passengers with your own list of evidence. Is there anything you think Poirot left out? Is there anything you missed? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1**

CHAPTER TWO: TEN QUESTIONS

Vocabulary: methodical, incriminate, inflict, dubious, frail, interval **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.4a-d**

1. Examine Poirot's list of “Things Needing Explanation” (203 [pb]/241 [mm]). Are there any questions that you think need to be added to this list? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1**
2. According to M. Bouc, the handkerchief could potentially belong to one of three people? Of these three, who do you think is most likely the owner? Explain your answer. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1**
3. How do M. Bouc and Dr. Constantine explain the pipe cleaner? Does Poirot agree with their reasoning? Do you? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
4. What factors make the people who wore the Wagon Lit uniform and scarlet kimono so difficult to identify? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
5. Explain how Poirot's comment in response to M. Bouc and Dr. Constantine's theory of the dented watch (206 [pb]/245 [mm]) is an example of irony. Why is he using irony here? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.6**
6. What does Poirot reveal about his reasons for asking each passenger to write something? What information did this investigative tactic reveal? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**

CHAPTER THREE: CERTAIN SUGGESTIVE POINTS

Vocabulary: elucidation, unblushingly, pornographic, nebulously, conspicuous, circuitous **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.4a-d**

1. Christie begins this chapter with omniscient narration, relaying the internal thoughts of M. Bouc and Dr. Constantine. What does each man's thoughts reveal about them? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.6**
2. Christie uses a simile to describe Poirot's eyes being "green like a cat's" (210 [pb]/250 [mm]). What characteristics could she be trying to associate with Poirot? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.5 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.4**
3. Examine the list of points that Poirot claims are "suggestive" (211 [pb]/251 [mm]). Can you figure out why any of these points could be important? What do you think the list suggests? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
4. What evidence causes Poirot to suspect that the dropped handkerchief belongs to Countess Andrenyi? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
5. According to Poirot, how did the snow upset the murderer's original plan? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
6. What evidence leads Poirot to conclude that the murderer is connected to the Armstrong kidnapping case? Cite specific textual support for your answer. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1**
7. According to Poirot, what does the evidence against Countess Andrenyi prove? What doesn't it prove? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
8. What conclusion does Poirot come to regarding the identity of Countess Andrenyi? What evidence leads him to this conclusion? Do you think he is correct? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**

CHAPTER FOUR: THE GREASE SPOT ON A HUNGARIAN PASSPORT

Vocabulary: loquacious, acquaint, sordid, earnestness, gainsay, enticing, rigorous, idly **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.4a-d**

1. Examine the way that the Count and Countess Andrenyi respond when Poirot confronts them. Do you find their explanations believable? Explain your answer, citing specific textual evidence. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
2. After getting her to confess to being the younger sister of Sonia Armstrong, what does Poirot ask Countess Andrenyi about? Why do you think he wants to know about the members of the Armstrong household? What do you think he suspects? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**

CHAPTER FIVE: THE CHRISTIAN NAME OF PRINCESS DRAGOMIROFF

Vocabulary: cordially, extenuating, preposterous, indomitable, flustered, caste, trifling, duplicity, reproachfully

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.4a-d

Glossary:

hors de combat – incapable

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.6

1. What conclusion does M. Bouc jump to regarding the identity of Ratchett's murderers? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
2. Who admits to being the owner of the dropped handkerchief? Why wasn't she suspected? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
3. What do you think the Princess Dragomiroff means when she says she does not feel bad for interfering with the investigation because, "In this case I consider that justice—strict justice—has been done" (229 [pb]/272 [mm])? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.3**

4. Do you think Poirot, M. Bouc, and the doctor believe that the Princess murdered Ratchett? Explain your answer with specific evidence from the text. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1**
5. Explain the tactic that Poirot is going to use to determine who is not telling the truth. Does this seem like a good tactic to you? Why or why not? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**

CHAPTER SIX: A SECOND INTERVIEW WITH COLONEL ARBUTHNOT

Vocabulary: forbidding, sardonically, aback, impassive **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.4a-d**

1. How does Arbuthnot respond when Poirot confronts him? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
2. Do you think Poirot has guessed correctly about Mary Debenham's identity? Explain your answer. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE IDENTITY OF MARY DEBENHAM

Vocabulary: flinch, faintly, unconscious **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.4a-d**

Glossary:

mon cher, vous êtes épatant – my dear, you are amazing

c'est formidable – it's great

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.6

1. Do you find Mary Debenham's explanation for why she lied about her identity believable? Explain your answer. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
2. Does it seem believable that Mary would not have recognized the Countess? Support your answer with specific evidence from the text. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1**
3. What causes Mary to break down? What does the Colonel's response to her distress suggest about his relationship with her? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
4. Explain how Poirot deduced that Countess Andrenyi was lying. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**

CHAPTER EIGHT: FURTHER SURPRISING REVELATIONS

Vocabulary: geniality, spontaneously, lingered, infamy, vehemence, inarticulate, groped, resignation

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.4a-d

1. When Poirot questions the remaining passengers, what does he uncover about each person's connection with the Armstrong kidnapping case. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
2. At this point in the novel, which passenger or passengers do you think murdered Ratchett? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1**

CHAPTER NINE: POIROT PROPOUNDS TWO SOLUTIONS

Vocabulary: propound, egress, omitted, enumerated, elucidated, exigencies, acute, aroused, keen **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.4a-d**

1. Hercule Poirot offers two potential explanations for the evidence. According to his *first* explanation, who killed Ratchett? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
2. What are the potential problems with the first explanation? How does Poirot explain them? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
3. Do you think the first explanation is plausible? Explain your answer. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1**
4. According to Poirot, what is significant about the fact that there were twelve people connected with the Armstrong murder onboard the Calais coach? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
5. Why does Poirot refer to the crime as a “perfect mosaic” (258 [pb]/307 [mm])? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.3**
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.4
6. According to Poirot, why did the conspirators plant evidence implicating Colonel Arbuthnot and Princess Dragomiroff at the scene of the crime? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
7. In mystery writing, what is a “red herring”? Explain why the woman in the red kimono is an example of a “red herring.” **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7** **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1**
8. Who is the only passenger that Poirot believes did not participate in the murder of Ratchett? Why does he believe this person is innocent? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
9. How was the Wagon Lit conductor connected to the Armstrong case? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
10. How was Mrs. Hubbard connected to the Armstrong case? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
11. Who confesses and confirms that Poirot’s explanation for the crime is correct? Why does he/she offer to take the blame for the entire murder? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
12. Why do you think Poirot gives M. Bouc and Dr. Constantine the opportunity to choose which explanation of the crime they will present to the police? Which one do they choose? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1** **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.2**
13. Why do you think Christie chooses to end the book with ellipses? What could she be implying? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1** **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.2a**, **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.3**

Writing and Discussion Prompts

All of the writing prompts in this section allow students to practice using the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, punctuation, and spelling. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.1a-d; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.2a-c; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.3a

TOPICS FOR ARGUMENTATION ESSAYS OR DEBATE

Each of the assignment prompts in this subsection allows students to practice one of following two standards, depending on whether the teacher chooses to have students address the topic in a writing assignment or through discussion:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.1a-e: Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.1a-d: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

1. The first time that Poirot sees Samuel Ratchett he remarks, "I could not rid myself of the impression that evil had passed me by very close" (17 [pb]/20 [mm]). What does it mean to be evil? Does pure evil exist? Do you believe there are people that are completely evil? Is Ratchett one of them? Explore these questions in a Socratic Seminar.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.1a-d CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.4 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.6
2. When questioned about her role in obstructing Poirot's investigation, Princess Dragomiroff responds: "In this case I consider that justice—strict justice—has been done" (229 [pb]/272 [mm]). In your opinion, was the murder of Ratchett an act of absolute justice or was it an act of private vengeance? Support your answer with specific details from the text and appropriate rhetorical appeals to logic, emotion, and/or ethics. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.9**
3. Christie's novel has an implied message that there are times when death is an appropriate penalty for a crime. Do you agree with this position? Write a persuasive essay that uses examples from the book, examples from real life, and/or hypothetical examples to support why you feel the way you do. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.1a-e CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.4 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.5**
4. One of the early assumptions that Dr. Constantine and M. Bouc make about the murderer is that it must have been either a woman or the Italian. Why do they draw these conclusions? What stereotypes cause them to leap to these conclusions? Write a persuasive essay that addresses the problem of judging others based on appearance or stereotypes. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.9**
5. Hercule Poirot compares the murder to a "perfect mosaic" (258 [pb]/307 [mm]). Do you agree that this was an example of a perfect crime? Explore this question in a Socratic Seminar. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.1a-d CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.SL.8.6**
6. At the end of the book, in spite of the fact that one of the passengers confesses to the entire crime, all three men investigating the murder choose to withhold the truth about what happened on the Orient Express from the authorities. Compose a persuasive essay that explores the following questions: Do you think they did the right thing? Is there ever a time when a person should be allowed to get away with murder? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.9 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.4 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.5**
7. Throughout the novel, every character lies to Poirot. In some cases, the reason they lie seems clearly connected to their desire to protect another character. Is there ever a good reason to tell a lie? Write an essay that defends your answer using real life examples, textual evidence, and/or hypothetical support. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.9 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.4; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.5**

TOPICS FOR INFORMATIVE WRITING

Each of the assignment prompts in this subsection allows students to practice the following standard:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.2a-f: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

1. Analyze the structure of this novel, paying close attention to how Agatha Christie chose to divide each of the three main sections of the book. What aspects of the case does she emphasize in her chapter titles? Why would identifying characters by nationality make more sense than identifying them by name? How do these choices affect your experience reading the novel? (Hint: You might examine how the novel provides information about each character, the pacing of the narrative, and/or the way the plot is framed.) **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.4 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.6 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.9**
2. What are the characteristics of a well-written murder mystery? How do readers respond to such a novel? Is *Murder on the Orient Express* a well-written murder mystery? Why or why not? Write a definition essay that outlines the characteristics of a well-written murder mystery using specific textual evidence from the book to explain your ideas. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.9a CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.9 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.6**
3. Compare and contrast *Murder on the Orient Express* to one of the film adaptations of the book (note: the 1974 version directed by Sidney Lumet is widely considered the best adaptation). How do you explain the similarities and differences between the original plot and the film adaptation? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.5 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.7 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.2**
4. Examine the importance on the setting of the novel. Early in the text, M. Bouc comments that a train “lends itself to romance” (24 [pb]/28 [mm]). What makes a train the perfect setting for murder? What role does the season of the year play in the events of the novel? What role does the time period play? Could the murder of Ratchett have taken place in any other setting? Compose a thoughtful analysis of the role of setting in Agatha Christie’s novel. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.4 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.5 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.9**
5. *Murder on the Orient Express* features detective Hercule Poirot, a character that appears in thirty-seven of Christie’s novels. How does using a familiar character impact the reader’s experience of a text? If this was your first experience with Hercule Poirot, how do you think you would respond if you read another book with him in it? Consider the fact that series featuring the same detective are common in the mystery genre. Why do you think this is the case? Explore these questions in a Socratic Seminar. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.1a-d CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.6**
6. Use information from the book to create a boarding pass and passport for one of the passengers on the Orient Express. Include visuals that illustrate what you think the characters look like based on how they are described by the text. Include stamps for all locations that they have traveled. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.4 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.6 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.5**
7. The characters in *Murder on the Orient Express* are examples of stock characters—these are flat, static stereotypes we recognize because we’ve seen them in other fictional works. Write an essay that explains how one of the characters from the novel serves as an example of a specific stock character type. Use passages from the text to support your claims; you may also find it useful to compare your character to another fictional character that exhibits similar stock character qualities. (Note: A comprehensive list of stock character types can be found on Wikipedia at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_stock_characters.) **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.9 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.9a**
8. Creating suspense in a story is a technique that’s employed by murder mystery authors as well as those writing other kinds of stories. How do murder mystery authors create suspenseful narratives? How do writers writing in different genres create suspense in their plots? Consider a novel you like that is NOT a murder mystery but that still keeps you on the edge of your seat. Write a compare and contrast essay that focuses on explaining exactly how your book and *Murder on the Orient Express* create suspense in readers. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.5 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.4**

TOPICS FOR NARRATIVE WRITING

Each of the assignment prompts in this subsection allows students to practice the following standard:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.3a-3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

1. One of the details in the novel that is never fully explained is the context of the conversation that Poirot overheard between Mary Debenham and Colonel Arbuthnot. Write a short story that imagines the entire conversation and provides background information about the relationship between Mary and the Colonel. How did they first meet? When did they fall in love? Why couldn't Mary or the Colonel let anyone know they were together? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.4**
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.9
2. On page 23 (pb)/27 (mm), Poirot begins his journey on the train by paying close attention to the people in the luncheon-car with him. Visit a public place like a restaurant (or ride on public transit) and spend time watching the people around you. Compose a narrative sketch of several of the people that you find the most compelling. Use vivid descriptive details and figurative language to describe their physical appearance and include significant details describing their actions that you believe reveal aspects of their personalities. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.4** **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.5**
3. After a loud noise wakes him up, Poirot lays in bed listening to the sounds around him and constructing a probable narrative to explain what he hears. Select a series of sound effects or play just the sound from part of a scene in a film or television show that students are most likely unfamiliar with. Ask students to craft a narrative that explains the sounds that they've just heard. When students are done, ask them to share their narratives with the class and note similarities and differences between each story. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.4** **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.10** **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.4**
4. As a class, try your hand at creating a murder mystery of your own. Using the format of a role-playing mystery game as a guide, create a murder mystery for another class to play. Be sure to include at least one example of planted evidence and one red herring. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.4** **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.10** **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.1a-d**
5. *Murder on the Orient Express* deals largely with people's response to injustice. At times, it may seem like the legal system fails and guilty parties elude justice. Consider a time when you felt that justice was not served and compose a narrative reflective essay examining your feelings about the situation and imagining the scenario that you wish could have happened. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.4** **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.10**
6. As a class, create a fictional newspaper archive of the Armstrong kidnapping and trial. Base as much of your reporting as you can on details in Christie's novel, but fill in any gaps with historically accurate and consistent details. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.4** **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.6** **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.7** **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.9**
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.10
7. In the novel, the actress Linda Arden assumes the character and alias of Mrs. Hubbard, an American tourist. Her disguise works, in part, because she has thought up an elaborate backstory and has dressed and packed her bags "in character." Create an alter ego or alias for yourself and write a monologue explaining how you ended up at your school. Prepare to perform your monologue for the class by coming to class in character. Make sure you dress the part and pack your purse or backpack with items consistent with your character. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.4** **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.10**
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.4 **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.6**

TOPICS FOR RESEARCH PROJECTS

Each of the assignment prompts in this section allows students to practice the following standard:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.7: Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

1. Agatha Christie based parts of her novel on the real life kidnapping case of Charles Lindbergh. Research the Lindbergh kidnapping case and prepare a multimedia presentation that highlights the similarities and differences between the true crime story and the fictional Armstrong kidnapping. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.8 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.4 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.5**
2. The setting of the novel involves a passage from Syria to London, with all of the passengers onboard having spent time in the Middle East. In today's world, widespread European tourism in the Middle East seems highly unlikely. What has changed? Research the social and political climate in one of the countries mentioned in the novel: Turkey (Istanbul), Syria, Persia (now Iran/Afghanistan), Belgrade (Serbia). Contrast the social/political climate in the country at the time that Christie's novel was written (1933) with the social and political climate of the country today. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.4 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.6 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.8**
3. Agatha Christie's novels have influenced many other writers, including those who have parodied some of the conventions of Christie's writing. What is a parody? Compare *Murder on the Orient Express* to a parody of the genre such as the 1985 film *Clue*. What makes the parody effective? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.5 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.4 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.5 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.9**
4. One serious social issue that is alluded to in Christie's novel is the role that prejudice and profiling plays in a criminal investigation. M. Bouc, in particular, is quick to assign characters guilt or innocence based on what he perceives as being the "characteristics" of their nationality: the British repress their emotions; Italians are passionate and violent; Americans lack social graces. In reality, racial profiling is an extremely problematic issue. Research the role that racial profiling has played in criminal investigations and prosecutions. What steps are being taken to end racial profiling? What work still needs to be done? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.4 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.6 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.8**
5. *Murder on the Orient Express* has been described as one of the greatest train novels ever written. While rail travel has been largely usurped by flight, Christie's novel references the Golden Age of rail travel. Research the period of rail travel that lasted from the mid-1800s to 1940 and create a multimedia presentation that describes travel by train. You may want to consider the following questions: What was a voyage by train like for a first- or second-class passenger? What comforts were provided? How much did a typical ticket cost? How long did it take to travel by train? How safe was train travel? How did people dress while traveling? What were the expectations for behavior on a train? Did men and women travel together? What role did the conductor play? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.8 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.4 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.5**
6. An episode of the television show *Doctor Who*, titled "The Unicorn and the Wasp" (Season 4, Episode 7), features Agatha Christie as a character. After watching this episode and researching Agatha Christie's life, compose an essay that explains how this episode builds its plot around real details from Christie's life and writing. In what ways does the episode remain true to history? What creative liberties does the episode take when exploring Christie's life and works? How does the episode allude to *Murder on the Orient Express*? **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.8 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.7**
7. How is the murder mystery genre illustrated by current TV offerings? Examine an episode or two of a popular TV show wherein the characters solve a murder crime over the course of the show. What are these characters like, and what kinds of motives exist for those who commit the crimes? How does the show you're examining recall or differ from *Murder on the Orient Express*? Why do you think many viewers respond favorably to these kinds of viewing experiences? Write a research essay that offers answers to these questions. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.8 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.7**
8. Explore some of Agatha Christie's other works. (Some good options: *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*, *And Then There Were None*, *Crooked House*, and *A Murder is Announced*) What common stylistic and thematic elements do you notice? Prepare a

research paper or presentation that includes biographical information about Christie, a critical analysis of one of her other works, and a piece of your own creative writing that captures the stylistic and thematic elements that you identified in Christie's work. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.8 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.5**

9. The motif of the dragon is mentioned several times in the novel. Research the symbolism associated with dragons and create a poster that traces the references to dragons in Christie's novel and explains what this motif may symbolize or suggest. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.8 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.4 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.5**

Online Resources

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Novels

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[*After The Funeral*](#)

[*And Then There Were None*](#)

[*Appointment With Death*](#)

[*At Bertram's Hotel*](#)

[*The Big Four*](#)

[*The Body In The Library*](#)

[*By The Pricking Of My Thumbs*](#)

[*Cards On The Table*](#)

[*A Caribbean Mystery*](#)

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[*Sparkling Cyanide*](#)

[*Taken At The Flood*](#)

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Books About Agatha Christie

[*Agatha Christie's Secret Notebooks*](#) by John Curran

[*Agatha Christie: Murder In The Making*](#) by John Curran

[*Clues To Christie: An Introductory Guide to Miss Marple, Hercule Poirot, Tommy & Tuppence and All of Agatha Christie's Mysteries—Featuring Three Short Stories*](#)

A New Hercule Poirot Novel by Sophie Hannah and Agatha Christie

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