

The Literature
Of
Mystery and Detection.



Introduction

December 30, 2001

Dear Students,

Logic is a difficult skill to master. Trust me.

I'm substantially older than any of you, and I still have a hard time processing things logically. I am not Spock. Any skill however – cooking, drawing, playing piano, punting a football, reading, etc. – needs time and practice to develop. I don't practice my logic enough, so it's pretty rusty whenever I need to use it. *Intuition* is good enough for me most of the time.

But not in this unit.

For the next few weeks we will be learning about Mysteries and the Literature of Detection. Logic will be very important here. We will be studying *facts*, not *opinions*. **And** we will be putting these facts together in such a way that we will be able to solve the problems in front of us. We will distinguish between *logic* – cold, hard facts – and *intuition* – mercurial opinion. I expect you to guess (i.e., use your intuition) at who you think the guilty parties are, BUT I also want you to support your opinion with fact from the text.

Again. Skills that need practicing. And we will be practicing a lot.

It'll be fun. Trust me.

Before we start, I want you to take a few minutes to define the following words in terms of a mystery:

MOTIVE –

MEANS –

OPPORTUNITY –

I will often be asking for this information during the course of this unit, so please commit these to memory and be able to use them appropriately. Thanks! And as with all the other unit we've worked on there are rules:

~~THE RULES~~

- You receive one copy of this booklet only. If you lose it, you will not receive another copy without penalty.
- If you do not understand, you will ask for clarification.
- You will accept responsibility for all your actions.
- You will show respect for others and yourself in your actions, words and work.
- You will expect a pop quiz everyday.

You will find a contract on the next page that recaps these rules. Please read it, sign it and turn it in to me.

Thanks!

Now, the game is afoot!

Sean

THE CONTRACT

I, _____, attest and certify that I have received my one and only copy of THE LITERATURE OF MYSTERY AND DETECTION workbook.

In signing this contract I will abide by the Rules set forth in class and in the introductory letter, shown again below:

- I receive one copy of this booklet only. If I lose it, I will not receive another copy.
- If I do not understand, I will ask for clarification.
- I will accept responsibility for all my actions.
- I will show respect for others and myself in my actions, words and work.
- I will expect a pop quiz everyday.

I will adhere to the contract to the best of my ability, the ultimate reward being a sense of completion and accomplishment that I alone have started my own Journey, and have conquered all my opponents (including but not limited to homework, fear, doubt, worry and bad grades).

Signed,

DATE

RULES OF A MYSTERY

Mysteries are unique pieces of literature. Whereas many stories keep the readers interested, but separate from the action, mysteries encourage the reader to work with the detective to solve the mystery right along with them. If the reader doesn't have the opportunity (and **WHAT** does that word *mean*?) to figure out "whodunit", then the point of the mystery is missed. Mysteries should provide the reader the equal opportunity as the detective to gather and analyze the clues in the text and come to a relatively good hypothesis ("a guess that can be tested") as to the guilty parties. To make sure mystery writers gave these opportunities S. S. Van Dine created a list of twenty rules that all authors had to adhere to. The list was created in 1928. And Then There Were None was published in 1939.

Let's see if Agatha followed all the rules.

Below is a matrix of the twenty rules. If Christie followed a rule, give her a star in the second column. If she violated a rule, give her a check in the second column and then explain where the violation took place.

RULE	✓ / ✘ / ★	EXPLANATION OF VIOLATION
1. The reader must have equal opportunity with the detective for solving the mystery. All clues must be plainly stated and described.		
2. No willful tricks or deceptions may be placed on the reader other than those played legitimately by the criminal on the detective himself.		
3. There must be no love interest. The business in hand is to bring a criminal to the bar of justice, not to bring a lovelorn couple to the hymeneal altar.		
4. The detective himself, or one of the official investigators, should never turn out to be the culprit. This is bald trickery, on a par with offering some one a bright penny for a five-dollar gold piece. It's false pretenses.		
5. The culprit must be determined by logical deductions — not by accident or coincidence or unmotivated confession. To solve a criminal problem in this latter fashion is like sending the reader on a deliberate wild-goose chase, and then telling him, after he has failed, that you had the object of his search up your sleeve all the time. Such an author is no better than a practical joker.		

<p>6. The detective novel must have a detective in it; and a detective is not a detective unless he detects. His function is to gather clues that will eventually lead to the person who did the dirty work in the first chapter; and if the detective does not reach his conclusions through an analysis of those clues, he has no more solved his problem than the schoolboy who gets his answer out of the back of the arithmetic.</p>		
<p>7. There simply must be a corpse in a detective novel, and the deader the corpse the better. No lesser crime than murder will suffice. Three hundred pages is far too much pother for a crime other than murder. After all, the reader's trouble and expenditure of energy must be rewarded.</p>		
<p>8. The problem of the crime must be solved by strictly naturalistic means. Such methods for learning the truth as slate-writing, ouija-boards, mind-reading, spiritualistic se'ances, crystal-gazing, and the like, are taboo. A reader has a chance when matching his wits with a rationalistic detective, but if he must compete with the world of spirits and go chasing about the fourth dimension of metaphysics, he is defeated ab initio.</p>		
<p>9. There must be but one detective — that is, but one protagonist of deduction — one deus ex machina. To bring the minds of three or four, or sometimes a gang of detectives to bear on a problem, is not only to disperse the interest and break the direct thread of logic, but to take an unfair advantage of the reader. If there is more than one detective the reader doesn't know who his codeductor is. It's like making the reader run a race with a relay team.</p>		
<p>10. The culprit must turn out to be a person who has played a more or less prominent part in the story — that is, a person with whom the reader is familiar and in whom he takes an interest.</p>		

<p>11. A servant must not be chosen by the author as the culprit. This is begging a noble question. It is a too easy solution. The culprit must be a decidedly worthwhile person — one that wouldn't ordinarily come under suspicion.</p>		
<p>12. There must be but one culprit, no matter how many murders are committed. The culprit may, of course, have a minor helper or co-plotter; but the entire onus must rest on one pair of shoulders: the entire indignation of the reader must be permitted to concentrate on a single black nature.</p>		
<p>13. Secret societies, camorras, mafias, et al., have no place in a detective story. A fascinating and truly beautiful murder is irremediably spoiled by any such wholesale culpability. To be sure, the murderer in a detective novel should be given a sporting chance; but it is going too far to grant him a secret society to fall back on. No high-class, self-respecting murderer would want such odds.</p>		
<p>14. The method of murder, and the means of detecting it, must be be rational and scientific. That is to say, pseudo-science and purely imaginative and speculative devices are not to be tolerated in the roman policier. Once an author soars into the realm of fantasy, in the Jules Verne manner, he is outside the bounds of detective fiction, cavorting in the uncharted reaches of adventure.</p>		
<p>15. The truth of the problem must at all times be apparent — provided the reader is shrewd enough to see it. By this I mean that if the reader, after learning the explanation for the crime, should reread the book, he would see that the solution had, in a sense, been staring him in the face—that all the clues really pointed to the culprit — and that, if he had been as clever as the detective, he could have solved the mystery himself without going on to the final chapter. That the clever reader does often thus solve the problem goes without saying.</p>		

<p>16. A detective novel should contain no long descriptive passages, no literary dallying with side-issues, no subtly worked-out character analyses, no "atmospheric" preoccupations. such matters have no vital place in a record of crime and deduction. They hold up the action and introduce issues irrelevant to the main purpose, which is to state a problem, analyze it, and bring it to a successful conclusion. To be sure, there must be a sufficient descriptiveness and character delineation to give the novel verisimilitude.</p>		
<p>17. A professional criminal must never be shouldered with the guilt of a crime in a detective story. Crimes by housebreakers and bandits are the province of the police departments — not of authors and brilliant amateur detectives. A really fascinating crime is one committed by a pillar of a church, or a spinster noted for her charities.</p>		
<p>18. A crime in a detective story must never turn out to be an accident or a suicide. To end an odyssey of sleuthing with such an anti-climax is to hoodwink the trusting and kind-hearted reader.</p>		
<p>19. The motives for all crimes in detective stories should be personal. International plottings and war politics belong in a different category of fiction — in secret-service tales, for instance. But a murder story must be kept gemütlich, so to speak. It must reflect the reader's everyday experiences, and give him a certain outlet for his own repressed desires and emotions.</p>		
<p>20. And (to give my Credo an even score of items) I herewith list a few of the devices which no self-respecting detective story writer will now avail himself of. They have been employed too often, and are familiar to all true lovers of literary crime. To use them is a</p>		

confession of the author's ineptitude and lack of originality. (a) Determining the identity of the culprit by comparing the butt of a cigarette left at the scene of the crime with the brand smoked by a suspect. (b) The bogus spiritualistic se'ance to frighten the culprit into giving himself away. (c) Forged fingerprints. (d) The dummy-figure alibi. (e) The dog that does not bark and thereby reveals the fact that the intruder is familiar. (f) The final pinning of the crime on a twin, or a relative who looks exactly like the suspected, but innocent, person. (g) The hypodermic syringe and the knockout drops. (h) The commission of the murder in a locked room after the police have actually broken in. (i) The word association test for guilt. (j) The cipher, or code letter, which is eventually unraveled by the sleuth.

Ten little Indian boys went out to dine;
One chocked his self and then there were nine.

Nine Indian boys sat up very late;
One overslept himself then there were eight.

Eight Indian boys traveling in Devon;
One said he'd stay there then there were seven.

Seven Indian boys chopping up sticks;
One chopped himself in halves then there were six.

Six Indian boys playing with a hive;
A bumble-bee stung one then there were five.

Five Indian boys going in for law;
One got in Chancery then there were four.

Four Indian boys going out to sea;
A red herring swallowed one then there were three.

Three Indian boys walking in the zoo;
A big bear hugged one then there were two.

Two Indian boys sitting in the sun;
One got all frizzled up then there was one.

One Indian boy left all alone;
He went and hanged himself and then there were none.

Chapter 1

1. Where is Mr. Justice Wargrave at the outset of the novel?
2. What is Wargrave's destination?
3. Why is Wargrave going to Indian Island?
4. What assessment of Wargrave's character can be made from this short scene?
5. How is Vera Claythorne different from Wargrave?
6. How is Vera like Wargrave?
7. How does Lombard characterize Vera?
8. What do Vera and Lombard have in common?
9. What is Philip Lombard's job?

10. What does it mean “to be at someone’s disposal” mean?

11. Ask Sean for an alternative meaning for this phrase.

12. In the face of the surrounding mystery of the job, how does Lombard feel?

13. Where do we meet Miss Emily Brent?

14. Why is Miss Brent Happy?

15. Why is Miss Brent going to Indian Island?

16. Is Miss Brent sure about anything?

17. Why is General Macarthur going to Indian Island?

18. What is the General’s attitude?

19. Why is Dr. Armstrong looking forward to his vacation on Indian Island?

20. Why is Dr. Armstrong going to the island?

21. How do we meet Tony Marston?

22. How does Tony feel about going to Indian Island?

23. Why is Tony going to the island?

24. How is Tony characterized?

25. How does Mr. Blore occupy his time travelling?

26. What does Blore know of Indian Island?

Chapter 2

1. What happens at Oakbridge Station?
2. How does Miss Brent feel about Wargrave?
3. Why does Lombard feel more assured after learning that Vera is Mrs. Owen's secretary?
4. How does Lombard handle Vera's questions about her new employer?
5. What is General MacArthur's reaction to Lombard?
6. What is learned from Lombard and MacArthur's conversation in the taxi?
7. Who is Davis?
8. What unites the members of the party as they prepare to cross to the island?
9. Why is Tony Marston's arrival emphasized?

10. What is learned from Fred Narracott's thoughts?

11. What do the guests learn as they arrive at the house?

12. What revives their spirits?

13. What does the butler tell the guests?

14. What does Vera discover as she is shown to her room?

15. What is Vera's response to the framed poem over the mantel?

16. How does Armstrong feel about Narracott's unwillingness or inability to talk about Indian Island?

17. How does Armstrong feel about islands in general?

18. Why does Armstrong feel weird to Armstrong?

19. Why is Wargrave suspicious?

20. What is the largest concern in General MacArthur's mind?

21. How does Lombard feel after arriving on the island?

22. How does Miss Brent spend her time prior to dinner?

Chapter 3

1. What is the centerpiece on the table at dinner?
2. What occurs after the men join the ladies in the drawing room?
3. What is the reaction to The Voice?
4. What does Lombard discover?
5. What is learned about Rogers?
6. How does Blore give himself away?
7. Wargrave calls for everyone present to make known why they are on Indian Island. What fact emerges from the various stories?
8. What is the joke about Owen's name?
9. What does Wargrave deduce from the facts now at his disposal?

Chapter 4

1. What other deduction does Wargrave make?
2. Does Wargrave admit to murdering Edward Seton?
3. How do Vera, Macarthur, Lombard and Marston react to the accusations leveled at them by The Voice?
4. What is the skeleton in Blore's closet?
5. Does Dr. Armstrong claim guilt in the death of a patient named Clees?
6. How does Miss Brent defend herself?
7. Does the entire party agree to leave with Narracott in the morning?

Chapter 5

1. How does Marston die?
2. What conclusion is reached about Marston's death?
3. What does Wargrave think of while preparing for bed?
4. What does Rogers discover as he clears up downstairs?
5. What is on General Macarthur's mind as he tries to go to sleep?
6. What is the story of Vera's past?

Chapter 6

1. Does Dr. Armstrong rest peacefully?
2. How does Mrs. Rogers die?
3. What is Emily Brent's explanation of Mrs. Rogers' death?
4. What is Blore's explanation?
5. Why does Rogers wish to talk with Dr. Armstrong again?

Chapter 7

1. What is Miss Brent's story?
2. What facts emerge as Lombard and Armstrong discuss the Rogerses?
3. What is Lombard's assessment of the situation on the island?

Chapter 3

1. What do Blore, Lombard and Armstrong uncover as they search the island for this lunatic?
2. What does Lombard guess to be the true situation with the motorboat?
3. What do Vera and General Macarthur discuss?
4. What do Armstrong and Blore discuss as they finish their search for a cave?
5. What do Armstrong, Blore and Lombard discover as they search the house?

Chapter 9

1. The three men must either accept the coincidence of the two deaths or find another explanation. What is Blore's explanation?
2. What occurs as the storm breaks?
3. What is the assessment of the situation?
4. How does Wargrave intend to search out the "bogus Indian boy"?

Chapter 10

1. Why does Lombard suspect Wargrave? Does Vera agree?
2. Whom does Miss Brent suspect of being “possessed by a devil,” and, therefore, Mr. Owen?
3. At tea-time theft is added to murder. What is missing?
4. How do the guests protect themselves during the night?

Chapter 11

1. The next morning, Rogers is missing and so is Miss Brent. Where are they?
2. Who is suspected of Rogers' murder?
3. Why does Vera become hysterical about bees?
4. How does Blore feel about Miss Brent?
5. Does Lombard agree?
6. What does Miss Brent think of while making breakfast?

Chapter 12

1. Emily Brent is acquitted of Rogers' murder through means of her own death. How does she die?
2. Who is suspected of the murder?
3. It is decided that the remaining weapons should be locked up. Does this happen?

Chapter 13

1. Half the party is now dead. How do the remaining people protect themselves?
2. What happens when Vera goes to her room?
3. What has really happened to Vera in her room?
4. Does all the party come to Vera's room?
5. Does Wargrave's own murder solve some of the mystery?
6. How does Lombard react to Wargrave's death?

Chapter 14

1. What is the mood of the party right now?
2. What does Lombard discover as he goes to bed?
3. What worries Blore in his bedroom?
4. What stirs him to action?
5. Who is missing?
6. What action is taken?
7. What do Blore and Lombard tell Vera upon their return?

Chapter 15

1. Why is Blore dissuaded from his belief that Lombard is Owen?
2. What information does Vera share?
3. What is Vera's state of mind at this point?
4. How does Lombard assess the situation?
5. Does Vera agree?
6. What does Lombard deduce ("figure out") from her statement?
7. What do Lombard and Vera discover as they return to the house?
8. What does Blore's death mean to Vera?
9. What do Vera and Lombard discover as the sun sets?

Chapter 16

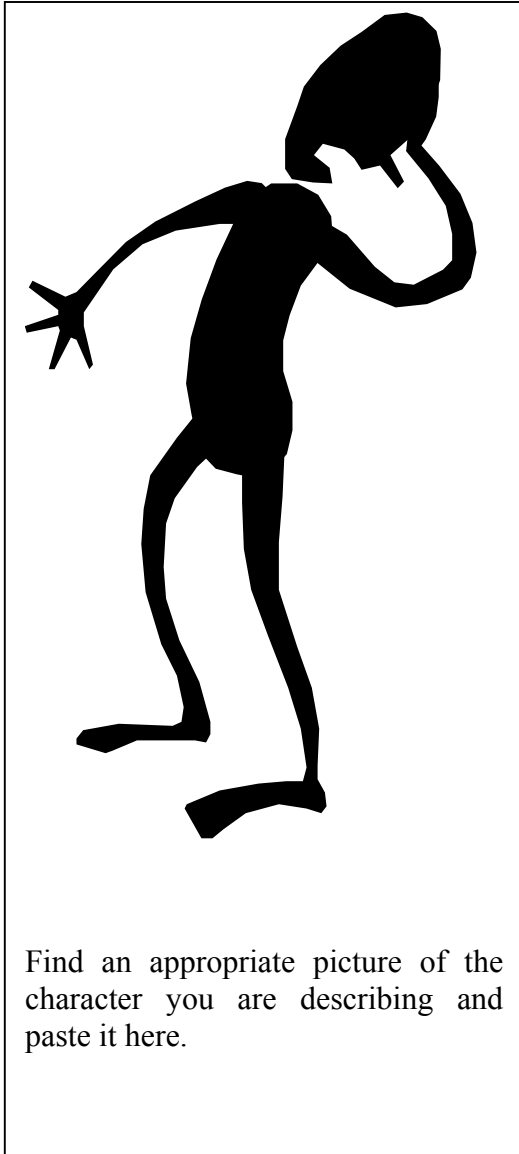
1. What is the most terrifying aspect of discovering Armstrong's body?
2. Why does Vera want to retrieve Armstrong's body?
3. What does Vera do after Lombard is dead?
4. What does the memory of the final verse of the nursery rhyme suggest to Vera?
5. What does she do as a result?

Epilogue

1. What do the police discover from Mr. Owen's agent, Isaac Morris?
2. How were the bodies on Indian Island found?
3. What had the investigation into the charges on the recording turn up?
4. Up to a point, all signs point to Vera as the murderer. Why do the police feel she couldn't have committed all those murders?
5. What is the conclusion of the police?

CHARACTER INFO SHEET

Name:
Age:
Gender:



Place of origin:

Describe their personality:

Pick a quote *said by this character* that you think is indicative of their personality:

Occupation:

Victim # _____

Death by: _____

Day # _____

The Voice accuses this person of: _____

The person was invited to Indian Island by _____ for _____.

The invitation was delivered by _____.

Additional info as learned from the text:

EVENT LOG

CHAPTER _____

Summary of Action:

Important Information (Clues)

WEAPONS DETAILS

Technical information

(May be taken from the Internet or an encyclopedia):

Find a picture of the weapons used to kill the characters in the novel. Paste them here. Picture should be accurate or representative.

Technical information

(May be taken from the Internet or an encyclopedia):

Find a picture of the weapons used to kill the characters in the novel. Paste them here. Picture should be accurate or representative.

PREDICTION

I think _____ killed _____
because¹:

¹ Be sure to include MOTIVE, MEANS and OPPORTUNITY.

FACT / OPINION

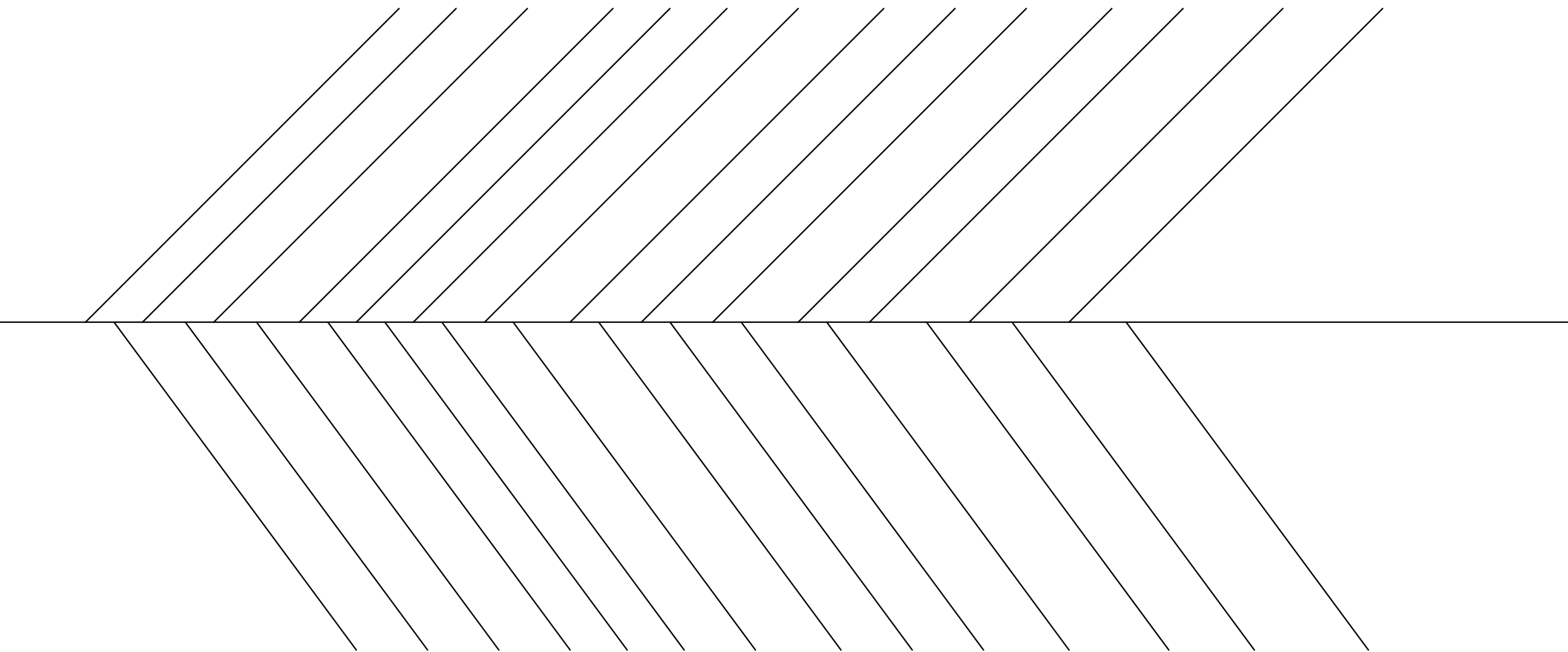
FACT	OPINION

FINAL ANALYSIS

I think _____ killed
_____ because²:

² Be sure to include MOTIVE, MEANS and OPPORTUNITY.

TIME LINE



Ten little Indian boys went out to dine;
One chocked his self and then there were nine.

Nine Indian boys sat up very late;
One overslept himself then there were eight.

Eight Indian boys traveling in Devon;
One said he'd stay there then there were seven.

Seven Indian boys chopping up sticks;
One chopped himself in halves then there were six.

Six Indian boys playing with a hive;
A bumble-bee stung one then there were five.

Five Indian boys going in for law;
One got in Chancery then there were four.

Four Indian boys going out to sea;
A red herring swallowed one then there were three.

Three Indian boys walking in the zoo;
A big bear hugged one then there were two.

Two Indian boys sitting in the sun;
One got all frizzled up then there was one.

One Indian boy left all alone;
He went and hanged himself and then there were none.

COMPARISON

DIRECTIONS - In the second column, write the name of the victim and explain how their death followed the poem

Ten little Indian boys went out to dine;
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