

PART I — CHAPTERS 1 – 4

Vocabulary: Draw a line from each word on the left to its definition on the right. Then use the numbered words to fill in the blanks in the sentences below.

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|-----------------|---|
| 1. altercation | a. doorkeeper at entrance of a building |
| 2. autocratic | b. sophisticated person |
| 3. caprice | c. generosity |
| 4. concierge | d. domineering; tyrannical |
| 5. coquetry | e. brimless, close-fitting hat |
| 6. cosmopolitan | f. evil |
| 7. indolent | g. flirtation |
| 8. malevolence | h. lazy |
| 9. munificence | i. angry argument |
| 10. toque | j. change of mind without any apparent reason |

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1. After repeating my name twice the _____ allowed me to enter the building.
2. A loud _____ began when one person insulted another.
3. Her look of hatred revealed a(n) _____ that alarmed me.
4. Mr. Collier, a Princeton alumnus, displayed his _____ when he donated a million dollars for a new library.
5. His _____ tone of voice told us he expected to be obeyed.
6. The man was a true _____, one who was at home anywhere in the world.
7. The warm, sunny weather made us feel sleepy and _____.
8. The _____ on the woman's head matched the color of her coat.
9. The girl's _____ attracted the attention of all the men in the room.
10. After a long illness, the man's sudden decision to try downhill skiing seemed like a foolish _____.

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Part I — Chapters 1 – 4 (cont.) *37 pages*

Questions:

1. What physical characteristics made Inspector Hercule Poirot stand out from others around him? What evidence suggested that Poirot was an important well-known person?
2. What had brought Inspector Poirot to Aleppo in Syria?
3. Why had Inspector Poirot become curious about the relationship between Colonel Arbuthnot and Miss Debenham?
4. Why did Poirot decide to take the Simplon Orient Express to London instead of remaining in Istanbul as he had planned?
5. How did Mr. Ratchett's appearance seem to belie his character?
6. Why was it strange that all the first-class sleeping compartments were filled on the Simplon Orient Express?
7. According to the director of the Compagnie Internationale des Wagons Lits, how was the trip on the Simplon Orient Express a romantic adventure?
8. Why did Poirot refuse Ratchett's case?

Questions for Discussion:

1. Why do you think Miss Debenham was so worried about missing her connection for the Simplon Orient Express train?
2. Do you think the train was really stopped at a station when Poirot heard the cry in the night? Why else might the train have stopped?
3. What crime might happen in the story?
4. How might Hercule Poirot become involved in the case?

Literary Element: Characterization

- I. Draw a line from each character's name to a clue. Then write your own clue for one of the characters not listed.

Characters	Clues
1. Count and Countess Andrenyi	a. male secretary
2. Hercule Poirot	b. Hungarian royalty
3. M. Bouc	c. Belgian detective
4. Mrs. Hubbard	d. lady's maid
5. Mary Debenham	e. Wagons Lits representative
6. Mr. Ratchett	f. American matron
7. Hector MacQueen	g. evil phony
8. Hildegarde Schmidt	h. English governess

Character: _____

Clue: _____

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Foreshadowing in *Murder on the Orient Express*

Directions: Foreshadowing is the use of hints in a story to suggest forthcoming action. This literary technique helps to build suspense. Read the samples of foreshadowing below, and underline words or phrases which seem particularly ominous.

1. It was the voices which gave him the clue to the two indistinct figures standing in the shadow of a traffic van. Arbuthnot was speaking.
"Mary—"
The girl interrupted him.
"Not now. Not now. When it's all over. When it's behind us—*then*—"
Discreetly M. Poirot turned away. He wondered . . .
He would hardly have recognized the cool, efficient voice of Miss Debenham. . . .
"Curious," he said to himself.
(Part I, chapter 1)
2. Hercule Poirot was a moment in replying. "When he [Ratchett] passed me in the restaurant," he said at last, "I had a curious impression. It was as though a wild animal—an animal savage, but savage! you understand—had passed me by."
"And yet he looked altogether of the most respectable."
"Precisement! The body—the cage—is everything of the most respectable—but through the bars, the wild animal looks out."
(Part I, chapter 2)
3. Mrs. Hubbard drew Poirot a little aside.
"You know, I'm dead scared of that man. Oh! not the valet—the other. His master. Master, indeed! There's something *wrong* about that man. My daughter always says I'm very intuitive. 'When Mamma gets a hunch, she's dead right,' that's what my daughter says. And I've got a hunch about that man. He's next door to me and I don't like it. I put my grips against the communicating door last night. I thought I heard him trying the handle. Do you know, I shouldn't be a bit surprised if that man turned out to be a murderer—one of these train robbers you read about."
(Part I, chapter 4)

Recognizing foreshadowing: As you read the next few chapters, look for examples of foreshadowing. Below, record an example. Be prepared to explain what the quote hints about what will happen in the future.

PART I — CHAPTERS 5 – 8

Vocabulary: Synonyms are words with similar meanings. Draw a line from each word in column A to its synonym in column B. Use the words in column A to fill in the blanks in the sentences below.

<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>
1. deferential	a. weak
2. voluble	b. boring
3. elucidate	c. puzzled
4. urgent	d. wisely
5. sagely	e. courteous
6. solemnly	f. imperative
7. perplexed	g. garrulous
8. monotonous	h. clarify
9. inertia	i. seriously
10. feeble	j. inactivity

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- I was _____ when the elevator took me to third floor when I had pushed the button for the tenth floor.
 - If you suspect your leg is broken, it is _____ that you get to a hospital emergency room.
 - The visiting team was so excited and _____ that the hometeam waited for them to quiet down before introducing themselves.
 - It became _____ when the instructor repeated the same message over and over again.
 - Aching bones and stiff muscles could be the result of _____.
 - It is fair to expect _____ treatment from the entire staff at a fine restaurant.
 - After a lengthy illness, my elderly aunt appeared pale and _____.
 - The judge nodded _____ as the attorney explained the details of his client's case.
 - Everyone waited for the man to _____ his strange behavior before accusing him of the crime.
 - Family members walked _____ into the funeral chapel.

Questions:

- Besides the cry in the night, what other sounds startled Poirot right after the train stopped?
- What was the real reason for the train stopping?

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Part I — Chapters 5 – 8

3. What information did Poirot learn about the death of Ratchett when he was called in to speak to M. Bouc? What was Poirot able to assume about the murderer's whereabouts?
4. Why did M. Bouc ask Poirot to take the case?
5. What unusual feature did Poirot notice about the threatening letters that Ratchett received? Why did he think the letters were written in that manner?
6. How did Poirot show his skill as a detective when he examined Ratchett's compartment?
7. What was Ratchett's real name? How was this linked to the Armstrong kidnapping?

Questions for Discussion:

1. Why do you think MacQueen showed little emotion when Poirot told him his employer was dead?
2. Why do you think Ratchett was using a false name?

Literary Device: Simile

A *simile* is a figure of speech in which the words "like" or "as" are used to compare two unlike objects. For example: He was as mean as a hungry bear. In Chapter Six of the novel, MacQueen begins the following simile to describe Ratchett. Finish the simile about Ratchett for MacQueen.

Why, the old man was as tough as _____.

Now write your own similes to describe other characters in the novel.

1. Poirot was as _____ as _____.
2. Princess Dragomiroff was as _____ as _____.
3. Mrs. Hubbard was as _____ as _____.
4. Mary Debenham was as _____ as _____.

Writing Activity: An Editorial

Imagine that you are the editor of an American newspaper. Write an editorial about the Armstrong kidnapping case. Tell how you feel about the fact that the leader of the kidnapping case was acquitted on a technical inaccuracy. Remember, a newspaper editorial is written to influence readers. It states the opinion of the management of a newspaper, but it also deals fairly with subjects. If possible, study some newspaper editorials before you begin writing to review the editorial style.

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PART II — CHAPTERS 1 – 6

Vocabulary: An analogy is an equation in which the first pair of words has the same relationship as the second set of words. For example: CRUEL is to KIND as ENEMY is to FRIEND. Both pairs of words are opposites. Choose the best word from the Word Box to complete each of the analogies below.

WORD BOX			
adroit	draught	grip	latent
appease	flamboyant	inordinate	legible

1. DEPRECIATING is to BELITTLING as _____ is to EXCESSIVE.
2. HOSTILE is to AMIABLE as CLUMSY is to _____.
3. ENAMORED is to FOND as _____ is to PACIFY.
4. _____ is to SUITCASE as KIMONO is to ROBE.
5. ABJECT is to IMPERIOUS as OBVIOUS is to _____.
6. DRINK is to _____ as ELEVATOR is to LIFT.
7. PLAIN is to _____ as STOUT is to SLENDER.
8. SOUND is to CLEAR as HANDWRITING is to _____.

Questions:

1. Why did Hector MacQueen have a personal interest in the Armstrong murder? Which other characters had a knowledge of the case or a personal interest in it?
2. What evidence about the crime did Masterman, Ratchett's valet, give Poirot?
3. Why did Poirot ask both MacQueen and Masterman if they smoked a pipe?
4. How would you describe the character of Mrs. Hubbard?
5. What evidence did Mrs. Hubbard offer for her statement that the murderer had been in her compartment? What were her thoughts about the woman in the scarlet dressing gown?

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Part II — Chapters 1 – 6 (cont.)

Questions for Discussion:

1. In your opinion, what might have made the sound of “something heavy” falling against Poirot’s door on the night of the murder?
2. Do you question any of the passenger’s statements? Are you beginning to form any hypotheses about the perpetrator of the crime?

Literary Elements:

- I. *Setting*—The setting of a story refers to the location where the story takes place as well as the time in which it happens. Why is a train, such as the Orient Express, which is now stuck in a snowdrift, the perfect setting for the committing of a crime and its eventual solution?
- II. *Characterization*—Add new information to the character chart that you began on page eleven of this study guide. Compare your information with that of others reading the same book.

Writing Activity: Character Description

Study the following description of Princess Dragomiroff from Chapter Six. Notice the way in which the author cleverly compares Princess Dragomiroff to a toad in order to bring a vivid picture of the princess to the mind of the reader.

Her small toad-like face looked even yellower than the day before. She was certainly ugly, and yet, like the toad, she had eyes like jewels, dark and imperious, revealing latent energy and an intellectual force that could be felt at once.

Now, create your own description of another character from the book. Begin by thinking of an animal to which the character can be compared. Then write a description in which you compare both the physical appearance and the personality of the character to that animal. Use vivid words and phrases to make your writing come to life.

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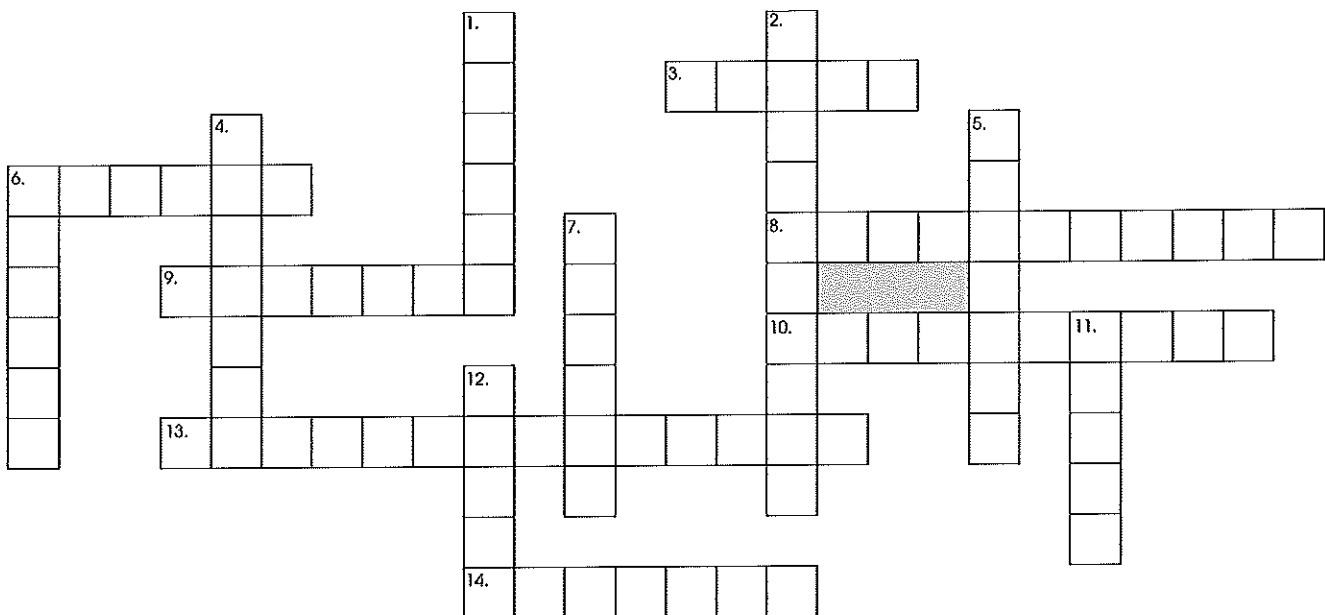
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PART II — CHAPTERS 7 – 12

Vocabulary: Use the words in the Word Box and the clues below to complete the crossword puzzle.

WORD BOX				
abash	ascertained	genial	piquet	sojourn
abominable	demur	jackanapes	placid	unpremeditated
acute	furtive	pallor	reverie	tomfool

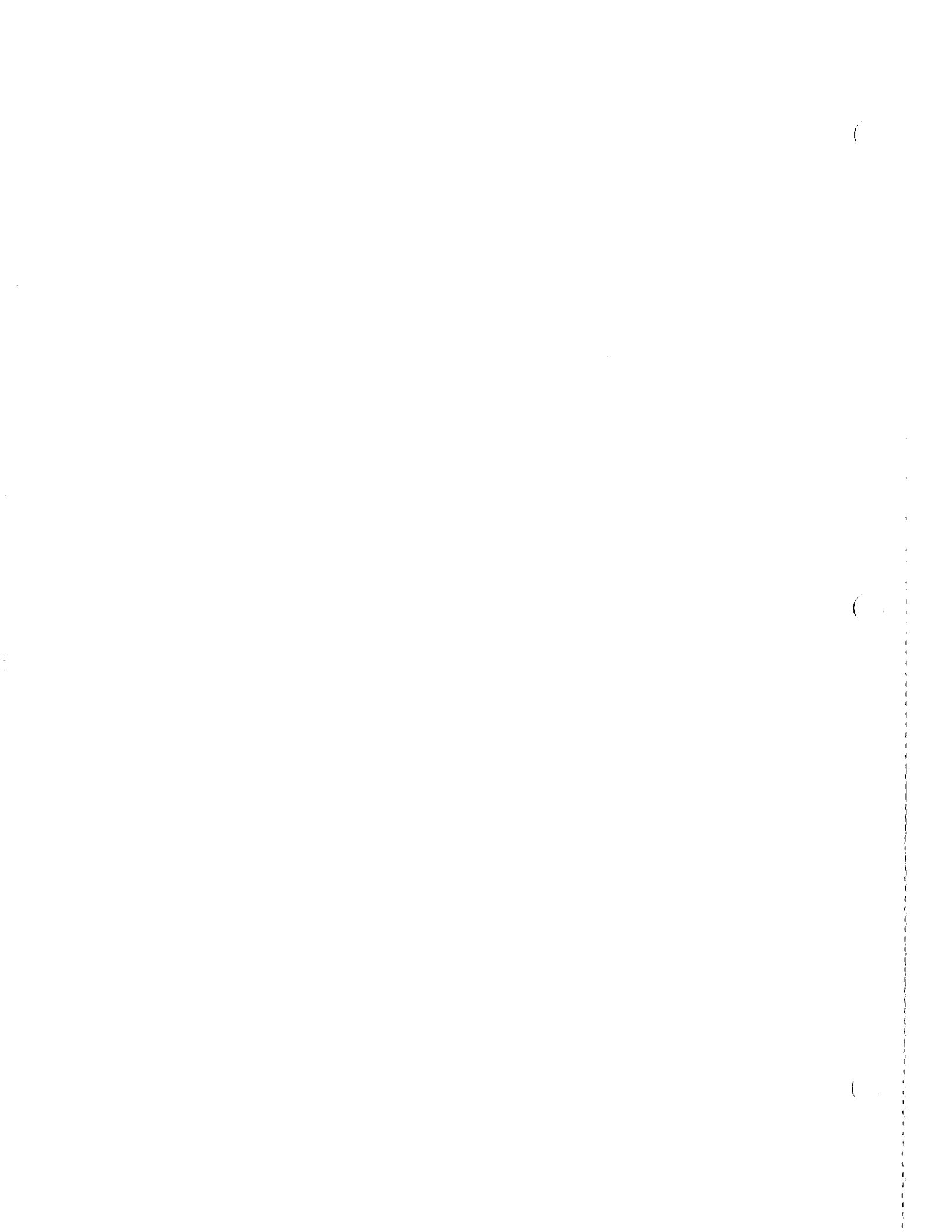


Across

- 3. embarrass
- 6. paleness
- 8. found out; learned with certainty
- 9. extremely foolish
- 10. loathsome
- 13. without forethought or planning
- 14. daydream

Down

- 1. pleasant
- 2. impertinent, conceited fellows
- 4. temporary stay
- 5. stealthy; sly
- 6. card game
- 7. serene; quiet; complacent
- 11. clever; ingenious
- 12. take exception



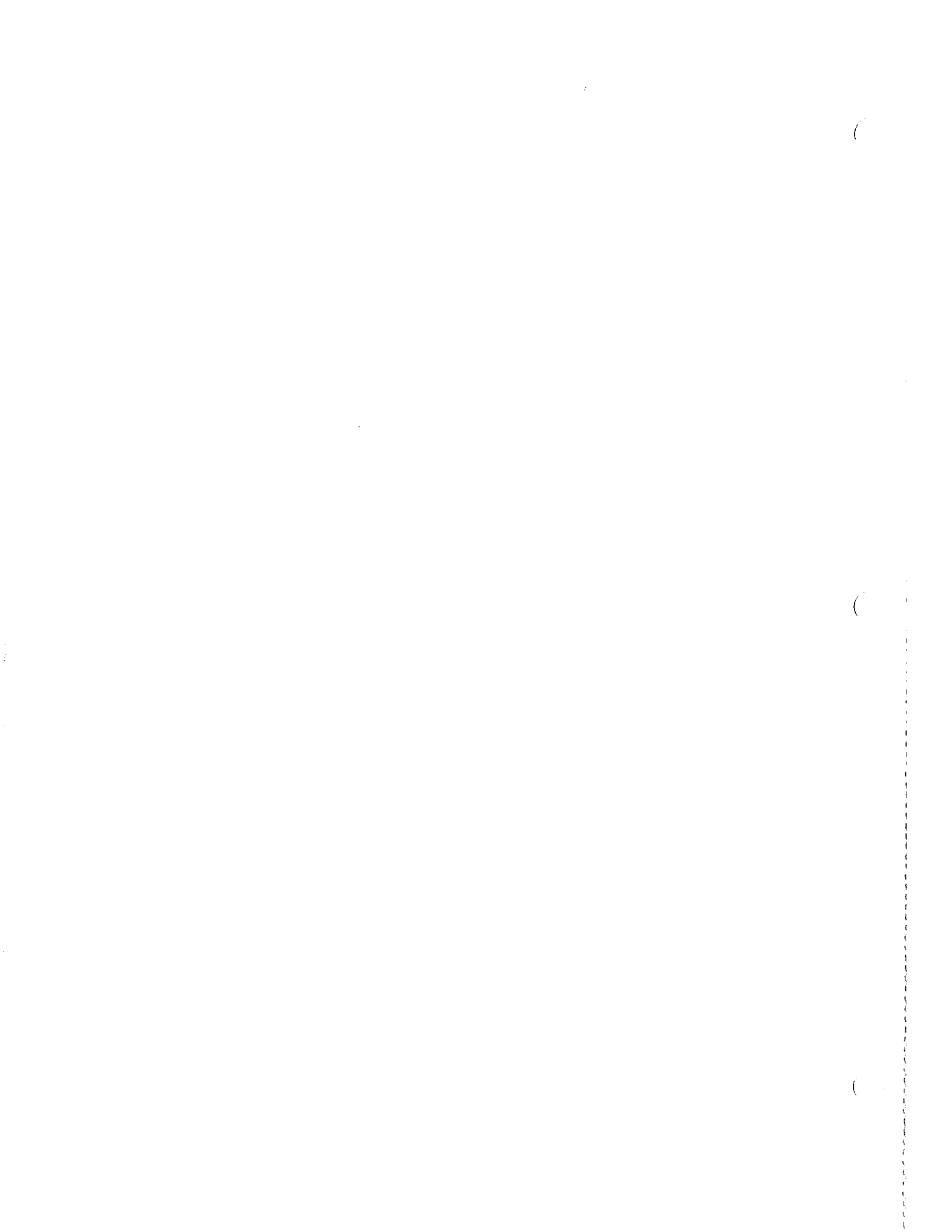
Part II — Chapters 7 – 12 (cont.)**Language Study: Multiple-Meaning Words**

Many words in our language have more than one meaning. For example, *grip* can mean “to hold onto something firmly.” Used informally, *grip* can also mean “suitcase.” Read the following sentences from Chapters 7–12. Circle the appropriate definition for each underlined word.

1. He fell into a reverie, beating a light tattoo on the table.
 - a. rhythmic tapping or drumming
 - b. indelible mark made upon the skin
2. I am Hercule Poirot. I am engaged by the company to investigate this matter.
 - a. promised to be married
 - b. hired for services
3. It will be a mere formality. But, you understand, it is necessary for my report.
 - a. present oneself to a person in authority
 - b. statement describing an event in detail
4. Poirot roused himself with a slight start.
 - a. give a sudden, involuntary jump or movement
 - b. begin or set out as on a journey

Questions:

1. Which piece of evidence might have connected Colonel Arbuthnot to the crime? Why did Poirot question that evidence?
2. In what way did Mr. Hardman fit the stereotype of an American? What was his real reason for traveling on the Orient Express?
3. What piece of interesting evidence did Hardman give Poirot?
4. In what way did Antonio Foscarelli fit the stereotype of an Italian?
5. How did Poirot tailor his questions to suit the individual passengers?
6. Compare Poirot’s deductions about the case with those of M. Bouc and Dr. Constantine. Why did they often differ?
7. What did Hildegard Schmidt’s description of the conductor suggest about him?

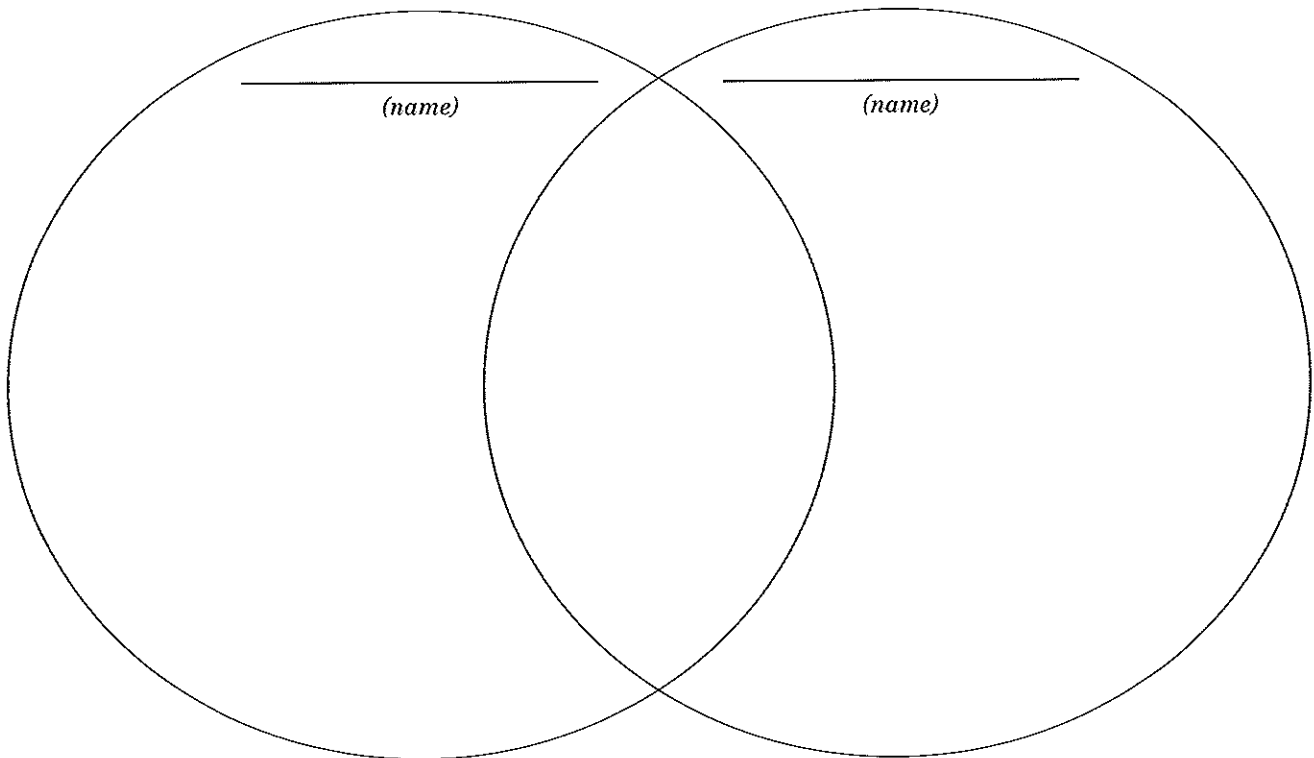


Part II — Chapters 7 – 12 (cont.)**Questions for Discussion:**

1. Do you think the characters in this novel are realistic or stereotypical?
2. Do you think it is possible that Miss Debenham and Colonel Arbuthnot committed the crime?
3. Why do you think Poirot had asked many of the passengers to write something on paper?

Literary Element: Characterization

There were six women traveling on the Calais Coach—Mary Debenham, Princess Dragomiroff, Greta Ohlsson, Mrs. Hubbard, Hildegard Schmidt and Countess Andrenyi. Choose the two women passengers who are the most interesting to you. Compare and contrast those two characters using the Venn diagram below. In the diagram, write the names of the women and tell how each woman is unique. Then in the overlapping section of the diagram, describe what the two women have in common.

**Writing Activity:**

Imagine you are one of the passengers on the train and write a journal entry describing your thoughts and feelings about the crime and your fellow passengers.

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PART II — CHAPTERS 13 – 15

Vocabulary: Draw a line from each word on the left to its definition on the right. Then use the numbered words to fill in the blanks in the sentences below.

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|----------------|---|
| 1. cavalierly | a. aggressive and belligerent |
| 2. linguist | b. person who abstains from alcoholic drinks |
| 3. mosques | c. full of regret |
| 4. portmanteau | d. person who is accomplished in many languages |
| 5. quay | e. in an offhand, arrogant way |
| 6. rueful | f. buildings used by Muslims for worship |
| 7. teetotaller | g. large traveling trunk |
| 8. truculent | h. place where ships are loaded and unloaded |

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1. My grandfather used to travel to Europe with a large _____ filled with clothes and books.
2. When I visited the Middle East, the beauty of the Muslim _____ greatly impressed me.
3. Because my friend is a _____, she had no trouble speaking to foreign visitors who come to our country.
4. The actor tore up the review rather than read the critic's _____ criticism.
5. The freighter waited at the _____ to be filled with overseas cargo.
6. The haughty young man _____ dismissed our concerns with a wave of his hand.
7. Her _____ expression revealed that she was sorry for her actions.
8. The man refused a glass of wine, saying he was a complete _____.

Questions:

1. Why did Poirot find this case aboard the train so fascinating?
2. How would you describe the dagger that Mrs. Hubbard found in her bag?

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Part II — Chapters 13 – 15 (cont.)

3. How did Poirot approach the problem of searching the luggage of Count and Countess Andrenyi?
4. What is the meaning of Poirot's words, "If you wish to catch a rabbit you put a ferret into the hole, and if the rabbit is there—he runs"?
5. What did the conductor's uniform in Hildegarde Schmidt's bag suggest about the murder case?

Questions for Discussion:

1. Miss Debenham refused to tell Poirot the meaning of her words to Colonel Arbuthnot, "When it's all over. When it's behind us." Considering your knowledge of the story so far, what do you think she meant by those words?
2. Why do you think Hildegarde Schmidt became frightened after she admitted to Poirot that she was a good cook?

Literary Device: Cliffhanger

Cliffhanger is a term borrowed from the days of serialized silent films in which each film segment ended at a moment of heightened tension and suspense to encourage the audience to return for the next episode. What was the cliffhanger at the end of Chapter Twenty-three? Why do you think the author chose to include such a device at that point in the book?

Writing Activity: Set the Stage

Agatha Christie's *Murder on the Orient Express* was presented as a movie in the 1970s. The film starred many famous actors and included lavish sets that were filled with beautiful details. Now, imagine that you are to create the sets for a movie version of the book. Describe in detail how two or three passengers' compartments would look. Also describe the dining car. Include as many details about the sets as possible. If you wish, you may also add drawings to illustrate your descriptions. Share your work with other members of your class.



PART III — CHAPTERS 1 – 4

Vocabulary: Synonyms are words with similar meanings. Draw a line from each word in column A to its synonym in column B. Then use the words in column A to fill in the blanks in the sentences below.

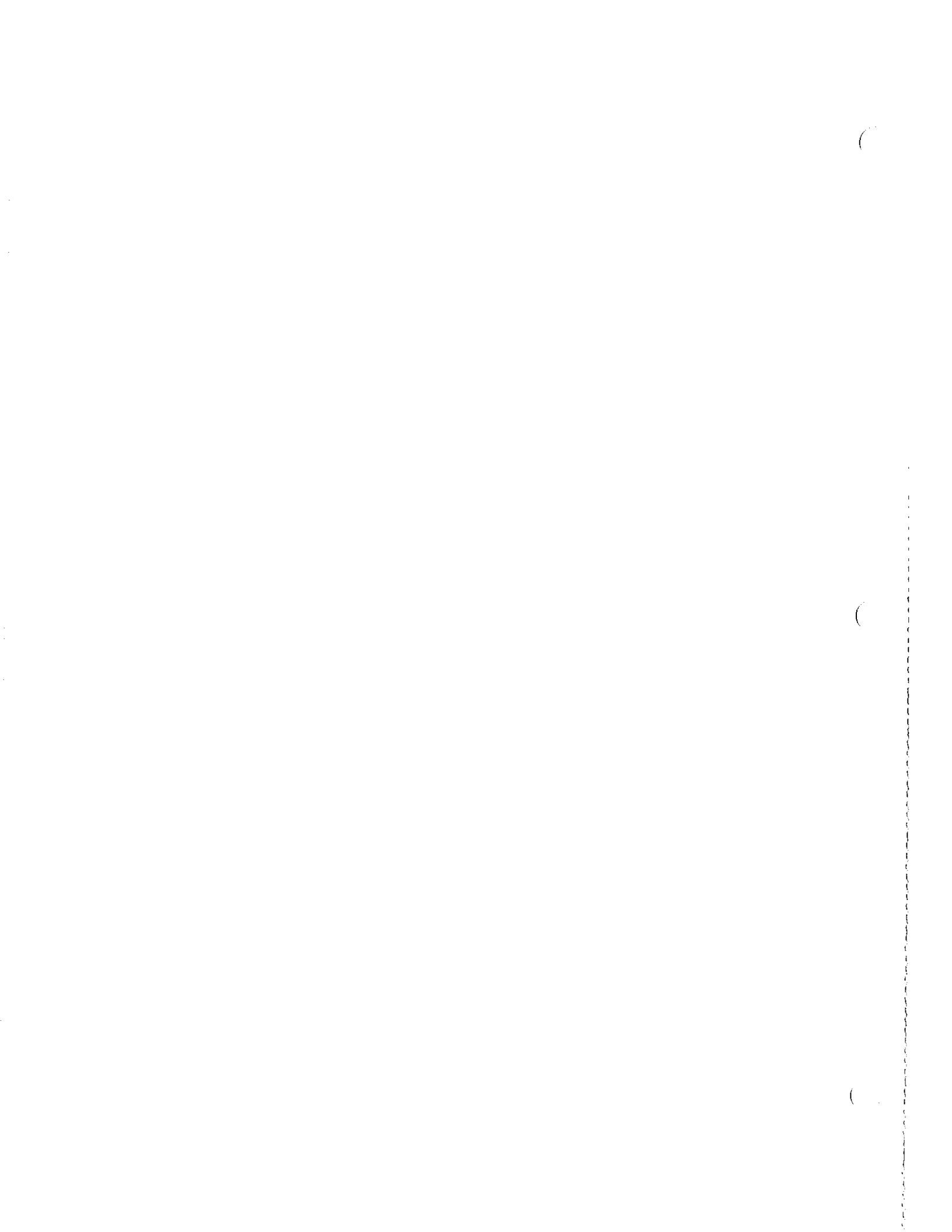
<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>
1. depressed	a. collusion
2. alibi	b. unwillingness
3. conspicuous	c. noticeable
4. complicity	d. proven
5. significant	e. doubtful
6. substantiated	f. excuse
7. reluctance	g. dejected
8. dubious	h. important

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1. Once you know that I had been in a terrible car accident, you can understand my _____ to drive a car.
2. Since the young man did not have a(n) _____ for his whereabouts on the night of the crime, he was questioned by the police.
3. Wearing a large, brightly-colored hat, the woman was _____ in the crowd.
4. After trying in vain for many months to get a job, my brother became _____.
5. I will avoid the _____ pleasure of swimming in the ocean on a winter day.
6. My _____ in the crime was assumed by the police who saw me with the burglar on the day of the theft.
7. In your report you should record _____ information and eliminate unimportant details.
8. My story was _____ when the police found the fingerprints of the person I accused at the scene of the crime.

Questions:

1. Why did Poirot find it unlikely that Ratchett would have called out in French on the night of his murder? What evidence led him to that deduction?
2. How would the evidence surrounding the murder have been different if the train had not been delayed by the snow?



PART III — CHAPTERS 1 – 4

3. What did the charred fragment of paper suggest to Poirot?
4. What was the Countess Andrenyi's true identity? Why did she try to conceal her identity from Poirot?
5. How did Countess Andrenyi describe the governess who looked after her when she was young?

Questions for Discussion:

1. Do you believe that Countess Andrenyi recognized no other person on the train other than Princess Dragomiroff?
2. Do you believe the Count's statement that his wife was innocent?

Writing Activity:

At the beginning of Chapter Two in Part III, Poirot presented ten questions about the crime. Work with a partner or a small group of classmates to discuss possible answers to those questions. Then complete the following Detective Notebook on your own. Save your work and review it after completing the novel.

DETECTIVE'S NOTEBOOK

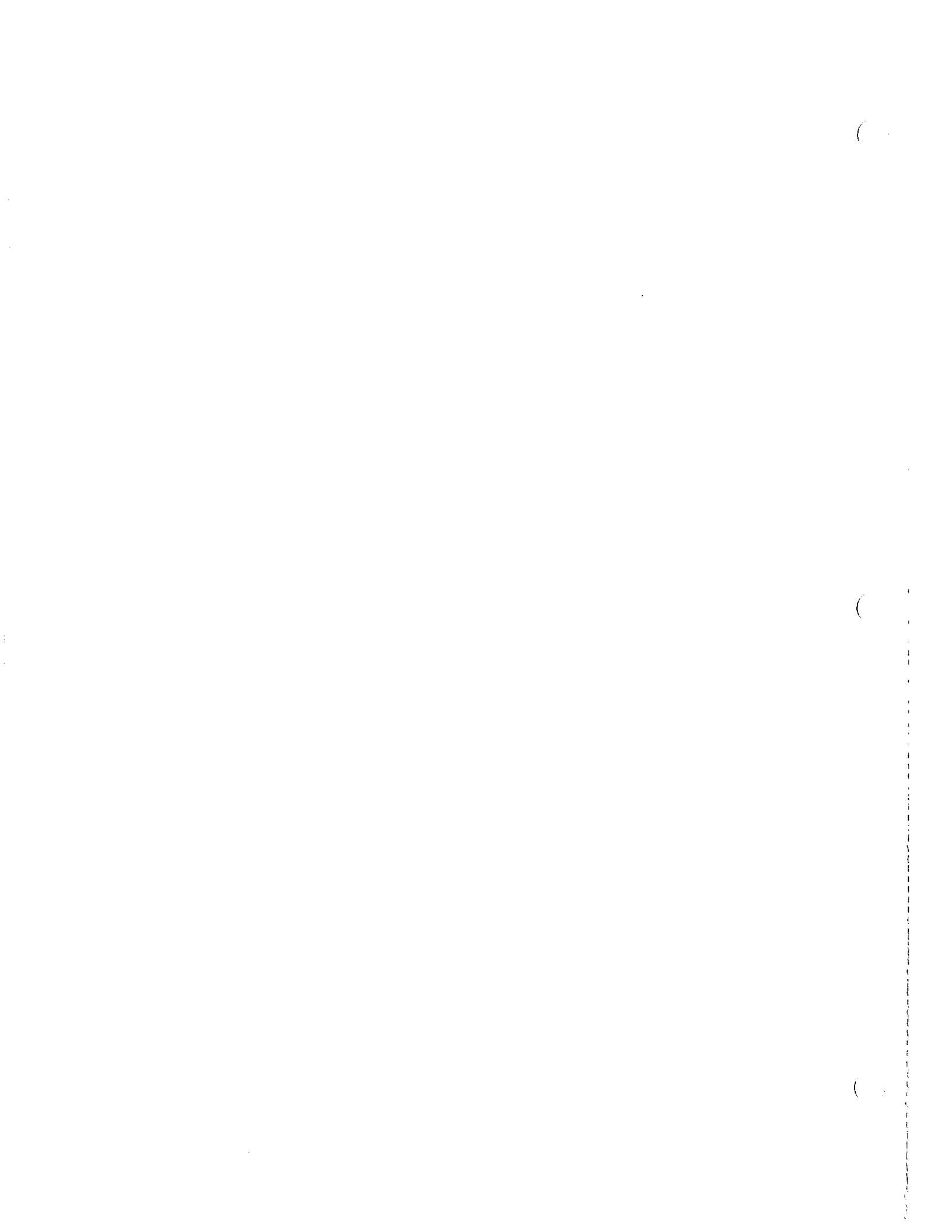
Case: The Murder of Cassetti, alias Ratchett

Location: The Calais Coach of the Simplon Orient Express

I believe the murderer(s) is/are: _____

The following evidence suggest his/her/their guilt:

The probable motive(s) is/are:



PART III — CHAPTERS 5 – 9

Vocabulary: Antonyms are words with opposite meanings. Draw a line from each word in column A to its antonym in column B. Then use the words in column A to fill in the blanks in the sentences below.

<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>
1. triumph	a. respectful
2. indomitable	b. flexible
3. contemptuous	c. released
4. duplicity	d. defeat
5. private	e. public
6. rigid	f. cooperation
7. defiance	g. yielding
8. detained	h. honesty

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1. My classmate's _____ became obvious when I saw her wearing the bracelet that I claimed to have lost in the auditorium.
2. The _____ woman pushed her way to the front of the line, not paying any attention to the criticism all around her.
3. Many demonstrators were _____ overnight at the county jail.
4. High school seniors often appear to be _____ of newly arrived freshman.
5. Our football team celebrated its _____ with an end-of-year banquet.
6. If you need to talk about your problems, meet me in the parking lot where we can have a(n) _____ discussion.
7. Her _____ against school authority became evident when she refused to sing the school song.
8. My teacher had such _____ rules for classroom behavior that she never made an exception for unusual circumstances.

Questions:

1. Who was the real owner of the woman's handkerchief found in Ratchett's compartment? Why was there confusion about the identity of its owner?
2. How was Miss Debenham connected to the Armstrongs? What led Poirot to recognize that connection?

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Part III — Chapters 5 – 9 (cont.)

3. What were the two solutions to the crime that Poirot offered?
4. Why was the dagger a perfect murder weapon in the second solution that Poirot offered?
5. Why was the letter that referred to the Armstrong case burned?
6. Why did Poirot say that Mrs. Hubbard played “the most important part in the drama”?

Questions for Discussion:

1. In your opinion, why did Hardman talk to Poirot after some of the other passengers confessed to knowing the Armstrongs?
2. Why do you think the author chose to have Poirot share his ideas about the crime with M. Bouc and Dr. Constantine?
3. Why do you think M. Bouc and Dr. Constantine offered the false solution to the Jugo-Slavian police?
4. Why weren't M. Bouc and Dr. Constantine suspects in the crime?
5. In what ways did both M. Bouc and Dr. Constantine add interest to the story? How would the story have been different if they had not been on the train?

Special Activity: Check Your Detective's Notebook

Review the Detective's Notebook you completed after reading Chapters 1–4 in Part III. Were you able to solve the case correctly? If so, what clues helped you? If not, what clues did you miss? How did the author “fool” you?

Writing Activity: Dialogue

The words that are spoken by characters in a story are called dialogue. Dialogue reflects the personality traits, background, and emotions of the speakers as well as their intentions. In *Murder on the Orient Express*, Agatha Christie used dialogue extensively, telling much of her story through the words of the characters. Now, imagine what would have happened at the end of the story when the travelers on the Orient Express finally faced the Jugo-Slavian police. How would M. Bouc and Dr. Constantine have explained the crime? What might Poirot have said? What would the other passengers say? Extend the story by writing a short passage describing what you think would have happened. Include dialogue that is appropriate for each character.

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CLOZE ACTIVITY

Read the following passage from the beginning of *Murder on the Orient Express*. After you have read the passage completely, fill in each blank with a word that makes sense. Then compare your language with that of the author.

It was five o'clock on a winter's morning in Syria. Alongside the platform at Aleppo stood the _____¹ grandly designated in railway guides as _____² Taurus Express. It consisted of a kitchen and _____³, a sleeping-car and two local coaches.

By _____⁴ step leading up into the sleeping-car stood _____⁵ young French lieutenant, resplendent in uniform, conversing _____⁶ a small man muffled up to the _____⁷ of whom nothing was visible but a _____⁸ nose and the two points of an _____⁹ moustache.

It was freezingly cold, and this _____¹⁰ of seeing off a distinguished stranger was _____¹¹ one to be envied, but Lieutenant Dubosc performed _____¹² part manfully. Graceful phrases fell from his _____¹³ in polished French. Not that he knew _____¹⁴ it was all about. There had been _____¹⁵, of course, as there always were in _____¹⁶ cases. The General's—*his* General's—temper had _____¹⁷ worse and worse. And then there had _____¹⁸ this Belgian stranger—all the way from _____¹⁹, it seemed. There had been a week—_____²⁰ week of curious tension. And then certain things _____²¹ happened. A very distinguished officer had committed _____²², another had suddenly resigned, anxious faces had _____²³ lost their anxiety, certain military precautions were _____²⁴. And the General, Lieutenant Dubosc's own particular General, _____²⁵ suddenly looked ten years younger.

Dubosc had _____²⁶ part of a conversation between him and _____²⁷ stranger. "You have saved us, *mon cher*," _____²⁸ the General emotionally, his great white moustache _____²⁹ as he spoke. "You have saved the _____³⁰ of the French Army—you have averted _____³¹ bloodshed! How can I thank you _____³² acceding to my request? To have come _____³³ far—"

To which the stranger (by name M. Hercule Poirot) had made a fitting reply including the phrase—"But indeed, do I not remember that once you saved my life?"

