



2015 specification
first exams in 2017

Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Sign of Four*

GCSE AQA Exam Preparation Pack

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Teacher's Introduction

The purpose of this resource is to enable your students to feel comfortable and confident when faced with exam questions.

If they follow the activity pack together with this exam pack no stone will have been left unturned and your students should be able to access the highest marks that they are capable of.

The pack comprises a thorough revision section with key quotations for every eventuality. Three sample answers are given with full analysis and further practice questions are suggested. What sets this pack apart is the very detailed indicative content under Assessment Objectives headings; suggestions as to how to use these in the classroom are given below.

The variety of activities and in-depth analysis make the pack not only essential reading but fun to use too.

The edition of *The Sign of Four* used is the Penguin edition, 978 0 141 39578 4.

Additional revision resources:

- The BBC Bitesize series (BBC Bitesize, *The Sign of Four*) has some useful revision exercises and is enhanced with videoclips.
- The DVD of *The Sign of Four* (1987), with Jeremy Brett as Sherlock Holmes, is also recommended.

May 2017

Teaching approaches:

Notes:

- 1) With Activity 2: Who's Who (p. 6), one teaching suggestion might be to reproduce the information on cards, cut them out and then ask students to match them up. At the end, therefore, they would have a complete revision sheet.
- 2) With the activity on key quotations in the chapter-by-chapter summary it is suggested that students, as individuals, look for suitable quotations and then compare with others' quotations. In this way a bank of relevant quotations can be built up and students would have 'ownership' of them.
- 3) For the SPAG activity on page 17 teachers could read out the words to the students, as an alternative activity.
- 4) Suggested questions have detailed indicative content arranged by Assessment Objectives. One approach might be to ask your students to look closely at some of the referenced passages and come up with their own suggestions of indicative content. As a general rule, they should also research their own answers for the second part of each question, by referring to the rest of the novel with help from the study/activity pack.
- 5) With the first sample essay given you might wish to give your students the task of writing a draft essay themselves in response to the question, before handing them the sample essay. Once they have the sample essay (p. 34) in front of them you could ask them to analyse it for good/weak points and ask for suggestions as to how it could be improved. As the final part of the activity, you could then give them the sample answer with comments. The end result would be a high band answer.
- 6) With the second sample essay suggestions as to how to improve it, and gain more marks specifically related to the Assessment Objectives, are given in the mark scheme.
- 7) Chapter-by-chapter Key Quotations (p. 10): Ask students to think what each quotation might illustrate.
- 8) Linking Context to the Plot, Characters and Themes (p. 44): The table could be presented with the context column blanked out and students could be asked to relate the question to possible contexts.

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Student-friendly Specification Information

AQA GCSE English Literature – Specification Information

Robert Louis Stevenson – *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*

Charles Dickens – *A Christmas Carol*

Charles Dickens – *Great Expectations*

Charlotte Brontë – *Jane Eyre*

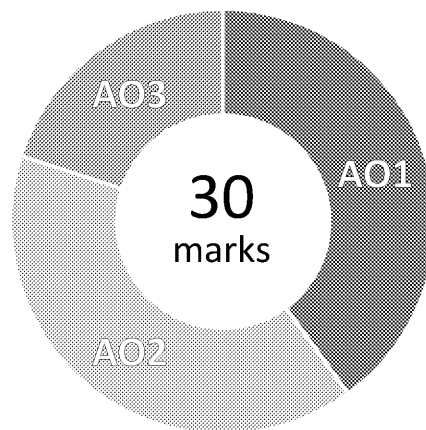
Mary Shelley – *Frankenstein*

Jane Austen – *Pride and Prejudice*

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle – *The Sign of Four*

Paper 1, Section B: The 19th-century Novel

- Closed-book, written exam
- Extract-based question (answer based on extract and the novel as a whole)
- One question per text
- 30 marks in total:
 - AO1: 12 marks
 - AO2: 12 marks
 - AO3: 6 marks
- Paper 1 overall (Sections A and B) is 1 hour minutes long and is worth 40% of the total GCSE grade



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Revision of the

1: Chapter Summary Table

Tips:

- 1) The chapter titles often summarise the action, try to memorise them.
- 2) Visualise the setting for each of the main events and try to build up a pictorial sequence of events in your mind.
- 3) One of the narrative techniques that Conan Doyle uses is to end each chapter on a cliffhanger. Look at the end of each chapter.
- 4) Used correctly, words in bold are likely to impress the examiner and improve AO1 marks.

Chapter	Key events/themes	Setting
1. The Science of Deduction <i>Key quotation: 'No, no: I never guess. It is a shocking habit...'</i>	Holmes impresses Watson by his powers of deduction, especially by reading clues in a watch that Watson gives him.	The lodgings in Baker Street
2. The Statement of the Case	Mary Morstan comes to see Holmes about the strange disappearance of her father and receiving a sequence of pearls. She has also received a mysterious letter.	The lodgings at Baker Street
3. In Quest of a Solution	At the Lyceum theatre they meet a man who takes them on a mysterious journey. On the way to the theatre Mary shows Holmes the 'Sign of Four'.	The Lyceum theatre, a house in south London
4. The Story of the Bald-headed Man	They meet the bald-headed man (Thaddeus Sholto). He narrates the story of Major Morstan's death at Pondicherry Lodge and the strange face at the window.	The interior of the house in south London. Pondicherry Lodge

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Chapter	Key events/themes	Setting	Narrative techniques	Context
	They all go to Pondicherry Lodge. They discover that Bartholomew is dead. The treasure is missing.	Pondicherry Lodge		As above
	Holmes deduces that two people must have committed the murder, one with a wooden leg, and one with very small footprints. A police detective Athelney Jones arrives.	Pondicherry Lodge	The incompetence of Athelney Jones is portrayed through irony and sarcasm .	Nineteenth-century police force
	Holmes and Watson follow the dog Toby who is following the scent of creosote from the crime scene. Toby leads them to a large barrel of creosote – not to the criminals.	The streets of London	The technique of exposition is used here as Holmes explains to Watson his interpretation of the case. Adds humour with the failure of the dog to follow the scent correctly, proving that dogs are not infallible. The contrast between different levels of society is shown.	The city of London and its inhabitants Contrast between rich and poor
	The dog leads them to a riverside landing stage. Holmes employs the Baker Street Irregulars to find the boat 'Aurora'.	A riverside landing stage on the Thames	Conan Doyle employs irony with the use of the inaccurate newspaper article, in order to show the limitations of the police force.	The River Thames as an important trading gateway to London and the rest of Britain The Baker Street Irregulars are the underbody of Victorian society, but Holmes trusts them (and vice versa) to do valuable work for him

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Chapter	Key events/themes	Setting	Narrative techniques	Context
	Watson goes to tell Mary Morstan and Mrs Forrester about the events. Mrs Hudson is worried about Holmes.	Mary Morstan's lodgings Back to Baker Street	Mrs Forrester helpfully summarises the plot and her attitude serves to make the story more dramatic.	The landlady–tenant relationship Mrs Hudson's caring nature
	Holmes, Watson and Jones pursue the 'Aurora'. Tonga falls into the river. Small is captured.	The River Thames	Many detective stories and thrillers include a chase sequence (think James Bond). Here Conan Doyle uses the river chase to add excitement and tension.	Criminals brought to justice
	The treasure chest is brought to Mary. It is empty. Watson is pleased as this now means Mary's potential wealth will no longer be a barrier to him marrying her.	Baker Street.	The story comes to an end. In literary terms this is the denouement of the plot. The sub-plot of Watson's romance also reaches its conclusion.	Wealth as a barrier to marriage The inequalities it brings
	Jonathan Small tells his story: how he lost his leg, his guarding of the fort at Agra where two Sikh guards convinced him to take part in a robbery; his desire for revenge on Sholto, who had gone off with the treasure. Watson proposes to Mary. Holmes is not pleased.	Baker Street In Small's story – the Great Fort of Agra	This chapter comprises a lengthy explanation of events (the exposition).	The influence of the British Empire The desire for revenge Ideas of justice

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Write a quotation from the text which could illustrate the key event or theme for each chapter. The first one has been done for you as an example. Choose your own quotations and then compare your quotation with others in your group.

2: Who's Who? Key Characters, Key Moments and

Character	Description	Key quotation	Language used to p
Sherlock Holmes	A private detective	'No, no. I never guess. It is a shocking habit – destructive to the logical faculty.' (p. 9)	Mostly seen through the Watson, but here some of tell us what he is like and to him of logical thought.
Mrs Hudson	The housekeeper at Baker Street	'Do you know, sir....I am afraid for his health' (p. 90)	Mrs Hudson is a steady in background at 22B Baker that she really cares about
Dr Watson	A doctor who fought in the Afghan wars	'I may be very obtuse, Holmes, but I fail to see what this suggests.' (p. 19)	This quotation shows that of his own limitations.
Mary Morstan	The daughter of an Indian Army Officer	'I have never looked upon a face which gave a clearer promise of a refined and sensitive nature.' (p. 12)	Mary Morstan provides a the story. This quotation indication of her character the Victorian idealised yo
Mrs Forrester	Mary Morstan's companion	'...a middle-aged, graceful woman. She was clearly no mere paid dependant but an honoured friend.' (p. 61)	Here we see Mary Morstan also a reflection of the role in Victorian England.
Thaddeus Sholto	The twin brother of Bartholomew Sholto	'...a small man with a very high head, a bristle of red hair all round the fringe of it, and a bald shining scalp which shot out from among it like a mountain-peak from fir trees.' (p. 26)	A fantastic description with simile, showing Conan Doyle the language in enabling to a vivid description of the
John Sholto	A former major in the Indian Army	'Major Sholto was a particular friend of Papa's ...He and Papa were in command of the troops on the Andaman Islands.' (p. 20)	This quotation brings to the importance of the Andaman development of the plot.

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Description	Key quotation	Language used to present them	Key moments
A police officer from Scotland Yard	“‘Confirms it in every respect,” said the fat detective pompously.’ (p. 56)	The evocative adverb ‘pompously’ immediately gives the reader the impression that Athelney Jones always thinks he knows best.	Sherlock Holmes has a very poor view of Jones and his methods, and is not averse to teasing him. The character’s incompetence serves as a contrast to the superiority of Holmes.
A small man from the Andaman Islands	‘Diminutive footmarks, toes never fettered by boots, naked feet, stone-headed wooden mace, great agility, small poisoned darts.’ (p. 85)	This list gives the reader, in concise form, all the details we wish to know about Tonga.	Holmes has been able to deduce all these attributes during the course of his investigation.
A dog	‘...an ugly, long-haired, lop-eared creature...with a very clumsy waddling gait.’ (p. 63)	This amusing portrait of the dog uses many apt adjectives.	The dog is very important to the plot. In fact Holmes wouldn’t have got anywhere without him.
A man with a wooden leg who joined the Third Buffs Regiment	‘Mad with hate...against the dead man he enters the room that night.’ (p. 70)	This shows the volatility of Small.	Further quotations bring out Small’s primitive-like nature: ‘A brown monkey-faced chap’ (p. 78).
Father of Mary Morstan	‘My father was an officer in an Indian regiment, who sent me home when I was quite a child.’ (p. 13)	This quotation explains the context of Mary Morstan’s orphan state.	Major Morstan does not appear in the story, but his death starts off the chain of events.

3: Whole-book Quiz

(Each question relates to a chapter. NB there may be more than one correct answer)

- How did Holmes deduce the watch belonged to Watson's brother?
 a) by the initials HW on the watch b) he guessed
- What did Mary Morstan receive each year?
 a) a diamond b) a pearl
- At the rendezvous at the theatre Holmes took which of these items with him?
 a) a gun b) a stick
- Thaddeus Sholto is Bartholomew Sholto's:
 a) father b) brother
- The housekeeper at Pondicherry Lodge is:
 a) Mrs Hudson b) Miss Morstan
- Holmes found which of the following outside Pondicherry Lodge:
 a) footprints b) circular muddy marks
- Holmes dipped his handkerchief into:
 a) creosote b) paint
- Mordecai Smith is:
 a) a fisherman b) a man who hires boats
- Who came to Baker Street disguised as an old man?
 a) Athelney Jones b) Dr Watson
- Which of the following did Holmes talk at length about?
 a) Stradivarius violins b) Buddhism
- What did Watson find inside the treasure chest?
 a) jewels b) pearls
- Jonathan Small had his leg bitten off by:
 a) a crocodile b) a shark

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4: Further Revision Activity

Sherlock Holmes's erudition (the quality of having or showing great knowledge)

How does the reader know that Holmes is clever and intelligent? Conan Doyle gives us many references throughout the novel.

Often these are shown by Holmes's use of statistics, lists, quotations from other authors and references.

Can you complete these references?

Chapter 1:

It is cocaine a solution.

Yes, I have been guilty of several monographs... Here, for example is one of the 'Ashes of the Various Tobaccos'. In it I enumerate cigar.

Chapter 2:

I have some few references to make. Let me recommend this book – one of which I have just penned. It is

Chapter 6:

Coupled with this distortion of the face, this Hippocratic smile or as the old writers called it.

He has occasional glimmerings of reason. '.....'

'Wir sind' Goethe is always pithy.

Chapter 10:

He spoke on a quick succession of subjects – on miracle plays handling each as though he had made a special study of it.

Chapter 12:

I often think of those lines of old Goethe: '.....'

NB. You would not be expected to be able to quote these references, but you could use them to illustrate Holmes's erudition, and the contrast between the character of Holmes and b) Athelney Jones.

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Exam Preparation Act

In order to help you prepare for the exam look at the following:

- 1) key quotations from each chapter
- 2) linking context to plot, character and themes
- 3) using significant terms on the author's technique

1. Chapter by Chapter: Key Quotations

(One from each chapter – fill in the missing words.)

1. Eliminate all other factors and the one which remains must be
2. You really are an automaton – a
3. Holmes alone could rise to petty
4. Our father would never tell us what it was he feared but he had a most mark
.....
5. So we stood hand in hand like two
hearts, for all the dark things that surrounded us.
6. How often have I said to you that when you have eliminated the impossible
..... ?
7. Might she not look upon me as a mere vulgar
8. It is the unofficial force – the Baker Street
9. Was it possible that his nimble and
theory upon faulty premises?
10. It's just these very simple things which are extremely liable to be
11. Whoever had lost a....., I knew that nis
12. But love is an emotional thing and whatever is emotional is opposed to that
..... which I place above all things.

⊕ *Extension activity:*

Work with a partner and choose another quotation from each chapter, but w
Test each other on the missing word(s).

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2. Linking Context to the Plot, Character

✍ Activity:

In your written answers you may well be asked to make reference to the context of the plot, characters and themes. Look at the table below and think about the kind of question you might be asked.

Exam tip: It is unlikely you will be asked to 'write about nineteenth-century London' as presented in *The Sign of Four*. It will be very much up to you to make the link between the context to the plot, characters and themes. Look at the table below and think about the kind of question you might be asked. Common terms that you will find useful are either 'Victorian England' or 'Victorian London'. Once the examiner sees these terms you will be on the way to a good answer.

Context	Plot/character/theme	
Women in Victorian England	Mary Morstan and other women/womanhood	
The British Empire in nineteenth-century India	The background to the plot	
Nineteenth-century London	The setting of London and the River Thames	
Victorian detective fiction	The structure of detective stories	
Victorian fascination with the depiction of human nature	The duality within Holmes's character	
Victorian concepts of crime, justice and fair play	The resolution of the plot and the conviction of Small	
The Victorian police force	The depiction of Athelney Jones and other policemen, as well as police resources	

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3. Key Linguistic Terminology

A summary of significant terms on technique that you can use to impress

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. cliffhanger | 6. irony and sarcasm |
| 2. narrator | 7. exposition |
| 3. dialogue | 8. chase sequence |
| 4. reported speech | 9. denouement |
| 5. evocative/emotive adjectives | 10. sub-plot |

✍ Task:

Make sure you know what each of these terms means. Refer back to the action dictionary if you are not sure of any of them.

Now fill in each of the sentences below with the appropriate word from the above

1. One way Conan Doyle gives a fuller picture of each character is his use of he is describing Mary Morstan.
2. Conan Doyle uses the well-known technique of detective fiction by ending each
3. The of the plot comes when Jonathan Small reveals mystery is fully resolved.
4. Holmes uses to comment on the actions of the police, which is humiliating, but can create a comic effect.
5. The of the plot comes at the beginning when Mary Morstan is in a predicament.
6. Conan Doyle uses to spice up the action, break up the monotony and make it more realistic and lively. It can also reveal the personality and class of some characters.
7. In many detective and/or spy stories there is a when the detective is in a predicament.
8. The of the story is Watson's developing romance with Mary Morstan.
9. Jonathan Small reveals all in the final chapter by: the time ago.
10. Watson serves as the in the story: he informs the reader of what is going on and gives his observations on Holmes.

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4. Close Analysis of Text

You will be expected to be able to analyse text closely in the exam, so please look at and answer the questions on the following page.

A heavy step was heard ascending the stair, with a great wheezing and rattling, sorely put to it for breath. Once or twice he stopped, as though the climb were last he made his way to our door and entered. His appearance corresponded to what I heard. He was an aged man, clad in seafaring garb, with an old pea-jacket but his back was bowed, his knees were shaky, and his breathing was painfully asthmatic. He took a thick oaken cudgel his shoulders heaved in the effort to draw the air into his lungs. A scarf round his chin, and I could see little of his face save a pair of keen dark eyes, white brows, and long gray side-whiskers. Altogether he gave me the impression of a mariner who had fallen into years and poverty.

"What is it, my man?" I asked.

He looked about him in the slow methodical fashion of old age.

"Is Mr. Sherlock Holmes here?" said he.

"No; but I am acting for him. You can tell me any message you have for him."

"It was to him himself I was to tell it," said he.

"But I tell you that I am acting for him. Was it about Mordecai Smith's boat?"

"Yes. I know well where it is. An' I know where the men he is after are. An' I know is. I know all about it."

"Then tell me, and I shall let him know."

"It was to him I was to tell it," he repeated, with the petulant obstinacy of a veteran.

"Well, you must wait for him."

"No, no; I ain't goin' to lose a whole day to please no one. If Mr. Holmes ain't here, I'll find it all out for himself. I don't care about the look of either of you, and I won't wait."

He shuffled towards the door, but Athelney Jones got in front of him.

"Wait a bit, my friend," said he. "You have important information, and you must keep you, whether you like or not, until our friend returns."

The old man made a little run towards the door, but, as Athelney Jones put his hand on his shoulder, he recognized the uselessness of resistance.

"Pretty sort o' treatment this!" he cried, stamping his stick. "I come here to see a friend, and you who I never saw in my life, seize me and treat me in this fashion!"

"You will be none the worse," I said. "We shall recompense you for the loss of your seat on the sofa, and you will not have long to wait."

He came across sullenly enough, and seated himself with his face resting on his hand. We resumed our cigars and our talk. Suddenly, however, Holmes's voice broke in on us.

"I think that you might offer me a cigar too," he said.

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1. What adjectives does Conan Doyle use to describe the old man?

.....
.....
.....
.....

2. In what other ways does he portray old age?

.....
.....
.....
.....

3. How does Conan Doyle perpetuate the trick disguise apart from appearance?

.....
.....
.....
.....

4. How is the element of surprise sprung on the reader?

.....
.....
.....
.....

5. What does this extract tell us about Holmes?

.....
.....
.....
.....

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5. Essay Writing - Preparation and Plan

When you are preparing and planning your essay you can use techniques and ideas from literature essays. Here are some activities to help you.

1) Sort out these instructions under the headings of 'Always', 'Sometimes', and 'Never'.

Read the question carefully.	Use the author's first name.
Use long quotations.	Use quotations in your own words.
Explain the effects of any language points.	Use the author's surname.
Make a plan.	Focus on the question.
Retell the story in your own words.	Take care of spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Always	Sometimes

2) What type of question? The exam question will be either about themes (T), characterisation (C) or author's techniques (A). There could be some overlap.

Read the questions below and decide what type of question it is, T, C/S, C or A.

- Examine how Conan Doyle uses language in this extract to build suspense.
- How does Conan Doyle present ideas about women in *The Sign of Four*?
- What is the importance of the River Thames in *The Sign of Four*?
- How does Conan Doyle present the character of Dr Watson in this extract?

3) You may think about making a 'writing mat'. Here are some useful headings.

- Getting started on analysing the extract
- Language terms I could use
- Embedding quotations
- Linking words
- What the author (Conan Doyle) does

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Language terms I could use

Linking words

What the author (Conan Doyle) does

The author...

Getting started on analysing the extract

Embedding quotations

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4) SPAG (Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar)

We have mentioned the importance of Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar. you to complete.

There are several grammatical errors in the passage below. Can you find them?

- i) *Throughout the novel conan doyle uses specific place names to locate the where mary marston goes to meet the stranger he also makes extensive use in the boat chase on the river and the events leading up to it when mr jones says it is a pity there is no key that we may make an inventory first you find the key my man*

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

- ii) Which of these words are correctly spelt? If you think they are incorrect, correct them.

- Consequently**
- Therefore**
- Personification**
- Aliteration**
- Repitition**
- Hyperbole**
- Simbolism**

- iii) Quick-fire questions:

- a) When should capital letters be used?
.....
- b) What is the purpose of a paragraph?
.....
- c) When might you use a colon (:)?
.....
- d) What punctuation should be used when you introduce quotations?
.....

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Practice Exam-style Qu

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QUESTION

1) Using this extract as a starting point, write about how Conan Doyle exp

You should look at

- how the city of London is presented by Conan Doyle in this extract
- how the city of London is presented by Conan Doyle in the whole

He took out his revolver as he spoke, and, having loaded two of the chambers, he put it in his right-hand pocket of his jacket.

We had during this time been following the guidance of Toby down the highway which lead to the metropolis. Now, however, we were beginning to come to a place where laborers and dockmen were already astir, and slatternly women were brushing door-steps. At the square-topped corner public houses business-looking men were emerging, rubbing their sleeves across their beards after a long day's work; dogs sauntered up and stared wonderingly at us as we passed, but our interest was neither to the right nor to the left, but trotted onwards with his nose to the ground at a point which spoke of a hot scent.

We had traversed Streatham, Brixton, Camberwell, and now found ourselves having borne away through the side-streets to the east of the Oval. The men seemed to have taken a curiously zigzag road, with the idea probably of escaping the police. They kept to the main road if a parallel side-street would serve their turn. At the end of the road they had edged away to the left through Bond Street and Miles Street. Where they met the Knight's Place, Toby ceased to advance, but began to run backwards and forwards, and the other drooping, the very picture of canine indecision. Then he wagged his tail up to us from time to time, as if to ask for sympathy in his embarrassment.

"What the deuce is the matter with the dog?" growled Holmes. "They surely won't get off in a balloon."

QUESTION

2) Using this extract as a starting point, write about how Conan Doyle exp

You should look at

- how the theme of love is presented by Conan Doyle in this extract
- how the theme of love is presented by Conan Doyle in the whole

I sat in the window with the volume in my hand, but my thoughts were far from the writer. My mind ran upon our late visitor, — her smiles, the deep rich beauty, the strange mystery which overhung her life. If she were seventeen at the time she must be seven-and-twenty now, — a sweet age, when youth has lost its bloom and become a little sobered by experience. So I sat and mused, until such danger came to my head that I hurried away to my desk and plunged furiously into the latest issue of the Times. I was I, an army surgeon with a weak leg and a weaker banking-account, the only man of such things? She was a unit, a factor, — nothing more. If my future were black, would it like a man than to attempt to brighten it by mere will-o'-the-wisps of the

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QUESTION

3) Using this extract as a starting point, write about how Conan Doyle explains Doctor Watson.

You should look at

- how Doctor Watson is presented by Conan Doyle in this extract
- how Doctor Watson is presented by Conan Doyle in the whole text

Three times a day for many months I had witnessed this performance, but my mind turned to it. On the contrary, from day to day I had become more irritable and my anger swelled nightly within me at the thought that I had lacked the courage to do what I had registered a vow that I should deliver my soul upon the subject, but there was the nonchalant air of my companion which made him the last man with whom I could do anything approaching to a liberty. His great powers, his masterly manner, his calmness, his had had of his many extraordinary qualities, all made me diffident and backward.

Yet upon that afternoon, whether it was the Beauce which I had taken with me, or the exasperation produced by the extreme deliberation of his manner, I suddenly I was no longer.

"Which is it to-day?" I asked, — "morphine or cocaine?"

He raised his eyes languidly from the old black-letter volume which he had been reading, and said, — "a seven-per-cent. solution. Would you care to try it?"

"No, indeed," I answered, brusquely. "My constitution has not got over the effects of the last one. I cannot afford to throw any extra strain upon it."

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QUESTION

- 4) Using this extract (p. 43–44 *'Inside we all followed ...with the frightened point, write about how Conan Doyle explores the role of women.*

You should look at

- how women are presented by Conan Doyle in this extract
- how women are presented by Conan Doyle in the whole text

We all followed him into the housekeeper's room, which stood upon the left. The old woman was pacing up and down with a scared look and restless paces. Miss Morstan appeared to have a soothing effect upon her.

"God bless your sweet calm face!" she cried, with an hysterical sob. "It does not seem as if you have been sorely tried this day!"

Our companion patted her thin, work-worn hand, and murmured some few words of comfort which brought the color back into the other's bloodless cheeks.

"Master has locked himself in and will not answer me," she explained. "All day I have waited for him, for he often likes to be alone; but an hour ago I feared that something had happened, and peeped through the key-hole. You must go up, Mr. Thaddeus, – you must go up yourself. I have seen Mr. Bartholomew Sholto in joy and in sorrow for ten years, but never with him with such a face on him as that."

Sherlock Holmes took the lamp and led the way, for Thaddeus Sholto's teeth were chattering. So shaken was he that I had to pass my hand under his arm as we went up the stairs, he was trembling under him. Twice as we ascended Holmes whipped his lens out and examined marks which appeared to me to be mere shapeless smudges of dirt upon the matting which served as a stair-carpet. He walked slowly from step to step, shooting keen glances to right and left. Miss Morstan had remained behind the housekeeper.

QUESTION

- 5) Using this extract (p. 119–20 *'The treasure is lost...I had gained one'*) as a stimulus, write about how Conan Doyle explores the theme of money and wealth.

You should look at

- how the theme of money and wealth is presented by Conan Doyle in this extract
- how the theme of money and wealth is presented by Conan Doyle in the whole text

"The treasure is lost," said Miss Morstan, calmly.

As I listened to the words and realized what they meant, a great shadow seemed to fall upon me. I did not know how this Agra treasure had weighed me down, until now that I was selfish, no doubt, disloyal, wrong, but I could realize nothing save that the treasure was from between us. "Thank God!" I ejaculated from my very heart.

She looked at me with a quick, questioning smile. "Why do you say that?"

"Because you are within my reach again," I said, taking her hand. She did not seem to love you, Mary, as truly as ever a man loved a woman. Because this treasure was gone from our lips. Now that they are gone I can tell you how I love you. That is why I say that."

"Then I say, 'Thank God,' too," she whispered, as I drew her to my side. We both knew that night that I had gained one.

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6) Using this extract as a starting point, how far do you think Conan Doyle

You should look at

- how an atmosphere of fear is created by Conan Doyle in this extract
- how an atmosphere of fear is created by Conan Doyle in the whole story

Inside, a gravel path wound through desolate grounds to a huge clump of all plunged in shadow save where a moonbeam struck one corner and glinted. The vast size of the building, with its gloom and its deathly silence, struck Thaddeus Sholto seemed ill at ease, and the lantern quivered and rattled in

"I cannot understand it," he said. "There must be some mistake. I distinctly should be here, and yet there is no light in his window. I do not know what

"Does he always guard the premises in this way?" asked Holmes.

"Yes; he has followed my father's custom. He was the favorite son, you know, my father may have told him more than he ever told me. That is Bartholomew the moonshine strikes. It is quite bright, but there is no light from within, is it?"

"None," said Holmes. "But I see the glint of a light in that little window beyond

"Ah, that is the housekeeper's room. That is where old Mrs. Bernstone sits, perhaps you would not mind waiting here for a minute or two, for if we all have no word of our coming she may be alarmed. But hush! what is that?"

He held up the lantern, and his hand shook until the circles of light flickered. Miss Morstan seized my wrist, and we all stood with thumping hearts, strange black house there sounded through the silent night the saddest and most broken whimpering of a frightened woman.

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- QUESTION** 7) Using this extract as a starting point, write about how Conan Doyle explains how the police force is presented in this extract and in the whole text.
- You should look at
- how the police force is presented by Conan Doyle in this extract
 - how the police force is presented by Conan Doyle in the whole text

"Well, I have been obliged to reconsider it. I had my net drawn tightly round the hole, but he went through a hole in the middle of it. He was able to prove an alibi with respect to the time that he left his brother's room he was never out of sight of me. It is not he who climbed over roofs and through trap-doors. It's a very dark business, and credit is at stake. I should be very glad of a little assistance."

"We all need help sometimes," said I.

"Your friend Mr. Sherlock Holmes is a wonderful man, sir," said he, in a hurried tone. "He's a man who is not to be beat. I have known that young man go into a case and see the case yet that he could not throw a light upon. He is irregular in his habits, perhaps in jumping at theories, but, on the whole, I think he would have more success than I and I don't care who knows it. I have had a wire from him this morning, but he has got some clue to this Sholto business. Here is the message."

He took the telegram out of his pocket, and handed it to me. It was dated from London. "Go to Baker Street at once," it said. "If I have not returned, wait for me. I am in a hurry. The Sholto gang. You can come with us to-night if you want to be in at the finish."

"This sounds well. He has evidently picked up the scent again," said I.

"Ah, then he has been at fault too," exclaimed Jones, with evident satisfaction.

- QUESTION** 8) Using this extract as a starting point, write about how Conan Doyle explains how the British Empire is presented in this extract and in the whole text.
- You should look at
- how the British Empire is presented by Conan Doyle in this extract
 - how the British Empire is presented by Conan Doyle in the whole text

"There is a rajah in the northern provinces who has much wealth, though it does not come to him from his father, and more still he has set by himself, for he is not a spendthrift, but hoards gold rather than spend it. When the troubles broke out he would be friendly to the British, — with the Sepoy and with the Company's Raj. Soon, however, it seemed that the British men's day was come, for through all the land he could hear of nothing but of the Sepoy overthrow. Yet, being a careful man, he made such plans that, come what may, some treasure should be left to him. That which was in gold and silver he kept by him in his palace, but the most precious stones and the choicest pearls that he had he hid away by a trusty servant who, under the guise of a merchant, should take it to the coast until the land is at peace. Thus, if the rebels won he would have his money, and if they conquered his jewels would be saved to him. Having thus divided his hoard, he was not in the cause of the Sepoys, since they were strong upon his borders. By doing this he has secured his property becomes the due of those who have been true to their salt."

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QUESTION

9) Using this extract from Chapter 7 as a starting point, write about how C

Write about

- how language is used by Conan Doyle to create tension
- how tension is created by Conan Doyle in the novel as a whole

"It is just possible that we may need something of the sort if we get to their lair but if the other turns nasty I shall shoot him dead." He took out his revolver and two of the chambers, he put it back into the right-hand pocket of his jacket.

We had during this time been following the guidance of Toby down the half-mile lead to the metropolis. Now, however, we were beginning to come among courtesans and dockmen were already astir, and slatternly women were taking down shutters. At the square-topped corner public houses business was just beginning, and redoubts were emerging, rubbing their sleeves across their beards after their morning wet. Some stared wonderingly at us as we passed, but our inimitable Toby looked neither back nor forward. He trotted onwards with his nose to the ground and an occasional eager whine when he caught sight of a dog.

We had traversed Streatham, Brixton, Camberwell, and now found ourselves borne away through the side-streets to the east of the Oval. The men whom we saw were taking a curiously zigzag road, with the idea probably of escaping observation. They were looking for a road if a parallel side-street would serve their turn. At the foot of Kennington Road we turned to the left through Bond Street and Miles Street. Where the latter street turns into Kennington Road we advanced, but began to run backwards and forwards with one ear cocked and the other drooping, a picture of canine indecision. Then he waddled round in circles, looking up to us with a pleading for sympathy in his embarrassment.

"What the deuce is the matter with the dog?" growled Holmes. "They surely were not carrying a balloon."

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QUESTION

10) Using this extract as a starting point, write about how Mary Morstan is

Write about:

- how language is used by Conan Doyle to portray Mary Morstan in
- how Mary Morstan is presented by Conan Doyle in the novel as a

She was seated by the open window, dressed in some sort of white diaphanous
scarlet at the neck and waist. The soft light of a shaded lamp fell upon her as she
sat in a high-backed chair, playing over her sweet, grave face, and tinting with a dull, metallic sparkle
her luxuriant hair. One white arm and hand drooped over the side of the chair, and
the face had a certain air of a spoke of an absorbing melancholy. At the sound of my foot-fall she sprang to
her feet, and a flush of surprise and of pleasure colored her pale cheeks.

"I heard a cab drive up," she said. "I thought that Mrs. Forrester had come back
and that you had dreamed that it might be you. What news have you brought me?"

"I have brought something better than news," said I, putting down the box upon
the table jovially and boisterously, though my heart was heavy within me. "I have brought
something worth all the news in the world. I have brought you a fortune."

She glanced at the iron box. "Is that the treasure, then?" she asked, coolly enough.

"Yes, this is the great Agra treasure. Half of it is yours and half is Thaddeus Sholto's.
It is worth a hundred thousand each. Think of that! An annuity of ten thousand pounds
for the rest of your lives in England. Is it not glorious?"

I think that I must have been rather overacting my delight, and that she detected
it. She made no congratulations, for I saw her eyebrows rise a little, and she glanced at me curiously.

"If I have it," said she, "I owe it to you."

"No, no," I answered, "not to me, but to my friend Sherlock Holmes. With all his
powers he never have followed up a clue which has taxed even his analytical genius. As
it was at the last moment."

"Pray sit down and tell me all about it, Dr. Watson," said she.

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Student-friendly Mark

AQA GCSE Student Self or Peer Mark Scheme

This mark scheme combines the ideas given in the AOs and the AQA mark scheme. You should use this to check your own or your peers' work and identify areas to work on.

		Level →	0 marks	Level 1	Level 2
		Key words →	Nothing worthy of credit	Simple, explicit	Support relevant
Skills to demonstrate in your work	AO1	I demonstrate my knowledge of the text.*			
	AO1	I present an informed personal response.			
	AO1	I use references to the text to support my interpretations.			
	AO2	I analyse the methods used by the author.			
	AO2	I analyse the effects of these methods on the reader.	<i>If this is not done, give 0 marks for this skill</i>		
	AO2	I use appropriate subject terminology.			
	AO3	I understand the relationship between text and context.			

*This does not appear in the AQA SAMs mark scheme

Best area:

Areas to work on:

Teachers should refer to the mark schemes given on the AQA website for marking and to ensure student

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Tackling a Sample Question A Step-by-Step Approach

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The question:

QUESTION Using this extract as a starting point, write about how Conan Doyle explores the theme of London in the extract. You should look at

- a) how the city of London is presented by Conan Doyle in this extract
- b) how the city of London is presented by Conan Doyle in the whole text

He took out his revolver as he spoke, and, having loaded two of the chambers, he put it in his hand pocket of his jacket.

We had during this time been following the guidance of Toby down the half-mile road that would lead to the metropolis. Now, however, we were beginning to come among crowds of people and dockmen were already astir, and slatternly women were taking down shutters. At the square-topped corner public houses business was just beginning, and men were emerging, rubbing their sleeves across their beards after their morning wet. Some of the men stared wonderingly at us as we passed, but our inimitable Toby looked neither to the right nor to the left, and trotted onwards with his nose to the ground and an occasional eager whine when he caught sight of a dog.

We had traversed Streatham, Brixton, Camberwell, and now found ourselves borne away through the side-streets to the east of the Oval. The men whom we saw were on a curiously zigzag road, with the idea probably of escaping observation. They were looking for a road if a parallel side-street would serve their turn. At the foot of Kennington Road we turned to the left through Bond Street and Miles Street. Where the latter street turns into a narrow lane we advanced, but began to run backwards and forwards with one ear cocked and the other hanging down in a picture of canine indecision. Then he waddled round in circles, looking up to the sky and down to the ground for sympathy in his embarrassment.

"What the deuce is the matter with the dog?" growled Holmes. "They surely were not looking for a balloon."

Step 1:

Decide what type of question this is (themes (T), context/setting (C/S), character (A), or a mixture?).

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Step 2:

Look at the wording of the question; what key words would you highlight?

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Step 3:

In the extract pick out some points you could easily comment on:

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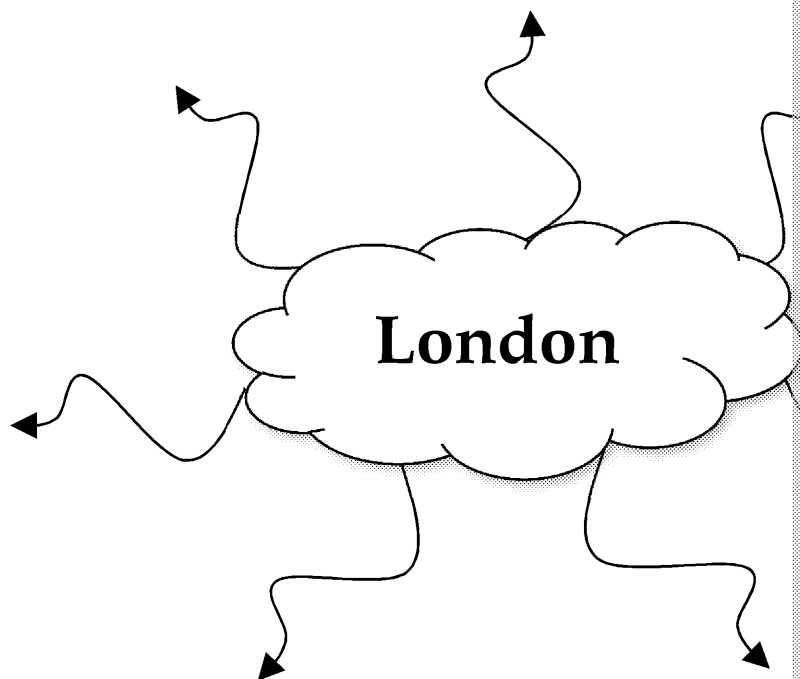
(Tip: Think about proper nouns, names, characters (London people), adjectives)

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Step 4:

Initial planning – do a spider diagram with London in the centre:



Step 5:

Ask yourself some pertinent questions, e.g.:

- Is the impression of London positive or negative? (How/why?)
- How is nineteenth-century London different to twenty-first-century London?

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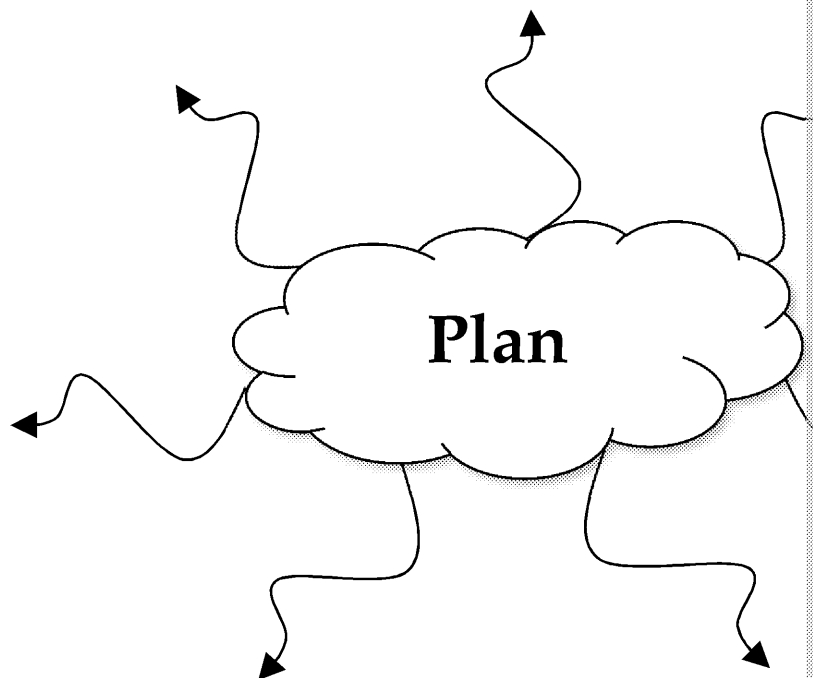
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Step 6:

Make a plan for part a) AND part b) of the question. Part b) could be tricky as you need to include this part of your answer. You might find that doing a similar spider diagram for part b) helps you remember. You could also use the essay planning mat on page 30, which could help you.

So now do a spider diagram using different evidence from the rest of the story but focusing on people, places, proper nouns, characters, adjectives, atmosphere, and topic-specific vocabulary. Using a mnemonic might help you. How about PAPPACT?!



Important tip: Try to include ideas for part b) that are not in the original extract. You should also show that you have got a grasp of the novel as a whole and that you can relate your knowledge to the story.

Step 7:

Throughout your essay you need to remember what the examiners will be looking for. So here are some more mnemonics:

EEQ = Examples, Explanations, Quotations

ETC = Effects, Techniques, Context

SPAG = Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar

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Step 8: Get started!

Write a draft essay and then look through a sample essay which your teacher will improve your essay.

The following paragraph headings might help you structure your essay:

Paragraph 1: Introduction

You could start your introduction with these words: *'In this passage, Conan some specific place names and introducing Toby the dog.'*

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Paragraph 2: Places

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Paragraph 3: People

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Paragraph 4: Author's technique: use of adjectives and adverbs; creating irony/humour/contrast

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Paragraph 5: Final paragraph (Summary)

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Language terms I could use

- | | |
|--------------|-----------|
| Alliteration | Hyperbole |
| Metaphor | Pathos |
| Repetition | Simile |

Linking words

- | | |
|--------------|-------------------|
| Consequently | In addition |
| Furthermore | On the other hand |
| However | Therefore |

What the author (Conan Doyle) does

The author...

- | | |
|-----------|--------------|
| expresses | demonstrates |
| evokes | highlights |
| contrasts | illustrates |

Getting started on analysing the extract

- In this passage Conan Doyle's use of..... conveys a sense of..... to the reader.
- Conan Doyle emphasises Sherlock Holmes's [arrogance] by
- The words '.....' imply that Sherlock Holmes is Watson who is
- As a result the reader is led to believe that
- The depiction of London in this passage shows the contrast between..... Victorian society.
- We can see here that [Mary Morstan] represents the changing role of..... century England.

Embedding quotations

- Conan Doyle emphasises Watson's 'downcast' attitude to money, showing the contrast between..... to his relationship with Mary Morstan (Chapter 4, p. 38).
- On Holmes's return to Baker Street his 'excellent spirits' are contrasted with..... This shows the duality of his character - something which fascinated Victorian..... novel *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* by R L Stevenson (Chapter 3, p. 19).

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Sample essay 1

QUESTION Using this extract as a starting point, write about how Conan Doyle explores London in this passage. You should look at

- how the city of London is presented by Conan Doyle in this extract
- how the city of London is presented by Conan Doyle in the whole text

He took out his revolver as he spoke, and, having loaded two of the chambers, he slipped it into the hand pocket of his jacket.

We had during this time been following the guidance of Toby down the half-mile lead to the metropolis. Now, however, we were beginning to come among common laborers and dockmen were already astir, and slatternly women were taking down the door-steps. At the square-topped corner public houses business was just beginning to be emerging, rubbing their sleeves across their beards after their morning work, and stared wonderingly at us as we passed, but our inimitable Toby looked not to the left, but trotted onwards with his nose to the ground and an occasional eager sniff of the scent.

We had traversed Streatham, Brixton, Camberwell, and now found ourselves borne away through the side-streets to the east of the Oval. The men whom we had taken a curiously zigzag road, with the idea probably of escaping observation from the main road if a parallel side-street would serve their turn. At the foot of Kennington we turned away to the left through Bond Street and Miles Street. Where the latter street ceased to advance, but began to run backwards and forwards with one ear cocked, he gave the very picture of canine indecision. Then he waddled round in circles, looking as if to ask for sympathy in his embarrassment.

"What the deuce is the matter with the dog?" growled Holmes. "They surely would not be in a balloon."

Bullet point one*Paragraph 1) Introduction:*

Conan Doyle presents London in this passage by using specific place names and characters. He also introduces some typical London characters and makes good use of interesting details to help the reader to visualise the characters and to create atmosphere.

Paragraph 2) Places

The specific place names he uses include Streatham, Camberwell and the Oval, which are well known to his readers. One word of specific vocabulary includes 'metropolis', which was used by Victorian readers and is still in use today, such as, for example, the Metropolitan Police Force. By using such vocabulary and specific terminology Conan Doyle gives a sense of the heart of London.

Paragraph 3) People

The types of workers specific to London in this passage include dock men and slatternly women. The image of the great importance of London as a great trading centre in Victorian times is illustrated by the slatternly women were taking down the shutters and brushing doorsteps' illustration. Slatternly women would have taken in Victorian times of cleaning and preparing the houses. The women just coming out of the pub, 'rubbing their sleeves across their beards, after their

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Paragraph 4) Author's technique

- *Use of adjectives and adverbs*
 Conan Doyle leads the reader from a prosperous part of London, 'half-rural' area: he creates the atmosphere of a rather seedy area of London by using 'slatternly' to describe the women, 'rough-looking' to describe the men and 'wretched' to describe the area.
- *Creating tension and suspense*
 The tension in this passage is created by Holmes taking out his revolver as he immediately that this is a dangerous assignment. In addition, the men are taking a 'curiously zigzag road', and by their use of 'parallel side streets'. This is exemplified by the dog, Toby, who doesn't know which way to go and 'wags his tail'.
- *Use of irony/humour/contrast*
 Conan Doyle's use of irony and an attempt at humour is seen in the last paragraph 'They surely would not take a cab or go off in a balloon'.

Paragraph 5) Final paragraph for this section (Summary)

In this passage Conan Doyle is describing a rather seedy area of London where there is a reflection of the underbelly of Victorian London. He creates an atmosphere of a grimy city with judicious use of adjectives, used to describe both people and places. The lawless serves to heighten the danger that Holmes and Watson are facing.

✍ Task 1:

What improvements do you think could be made to this essay?

.....

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Bullet point two: You should look at how the city of London is presented by Conan Doyle.

You will not be expected to answer part b) in the same amount of detail, as you would for part a). However, it might be useful to think of the same headings as you used for part a) to help your memory.

The best chapters for writing about London come from Chapter 3, when Holmes and Watson are on their way to the Lyceum theatre for their secret assignment, and also Chapter 4, when they are on their chase on the River Thames. (Don't forget that the River Thames is an integral part of London's history.)

✍ Task 2:

Write your essay with improvements.

✍ Task 3:

Check your answer to see if you've missed anything. Can you improve your response? Read the draft?

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Student task:

Look at this answer to part b), divide it into paragraphs and then give each paragraph a topic sentence. When you have done this, see if you can spot any quotations and highlight or underline them. Finally, can you spot a new idea that has appeared in part b)?

Throughout the novel Conan Doyle uses specific place names to firm up the setting of Victorian London. The Lyceum theatre where Mary Morstan goes to meet the stranger. He also sets some of the action in the suburbs, for example, Pondicherry grounds. Londoners who are described include Mrs Hudson, Mrs Smith and the Irregulars. The boys are called street Arabs, implying uneducated and poor children, representing the underclass of Londoners. One is described as a scarecrow. Mrs Smith is portrayed as a typical docker's wife, as a woman who has to earn her living by renting out rooms. One of the best parts of the atmosphere of Victorian London comes early in the novel. Conan Doyle describes a dreary place with fog lying over the city. Adjectives used include misty, light, a feeble circular glimmer, a slimy pavement, a murky shifting and ghostlike. The whole city is represented as being both gloomy and dangerous with people with sad faces and glad, haggard and merry. One other way of describing London is through the traffic and transport used in the city in Victorian times. Steam launches on the Thames, the continuous stream of hansoms and cabs up in front of the Lyceum theatre. Overall London is presented as the centre of a huge trading empire with extreme contrasts between rich and poor without danger.

A large rectangular area with a dashed border, containing several horizontal dotted lines for writing.

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Further Sample Answers Commentaries

Sample 2: Mid-band essay with comments

Read the following extract from Chapter 7 and then answer **both parts** of the question.

QUESTION Using this extract as a starting point, write about how Conan Doyle creates tension in the extract.
Write about

- how language is used by Conan Doyle to create tension
- how tension is created by Conan Doyle in the novel as a whole

In this extract Holmes and Watson are using the dog Toby to help them find the criminal.

‘It is just possible that we may need something of the sort if we get to their lair, you, but if the other turns nasty I shall shoot him dead.’ He took out his revolver, loaded two of the chambers, he put it back into the right-hand pocket of his jacket.

We had during this time been following the guidance of Toby down the half-mile lead to the metropolis. Now, however, we were beginning to come among common labourers and dockmen were already astir, and slatternly women were taking down door-steps. At the square-topped corner public houses business was just beginning, men were emerging, rubbing their sleeves across their beards after their morning sauntered up and stared wonderingly at us as we passed, but our inimitable Toby, right nor to the left, but trotted onwards with his nose to the ground and an occasional spoke of a hot scent.

We had traversed Streatham, Brixton, Camberwell, and now found ourselves borne away through the side-streets to the east of the Oval. The men whom we had taken a curiously zigzag road, with the idea probably of escaping observation from the main road if a parallel side-street would serve their turn. At the foot of Kennington we turned away to the left through Bond Street and Miles Street. Where the latter street ended Toby ceased to advance, but began to run backwards and forwards with one ear drooping, the very picture of canine indecision. Then he waddled round in circles from time to time, as if to ask for sympathy in his embarrassment.

‘What the deuce is the matter with the dog?’ growled Holmes. ‘They surely won’t be in a balloon.’

Sample Answer

In this extract Conan Doyle starts with a dramatic event: ‘He took out his revolver and asks himself/herself whether the revolver will be used. The language is also dramatic. Short, bullet-like words are used to convey the excitement of the situation.

The author further sets the scene of the dog hunt in rather a seedy neighbourhood rather more respectable ‘villa-lined’ roads. This helps to create an ominous atmosphere, such as ‘slatternly’ to describe the women and ‘rough-looking’ to describe the men, but Toby, the dog used by Sherlock Holmes, ‘looked neither to the right nor to the left, but trotted onwards with his nose to the ground and an occasional eager whine which spoke of a hot scent’. The word ‘eager’ gives the dog the scent purposefully and the adjective ‘hot’ adds further to the excitement of the scene.

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The use of a list of London place names also serves to heighten the tension and climax. The men Holmes was following took a 'zigzag road'. The word 'zigzag' gives the reader the impression that the chase was not straightforward – it was complex and much more exciting.

Conan Doyle is very skilful at painting a picture of Toby's indecision by using adjectives like 'one ear cocked, the other drooping'. He also adds a bit of humour by using the impression of Toby being like a fat duck going round in circles.

Another way excitement is created is by the abrupt interruption of Holmes's question 'What matter with the dog?', and instead of just writing 'said' or 'asked' Conan Doyle writes 'said almost as though Holmes is turning into a dog himself'. Finally the last phrase 'a cab or balloon' adds some sarcasm and humour to Holmes's frustration.

Conan Doyle creates excitement in the rest of the novel by using many of the same techniques. One particular example that has struck me is the river chase. Here he uses adjectives like 'fate' when their boat the 'Aurora' is intercepted by three barges. By putting adjectives like 'fate' the chase is not straightforward – a bit like the zigzag effect in the extract here. To create excitement, such as 'shot' through the pool, giving the idea of a gunshot. The desperate nature of the situation is his portrayal of the boatman Smith shovelling.

Doctor Watson describes the chase as giving him a 'wild thrill', even outdoing the excitement he has experienced in other countries. The excitement and tension increase with the repetition, with phrases such as 'mad, flying man-hunt', 'nearer and nearer' and the use of nouns to convey personification, such as the 'panting and clanking' of the machine, all of which create excitement.

Commentary: How would this essay be marked?

It is important to note that the mark scheme is a guide only and many interpretations are possible as long as they are backed up by evidence. An analogy is that the examiner will be looking for what you have understood and responded to the text well. They will then be looking for the particular mark band.

Looking at this essay, it is useful to remember the Assessment Objectives.

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| AO1: | Read, understand and respond to texts.
Students should be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> maintain a critical style and develop an informed personal response use textual references, including quotations, to support and illustrate their views |
| AO2: | Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meaning and effect, and use relevant subject terminology where appropriate. |
| AO3: | Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they are written. |

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Writing Activities

- Looking at the sample essay above and bearing the AOs in mind, can you describe good points? Divide them into columns:

Good points	

- Now looking at the definitions of the AOs more specifically, can you find a 'PERSONAL' response?

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- Now highlight all the AO2s (language points).
- Can you find any evidence of any points that would cover AO3?

.....

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- Now, looking at the mark schemes provided by AQA (see specification and detailed comments, what band would you place this essay in (i.e. Band 5 21–25 marks, Band 4 16–20 marks, Band 3 11–15 marks, Band 2 6–10 marks, Band 1 1–5 marks)?

.....

.....

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Sample 3: Lower-band essay with commentary

Read the following extract from Chapter 11 and then answer both parts of the question.

QUESTION Using this extract as a starting point, write about how Mary Morstan is presented in the novel. Write about:

- how language is used by Conan Doyle to portray Mary Morstan in this extract
- how Mary Morstan is presented by Conan Doyle in the novel as a whole

In this extract Doctor Watson informs Mary Morstan that he has found her fortune in a treasure chest.

She was seated by the open window, dressed in some sort of white diaphanous gown with a touch of scarlet at the neck and waist. The soft light of a shaded lamp fell upon her as she sat in a chair, playing over her sweet, grave face, and tinting with a dull, metallic sparkle her luxuriant hair. One white arm and hand drooped over the side of the chair, and the other spoke of an absorbing melancholy. At the sound of my foot-fall she sprang to her feet, a flush of surprise and of pleasure coloured her pale cheeks.

'I heard a cab drive up,' she said. 'I thought that Mrs. Forrester had come back, but I dreamed that it might be you. What news have you brought me?'

'I have brought something better than news,' said I, putting down the box upon the table jovially and boisterously, though my heart was heavy within me. 'I have brought you a fortune worth all the news in the world. I have brought you a fortune.'

She glanced at the iron box. 'Is that the treasure, then?' she asked, coolly enough.

'Yes, this is the great Agra treasure. Half of it is yours and half is Thaddeus Sholto's. It is worth a hundred thousand each. Think of that! An annuity of ten thousand pounds a year for young ladies in England. Is it not glorious?'

I think that I must have been rather overacting my delight, and that she detected my overacting, for I saw her eyebrows rise a little, and she glanced at me curiously.

'If I have it,' said she, 'I owe it to you.'

'No, no,' I answered, 'not to me, but to my friend Sherlock Holmes. With all his help I never have followed up a clue which has taxed even his analytical genius. As it is, it is the last moment.'

'Pray sit down and tell me all about it, Dr. Watson,' said she.

Sample answer:

In this extract Conan Doyle portrays Mary Morstan as a beautiful young lady. She is wearing and uses the colours white and red to tell us the colours of her clothes. He uses adjectives such as 'sweet', 'grave', and 'luxuriant'. She seems rather sad, but when she jumps up and is very pleased to see him.

She asks him what news he has brought her. Dr Watson shows her the iron box and what is inside it. She doesn't seem very pleased to see it.

This episode in the book shows us that Mary has feelings for Dr Watson.

In the book as a whole another episode I remember is when Dr Watson meets Mary. She is portrayed as a serious but beautiful lady and Dr Watson falls in love with her. At the end of the story Conan Doyle makes the reader more interested by making Dr Watson declare that he is going to marry Mary. Sherlock Holmes hears this news.

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Commentary: How would this essay be marked?

Looking at this essay, it is useful to remember the Assessment Objectives.

- AO1:** Read, understand and respond to texts.
Students should be able to:
 - maintain a critical style and develop an informed personal response
 - use textual references, including quotations, to support and illustrate their views
- AO2:** Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meaning and effect, and use relevant subject terminology where appropriate.
- AO3:** Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they are written.



Writing Activity

1. Looking at the sample essay above and bearing the AOs in mind, can you describe its strengths and weaknesses? There are some fairly obvious weak points in this essay. What could you add to the following columns:

Good points	Weak points

2. Now, looking at the mark schemes provided by AQA (see <https://www.aqa.org.uk/qualifications/gcse/english>) what band would you place this essay in (i.e. Band 6 26–30 marks, Band 5 21–25 marks, Band 3 11–15 marks, Band 2 6–10 marks, Band 1 1–5 marks)?

.....

.....

3. How could this essay be improved?
-
-
-

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Answers

Revision of the text

Chapter Summary Table Student Task:

N.B. Ideally students should individually come up with their own quotations, which can then be added to a bank of quotations so that they can each feel 'ownership' of. The answers below are not exhaustive in any way.

Key quotations

Chapter	Quotation	Event
1	'No, no; I never guess. It is a shocking habit.'	Looking at the watch
2	'You really are an automaton, a calculating machine'	Watson's opinion of Holmes
3	'There was to my mind, something eerie and ghostlike...'	The meeting at the Lyceum theatre
4	'A blind and foolish thing is avarice'	The implications of the treasure
5	'A wondrous subtle thing is love'	Dr Watson's developing feelings for Mary
6	'It is the impression of a wooden stump'	Finding clues to the robbery
7	'...the very picture of canine indecision'	Toby coming to the end of the trail
8	'...and in rushed a dozen dirty and ragged little street Arabs'	The appearance of the Baker Street Irregulars
9	'An injured lady, half a million in treasure, a black cannibal and a wooden-legged ruffian'	Mrs Forrester summarises the plot
10	'...mad, flying man-hunt down the Thames'	The boat chase in the 'Aurora'
11	'Whoever had lost a treasure, I knew that night that I had gained one'	Watson's joy in knowing that he can marry Mary as an equal
12	'I get a wife out of it, Jones gets the credit, pray what remains for you?'	The end of the case

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Whole-book Quiz

- | | |
|--------------|--------|
| 1. a) | 7. a) |
| 2. b) | 8. b) |
| 3. a) | 9. c) |
| 4. b) | 10. b) |
| 5. c) | 11. c) |
| 6. a) and b) | 12. a) |

Further Revision Activity: Sherlock Holmes's erudition (the quality of having or showing)**Chapter 1:**

It is cocaine a **(7%)** solution.

Yes, I have been guilty of several monographs...Here, for example is one 'Upon the Distinction Between Various Tobaccos'. In it I enumerate **(140)** forms of cigar.

Chapter 2:

I have some few references to make. Let me recommend this book – one of the most recent – **(Winwood Reade's Martyrdom of Man.)**

Chapter 6:

Coupled with this distortion of the face, this Hippocratic smile or '**(risus sardonicus)**' as the French call it. He has occasional glimmerings of reason. ('**Il n'y a pas des sots si incommodes que ceux que l'on croit sots.**') 'Wir sind gewohnt dass die Menschen werhohnen was sie nicht verstehen,') Goethe is always right.

Chapter 10:

He spoke on a quick succession of subjects – on miracle plays **(on medieval pottery, on the history of Ceylon, and on the warships of the future)** - handling each as though he had made a special study of it.

Chapter 12:

I often think of those lines of old Goethe: **(Schade dass die Natur, etc.)**

Exam Preparation Activities**1. Chapter by Chapter: Key Quotations**

(Teacher's note: ask students to think what each quotation might illustrate.)

- Eliminate all other factors and the one which remains must be **the truth**.
- You really are an automaton – a **calculating** machine.
- Holmes alone could rise **superior** to petty influences.
- Our father would never tell us what it was he feared but he had a most marked **superiority**.
- So we stood hand in hand like two **children** and there was peace in our hearts, and we were surrounded by a **peace**.
- How often have I said to you that when you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, **must be the truth**.
- Might she not look upon me as a mere vulgar **fortune seeker**?
- It is the unofficial force – the Baker Street **Irregulars**.
- Was it possible that his nimble and **speculative** mind had built up this wild theory?
- It's just these very simple things which are extremely liable to be **overlooked**.
- Whoever had lost a **treasure**, I knew that night I had gained one.
- But love is an emotional thing and whatever is emotional is opposed to that **cold** and **logical** things.

Extension Activity

Students' own responses

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2. Linking Context to the Plot, Characters and Themes

(Teacher's note: The table below could be presented with the context column blank to relate the question to possible contexts.)

Context	Plot/character/theme	
Women in Victorian England	Mary Morstan and other women/womanhood	Write ideas
The British Empire in nineteenth-century India	The background to the plot	Write the Br develop
Nineteenth-century London	The setting of London and the River Thames	Write the set relevant plot.
Victorian detective fiction	The structure of detective stories	Write the str Sign o
Victorian fascination with the depiction of human nature	The duality within Holmes's character	Write the du charac
Victorian concepts of crime, justice and fair play	The resolution of the plot and the conviction of Small	Write the th
The Victorian police force	The depiction of Athelney Jones and other policemen, as well as police resources	Write the pol

3. Key Linguistic Terminology

I think it would be useful to give an example of each of these words applied to an e

- One way Conan Doyle gives a fuller picture of each character is his use of **evocative** language when he is describing Mary Morstan.
- Conan Doyle uses the well-known technique of detective fiction by ending each chapter with a cliffhanger.
- The **denouement** of the plot comes when Jonathan Small reveals all in the final chapter, which is resolved.
- Holmes uses **sarcasm/irony** to comment on the actions of the police, which can create a comic effect.
- The **exposition** of the plot comes at the beginning when Mary Morstan tells Holmes about the case.
- Conan Doyle uses **dialogue** to spice up the action, break up the text and to make it more lively. It can also reveal the personality and class of some of the characters.
- In many detective and/or spy stories there is a **chase sequence** when the criminal is being pursued.
- The **sub-plot** of the story is Watson's developing romance with Mary Morstan.
- Jonathan Small reveals all in the final chapter by **reported speech**: the events are told through his words.
- Watson serves as the **narrator** in the story: he informs the reader of what is going on through his observations on Holmes.

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4. Close Analysis of Text

1. What adjectives does Conan Doyle use to describe the old man?
aged (man), seafaring (garb), bowed (back), shaky (knees), asthmatic (breathing), long grey (whiskers), petulant (obstinacy)
2. In what other ways does he portray old age?
Conan Doyle uses:
 - nouns – ‘wheezing’ and ‘rattling’, ‘breath’, ‘petulant obstinacy of a very old man’
 - verbs – ‘shuffled’, ‘stamping his stick’, ‘fallen into poverty’, ‘shoulders heavy with years’
 - adverb – ‘sullenly’
3. How does Conan Doyle perpetuate the trick disguise apart from appearances?
He uses dialogue – reproducing a Cockney accent, e.g. ‘An’I knows...’, ‘Pretty soon’
4. How is the element of surprise sprung on the reader?
There are no clues until right at the end when Holmes’s voice is revealed under the disguise. The fact that the old man speaks while still in the guise of the old man makes it all the more dramatic
5. What does this extract tell us about Holmes?
The reader learns that Holmes is a master of disguise, he has a keen sense of his own power over the more susceptible people (his inferiors). He exploits his cleverness.

5. Essay Writing – Preparation and Planning

1.

Always	Sometimes	
Read the question carefully.	Use quotations in your own words.	
Explain the effects of any language points.	Use long quotations.	Use
Make a plan.	Retell the story in your own words (when you are not using direct quotations).	Incorporate
Link the text to the context.	Use short quotations.	Give
Focus on the question.		ext
Take care of spelling, punctuation and grammar.		
Use the author’s surname		

2.
 - a. Author’s techniques
 - b. Context/characterisation
 - c. Setting
 - d. Characterisation
4.
 - i) Throughout the novel **Conan Doyle** uses specific place names to locate the action. **Mary Marston** goes to meet the **stranger**. **He** also makes extensive use of the **River** on the river and the events leading up to **it**. **When Mr Jones** finds the treasure chest he says ‘**It** is a pity there is no key, that **You** will have to break it **open**. **Where** is the **key**, my man?’
 - ii) Which of these words are correctly spelt? If you think they are incorrect, change them.

Consecuently	(Consequently)
Therefore	(Therefore)
Personification	
Aliteration	(Alliteration)
Repitition	(Repetition)
Hyperbole	
Symbolism	(Symbolism)

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- iii) Quick-fire questions:
- at the start of every sentence and for proper names
 - when you start a new idea or theme
 - when introducing a quotation
 - You should use inverted comma marks.

Practice Exam-style Questions

Question 1

See sample essays

Question 2

Students could include:

AO1

- Dr Watson's detailed observation of Mary
- his idea that his thoughts were 'dangerous'
- he tries to distract himself by reading a work on pathology
- thinks he is presumptuous to even think of marrying her as he has so little (financial)
- sees the need to face up to his lack of wealth
- thinks his future would be 'black' without her

AO2

- use of effective adjectives, 'deep rich tones...', 'strange mystery', 'sweet age'
- the words about youth, 'has lost its self-consciousness... a little sobered by experience'
- contrast between 'sat and mused' and hurrying away – to illustrate his confusion
- a strong rhetorical question: 'What was I ...that should I dare to think of such things?'
- use of the colour black to express dark thoughts
- evocative, slightly whimsical expression 'will-o'-the-wisps' to express uncertainty and

AO3

- this extract reveals the Victorian ideal of womanhood, e.g., 'sweet'
- also shows the conventional idea that the man must provide and have enough wealth
- shows attitudes towards the status of women, seen through Dr Watson's eyes
- the need for love in all humans
- ideas about the benefits of love and forming a partnership in marriage, and the yearning for a
- future, but with the recognition that it might just be too much to hope for

Question 3

Students could include:

AO1

- shows Watson's concern about Holmes, and his conscience that he should do something
- But he is quite cowardly, lacking the courage to protest.
- respects Holmes's other-worldliness and is 'diffident' and 'backward' when thinking
- The reader learns that Watson has a weak constitution as a result of the Afghan war
- We learn that in fact Watson can be quite 'vehement' when sufficiently concerned, showing
- his character.
- It shows Watson's great respect and admiration for Holmes – his 'great powers, masterly
- qualities'.
- It is a foil for Holmes's teasing of Watson: 'Would you care to try it?'
- shows Watson's cautious nature, in contrast to Holmes: 'I cannot afford to throw any
- The following paragraph shows Watson's medical knowledge – a very useful attribute
- seen in other parts of the story.

AO2

- use of strong verbs and adverbs: Watson's conscience 'swelled nightly'; 'I answered
- use of the power of three to express his admiration of Holmes – his 'great powers, masterly
- extraordinary qualities'
- use of effective adjectives in the above quotation
- other strong adjectives to express Watson's frustration: 'additional exasperation', 'exasperated
- (Holmes)
- use of irony in the question 'Which is it today – morphine or cocaine?'
- use of dialogue to bring the scene to life and carry the action forward
- specialist vocabulary: Beaune – referring to French wine

AO3

- The passage shows the context of the Afghan conflict, as relevant to Watson's injuries and
- important to the development of the plot.
- It shows Watson's role as the conduit for the reader's attitude to a great detective, showing
- admiration: 'great powers', 'masterly manner', 'extraordinary qualities'.

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- It shows inequality in their relationship; Watson is slightly afraid of confronting Holmes but he has found the courage to confront him over his drug-taking habits.
- It shows the acceptance of drug-taking (heroin and cocaine) in Victorian society.

Question 4

Students could include:

AO1

- The housekeeper, Mrs Bernstone, is an old woman, frightened by what might have happened to Bartholomew Sholto.
- She calms down when she meets Mary Morstan, who had a 'soothing effect upon her'.
- Mrs Bernstone says that she has had no answer from her master.
- We learn that she has been working for him for 10 years.
- She tells Thaddeus that he must go up to see inside the room. She stays behind with the children.

AO2

- Effective adjectives are used to express Mrs Bernstone's anxiety, e.g. 'restless, picking up hysterical' sobs.
- The adjectives used to describe Mary Morstan serve as a contrast to the older woman's 'soothing effect'.
- We learn that Mrs Bernstone's hands are 'thin, work-worn', which emphasises her hard work.
- The use of direct speech moves the action forward and exemplifies and explains Mrs Bernstone's anxiety: "'Master has locked himself in and will not answer me", she explained'.
- Mrs Bernstone's anxiety is highlighted by the verb 'pacing': 'pacing up and down'.
- Mary Morstan's calmness is emphasised by the verb 'patted', as though Mrs Bernstone had calmed down.
- Rhetorical devices are used by Conan Doyle to emphasise her near hysteria: 'God bless her'.

AO3

- The two women are presented in fairly typical ways – they comfort each other and are typical of Victorian women.
- Mrs Bernstone is a housekeeper – one of the few respectable jobs that Victorian women could do as an employee, having worked for her master for 10 years, loyalty being a respected characteristic of Victorian females. However, long service takes its toll – as seen in the way her hands are described.
- Another Victorian view was that women were also perceived as being liable to hysteria.

Question 5

Students could include:

AO1

- Mary Morstan is calm about there being no treasure.
- Watson is seen to be pleased that there is no treasure: 'a great shadow seemed to be cast off because it puts him on an even footing with Mary and more within his reach of becoming a man'.
- The real treasure for Watson is Mary. Personal relationships are much more important than money.
- God is evoked three times in the passage, showing, perhaps, the idea of a superior power.

AO2

- There is evocative use of specific nouns, e.g. 'shadow': 'A great shadow seemed to be cast off because it puts him on an even footing with Mary and more within his reach of becoming a man'.
- There is effective use of the adjective 'golden' to do with wealth and money, but at the same time it is used to describe Mary's hair.
- Other adjectives show that Mary needs clarification of what Watson is thinking, as in 'the golden hair'.
- Dialogue carries the action forward by the use of short, sharp sentences, e.g. 'the treasure was not there'.
- Emphatic linked phrases add drama: 'This treasure, these riches...'

AO3

- This passage illustrates the Victorian attitude to wealth. Wealth was obviously important and made due to the opportunities presented by the expansion of the British Empire.
- Some guilt is attached to wealth; however, Mary Morstan is due what is rightly hers.
- Money is not the be-all and end-all – Conan Doyle is making the point that relationships are more important than money – this is where real wealth is to be found.
- Throughout the novel we are reminded of the desperate actions men take to achieve their goals around missing treasure.

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Question 6

Students could include:

A01

- The house of T Sholto is presented as being rather sinister, in the moonlight.
- The characters in this passage are 'ill at ease'.
- Sholto observes that there is no light in the window, but doesn't want to alarm Mrs
- His hands are shaking with fear.
- Mary Morstan is also obviously frightened: 'she seized my wrist'.
- They all were affected: 'we all stood with thumping hearts'.

A02

- The use of sinister abstract nouns helps create an atmosphere of fear: 'moonlight', 'deathly silence', 'chill'.
- The use of atmospheric verbs highlights the gloom: 'plunged in shadow', the lantern 'shook', the light 'flickered and wavered'.
- Evocative adjectives are used: 'Desolate' grounds, 'deathly' silence, 'thumping' heart sounds, 'shrill, broken' whimpering, 'great, black' house.

A03

- A sinister atmosphere is created around a big house, typical of the wealthy middle class.
- The house has no particular merit, it is a 'clump' of a house, 'prosaic' (lacking imagination).
- The 'vast' size of the house emphasises the Victorian desire to show off their wealth.
- The position of the housekeeper shows a typical, restricted occupation that respectable people aspire to.
- The women are presented in a fairly stereotypical way, as the weaker sex, i.e. both show their fear, in contrast to the men in the extract, who do not.

Question 7

Students could include:

A01

- Mr Jones recognises that he needs help: 'I should be very glad of a little assistance'.
- He is worried about his professional reputation: 'My professional credit is at stake'.
- He appreciates Sherlock Holmes but is not beyond criticising him: 'He is irregular in his habits, perhaps in jumping at theories...'
- He is rather patronising in his assessment of Holmes and Conan Doyle is sharing a job with him. On the same course, Holmes is superior and has no ambition to be a police officer ('I think he would be a better officer').
- He is pleased when it appears that Holmes is also having difficulty with the case: "'At last!' exclaimed Jones with evident satisfaction.'
- He is very aware of his duty: 'it is my duty as an officer of the law...'
- He takes the message from Holmes at face value.

A02

- The simple sentences listing Jones's thoughts show that his thought processes are rather slow.
- The interjection by Watson, 'We all need help sometimes', serves to break up the text and to show Jones, as rather bumbling characters in comparison to the genius of Holmes.
- Apposite adjectives are used to express his admiration for Holmes: 'He is a wonderful man, the most promising officer'.

A03

- The Victorian police force is represented here by the character of Athelney Jones; he is a man of little imagination.
- However, Holmes appears to appreciate the help he can give and, indeed, lets him to see in the last chapter.
- Conan Doyle, through Holmes, shows respect for the police force, in spite of being scornful of their plodding ways at times.

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Question 8

Students could include:

AO1

- The passage explains the rajah in the north who has hoarded his wealth.
- Hindus are mentioned as being unreliable 'lying Hindoo'.
- Foreigners are more trustworthy.
- Sikhs are more reliable than Hindus.
- The rajah is quite prepared to give up on loyalty when it suits him – he can be friendly.
- The fort at Agra will be where the treasure is hidden.

AO2

- There is a lot of topic-specific vocabulary in this passage that Conan Doyle would expect to use: Sikh, Feringhee, Rajah, Hindoo, Sepoy, Sahib.
- An idiom is used, 'true to their salt', meaning faithful to their employers, to emphasise loyalty.
- Some of the language is archaic: 'Hearken...', perhaps to appeal more to the Victorian audience.
- Adjectives are used effectively to categorise people: 'he is of a low nature' (the Rajah).
- Specific nouns and adjectives are used to denote wealth and riches, e.g. gold, silver, diamonds.

AO3

- The passage shows typical attitudes which would have been prevalent in the British Empire: 'Hindoo' can't be relied upon; their temples are 'false'.
- The Sikhs, however, are perceived as being more reliable.
- Foreigners (i.e. white people) don't lie.
- Conan Doyle may appear racist and prejudiced; these would have been common attitudes at the time.
- There are hints at what is going to happen in India in the struggle for independence.
- The fort at Agra would have appealed to the reader's imagination and the romance of the East.

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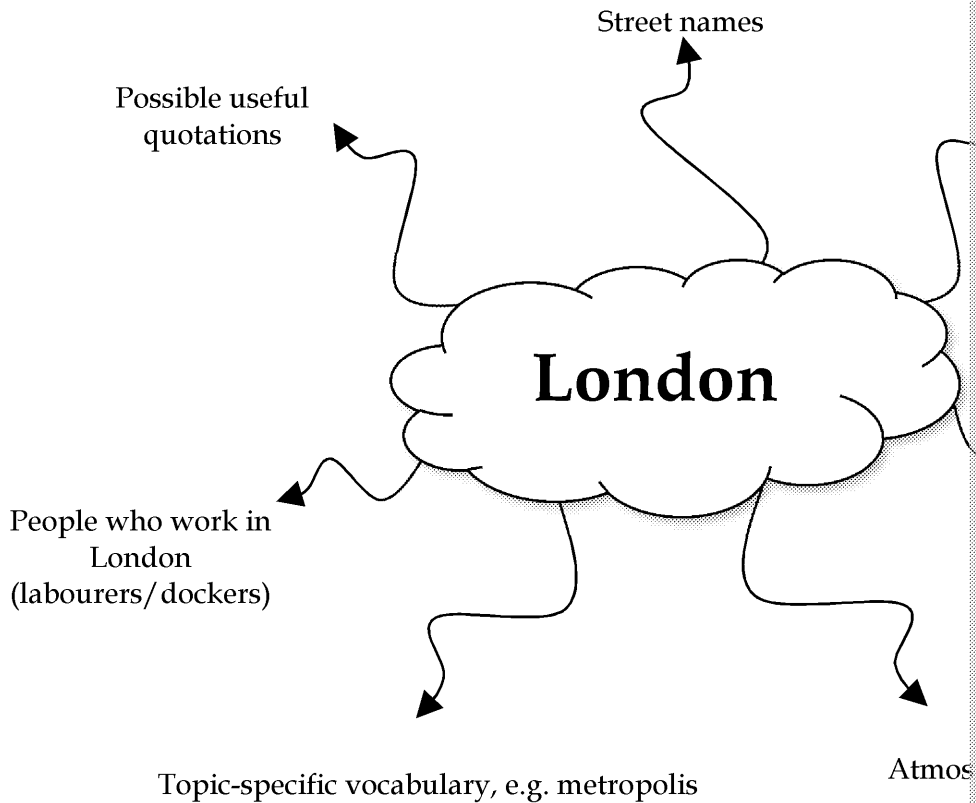
Tackling a Sample Question: A Step-by-

Step 1: Setting

Step 2: Students' own answers

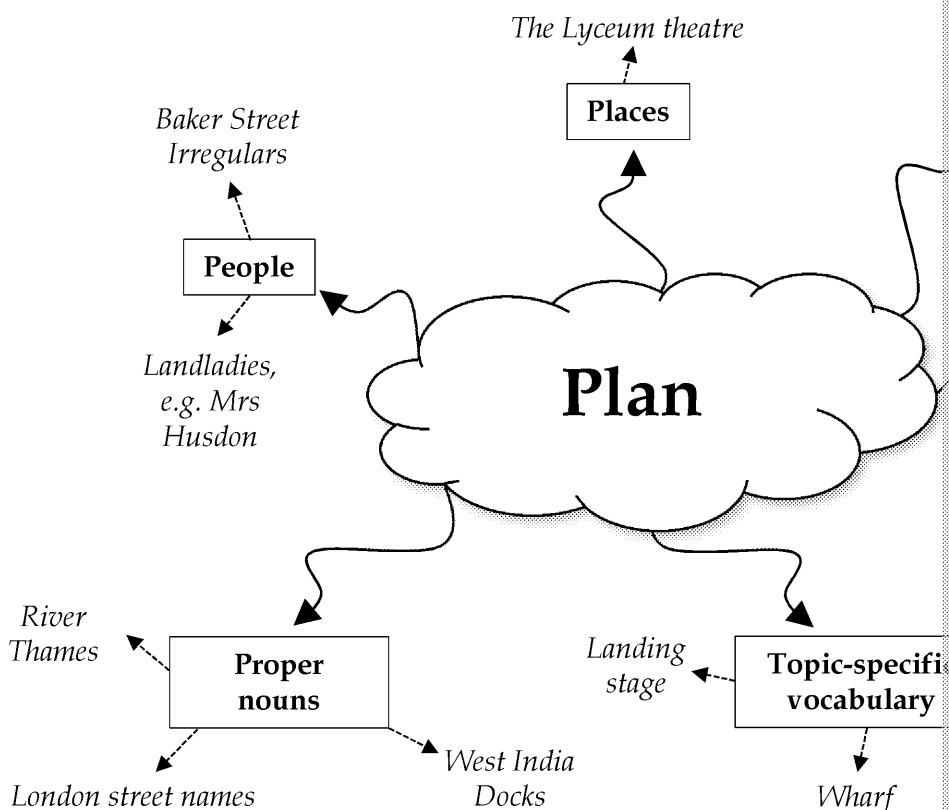
Step 3: Students' own answers

Step 4: Students' own answers, see example below.



Step 5: Students' own answers

Step 6:



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Step 8:**Places**

Throughout the novel Conan Doyle uses specific place names to firmly locate the action, as Morstan goes to meet the stranger. He also makes extensive use of the River Thames, and the events leading up to it. He also sets some of the action in the suburbs, for example **'own grounds'**.

People

Londoners who are described include Mrs Hudson, Mrs Smith, and the Baker Street Irregulars, **'Arabs'**, implying uneducated and maybe poorly stricken children, representing the underclass as a **'disreputable little scarecrow'**. Mrs Smith is portrayed as a typical docker's wife, as representing a more genteel, respectable side of Victorian womanhood, but a woman who works in rooms.

Technique

One of the best passages creating the atmosphere of Victorian London comes early in the novel, describing London as a **'dreary place with fog lying over the city'**. Adjectives used include **'misty spaces', 'circular glimmer'**, a **'slimy pavement'**, a **'murky shifting radiance, eerie and ghostlike'**. The city is being both gloomy and crowded, with a mixture of people with **'sad faces and glad'**, 'happy' faces.

Transport

One other way Conan Doyle presents London is through the traffic and transport used in the city: the steam launches on the Thames, the continuous stream of hansoms and four wheelers, and the theatre. All these give the impression of London being a busy, crowded city.

Overall summary

Overall Conan Doyle presents London as a chaotic, lively city, the centre of a huge trading hub between rich and poor, and not without danger.

The new idea introduced in this section is the paragraph about London transport.

(This is also the answer to the student task.)

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Further Sample Answers

Sample essay 1

Bullet point one

Paragraph 1) Introduction:

Conan Doyle presents London in this passage by using specific place names and He also introduces some typical London characters and makes good use of inter reader to visualise the characters and to create atmosphere.

The introduction has the following good points about it:

- i) It uses wording from the question (so that the examiner can see focus straight away)
- ii) It indicates the content of the main body of the essay.
- iii) It already makes a mention of the effect on the reader. (A01) (A02)

Paragraph 2) Places

The specific place names he uses include Streatham, Camberwell and the Oval, known to his readers. One word of specific vocabulary includes 'metropolis', which Victorian readers and is still in use today, such as, for example, the Metropolitan Police Force. By using such vocabulary and specific terminology Conan Doyle fills the heart of London.

This paragraph deals with place names. To further enhance your answer (and to show awareness about the word 'metropolitan' (deriving from two Greek words for mother and state)) (A01) (A02) (A03)

Paragraph 3) People

The types of workers specific to London in this passage include dock men and the image of the great importance of London as a great trading centre in Victorian times. 'slatternly women were taking down the shutters and brushing doorsteps' illustrates the women would have taken in Victorian times of cleaning and preparing the house just coming out of the pub, 'rubbing their sleeves across their beards, after their

This paragraph shows some awareness of context, e.g. London as a great trading centre (A01) (A02) (A03)

Paragraph 4) Author's technique

- Use of adjectives and adverbs
Conan Doyle leads the reader from a prosperous part of London, 'half-rural' area: he creates the atmosphere of a rather seedy area of London by using 'slatternly' to describe the women, 'rough-looking' to describe the men and

Good selection of adjectives, and the effect they have. (A01) (A02) (A03)

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- Creating tension and suspense

The tension in this passage is created by Holmes taking out his revolver as immediately that this is a dangerous assignment. In addition, the men are taking a 'curiously zigzag road', and by their use of 'parallel side streets'. This is exemplified by the dog, Toby, who doesn't know which way to go and 'was

Creating tension and suspense is present throughout the novel and is an essential technique worth seeing if you can bring a mention of it to any passage you are asked to analyse. (A01) (A02)

- Use of irony/humour/contrast

Conan Doyle's use of irony and an attempt at humour is seen in the last paragraph: 'They surely would not take a cab or go off in a balloon'.

Worth mentioning other techniques of the author. (A03)

Paragraph 5) Final paragraph for this section (Summary)

In this passage Conan Doyle is describing a rather seedy area of London where there is a reflection of the underbelly of Victorian London. He creates an atmosphere of a grimy city with judicious use of adjectives, used to describe both people and places. This use of language serves to heighten the danger that Holmes and Watson are facing.

Useful summary. Remember to ask yourself the question 'Why is CD writing like this?' and how this phrase exemplifies this. (A01) (A02) (A03)

With the additions this would then be a top grade answer.

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Sample 2: Mid-band essay with comments

Commentary: How would this essay be marked?

It is important to note that the mark scheme is a guide only and many interpretations will be backed up by evidence. An analogy is that the examiner will be looking for clues to see if you responded to the text well. They will then be looking for the evidence to place you in a particular band.

Looking at this essay it is useful to remember the Assessment Objectives.

AO1:

Read, understand and respond to texts.

Students should be able to:

- maintain a critical style and develop an informed personal response
- use textual references, including quotations, to support and illustrate interpretations

So the mark scheme might look like this:

AO1

- Watson's observations of the journey and its difficulties
- the unfamiliar places
- the potential use of a revolver
- the attitude of the dog Toby changing from certainty to indecision

AO2:

Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meanings and effects where appropriate.

So the mark scheme might look like this:

- use of language to describe elements of the chase, e.g. 'hot scent'
- particular words to create excitement, e.g. 'revolver', 'zigzag'
- adjectives to describe neighbourhoods, showing contrast and mystery
- use of abrupt dialogue
- use of dramatic, picturesque verbs, e.g. 'sauntered', 'waddled', 'growled', 'edged'
- use of interesting adverbs, e.g. 'wonderingly'

AO3:

Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written.

So the mark scheme might look like this:

- generic attributes of detective fiction, e.g. use of setting in detective fiction to increase tension and cliffhangers
- the influence of the Gothic genre
- apparent threat and tension used by setting, e.g. run-down, unfamiliar neighbourhoods
- language used to present new surroundings as potentially threatening and mysterious
- presentation of expert detective
- presentation of a companion to explain and help to enlighten the reader

Writing Activities

1. Students' own answers

Example marker commentary:

I would place this essay in Band 5 (21–25 marks) for the following reasons:

- 1) It shows a thoughtful, detailed approach to the full task.
- 2) References are integrated into the interpretation.
- 3) There is a detailed examination of the effects of language.
- 4) There is an examination of ideas / perspectives / contextual factors.

Why would this essay not get into the top band? How could it be improved?

The examiners like to see a personal response and this essay could have included more personal insight could have been given in certain cases. More of an evaluation could have been given. Some alternative interpretations and deeper meanings could have been given.

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2. Sample Answer:

AO2s in bold

Further additions to make this a more personal response are added in capitals.

To add comments to make sure of getting marks for AO3 please see the additional fo

In this extract Conan Doyle starts with a dramatic event: 'He took out his revolver and immediately asks himself/herself) **I IMMEDIATELY WANT TO KNOW** whether the language is also dramatic: '...I shall shoot him dead'. **Short, bullet-like words are used to describe the situation.**

The author further sets the scene of the dog hunt in rather a seedy neighbourhood rather more respectable 'villa-lined' roads.¹ This helps to create an ominous atmosphere, such as 'slatternly' to describe the women and 'rough-looking' to describe the dog. 'Looking' but Toby, the dog used by Sherlock Holmes, 'looked neither to the right nor to the left, but with an occasional eager whine which spoke of a hot scent'. **The word 'eager' gives the impression of the dog's** the scent purposefully and the adjective 'hot' adds further to the excitement of the chase.

The use of a list of London place names also serves to heighten the tension and build up to the climax. The men Holmes was following took a 'zigzag road'. **The word 'zigzag' (for the reader) AS IT GIVES ME** the impression that the chase was not straightforward and, therefore, much more exciting.

Conan Doyle is very skilful at painting a picture of Toby's indecision by using adjectives such as 'one ear cocked, the other drooping'. **LIKE THE FACT THAT** he also adds a bit of humour with 'waddled' – giving the impression of Toby being like a fat duck going round in circles.

Another way excitement is created is by the abrupt interruption of Holmes's question 'What's the matter with the dog?', and instead of just writing 'said' or 'asked' Conan Doyle writes 'said' almost as though Holmes is turning into a dog himself. Finally the last phrase 'a cab or balloon' adds some sarcasm and humour to Holmes's frustration.

Conan Doyle creates excitement in the rest of the novel by using many of the same techniques. One particular example that has struck me is the river chase. **Here he uses adjectives to describe the fate** when their boat the 'Aurora' is intercepted by three barges. By putting a question mark at the end of the chase is not straightforward – a bit like the zigzag effect in the extract here. **He uses adjectives to create excitement, such as 'shot' through the pool, giving the idea of a gunshot.** The desperate nature of the situation is his portrayal of the boatman Smith shovelling coal into the engine.

Doctor Watson describes the chase as giving him a 'wild thrill', even outdoing the excitement he has experienced in other countries. The excitement and tension increase with the use of **repetition**, with phrases such as 'mad, flying man-hunt', 'nearer and nearer' and 'nearer and nearer' and nouns to convey **personification**, such as the 'panting and clanking' of the machine, to create excitement.

(There is further detailed help on how to apply the mark scheme from the AQA English GCSE <http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/english/gcse/english-literature-8702/supporting-resources/mark-schemes>)

¹ This shows the different types of neighbourhood in Victorian London, from poor working class areas to more respectable middle-class areas with their 'villa-lined' roads.

² This also reminds us that the speed of boats in the Victorian era would have been dependent on the speed of the engines which could be shovelled with coal.

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Sample 3: Lower-band essay with comments

Commentary: How would this essay be marked?

Looking at this essay, it is useful to remember the Assessment Objectives.

AO1

Read, understand and respond to texts.

Students should be able to:

- maintain a critical style and develop an informed personal response
- use textual references, including quotations, to support and illustrate interpretations

So the mark scheme might look like this:

AO1

- portrayal of Mary Morstan as a serious character
- the developing relationship between her and Dr Watson
- the effect on her of seeing the treasure chest
- her reaction to Dr Watson's attempts to be cheerful

AO2

Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meanings and effects, where appropriate.

So the mark scheme might look like this:

- use of language to describe Mary's beauty, e.g. 'sweet grave face'
- particular use of very precise words and phrases to create a vivid description, e.g. 'white and red'
- adjectives to describe clothes and hair, e.g. 'rich coils of her luxuriant hair'
- use of dialogue, with comments, e.g. 'She asked, coolly enough'
- use of picturesque verbs, to illustrate her feelings for Watson, e.g. 'she sprang to her feet'
- use of interesting adverbs, e.g. 'coolly', 'curiously'

AO3

Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written.

So the mark scheme might look like this:

- detective fiction genre: presentation of an intriguing woman with a mysterious background
- use of setting in detective fiction to create atmosphere (in this extract the description of the portrait painting)
- the portrayal of women as beautiful and vulnerable, as decorative creatures
- use of a love affair to generate more interest in a novel, possibly to appeal more to a female audience
- presentation of a woman to help explain and enlighten the reader as to Dr Watson's feelings

Writing Activity

1. Students' own response. However, see below for some weak points.
2. This essay might just get into Band 2 (6–10 marks), but is at risk of falling into Band 1 (3–5 marks).
 - 1) The approach is not very thoughtful or detailed.
 - 2) There are very few references integrated into the interpretation.
 - 3) The effects of language are not explored.
 - 4) There is no examination of ideas / perspectives / contextual factors.
3. First and foremost, direct quotations from the extract should be used. They are all there for a reason – not to use them! The examiners like to see a personal response and this essay could have been more detailed in its interpretations. Much more insight could have been given in certain cases. More could have been given to contextual factors. Some alternative interpretations and deeper meanings could have been explored.

Suggestions for improvements to raise this essay to Grade 6

In this extract Conan Doyle portrays Mary Morstan as a beautiful young lady (she is wearing and uses the colours white and red to tell us the colours of her hair from the text here.) He uses other good adjectives such as 'sweet', 'grave', and 'coolly' to describe her. The effect these adjectives have on the reader, e.g. The reader learns that Mary is not just a beautiful person. Many more adjectives and their effects should be included, e.g. 'melancholy' to describe her. The effect is rather like seeing a portrait.) She seems rather sad, but when she sees

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very pleased to see him. **(Write about the effect of these actions; for example, the important Watson is to Mary and illustrate their growing relationship.)**

She asks him what news he has brought her. Dr Watson shows her the iron chest to be inside it. She doesn't seem very pleased to see it. **(Speculate why she is not pleased to see the treasure.)**

This episode in the book shows us that Mary has feelings for Dr Watson.

In the book as a whole another episode I remember is when Doctor Watson is introduced. She is portrayed as a serious but beautiful lady and Dr Watson falls in love with her. This adds to the plot of the story and Conan Doyle makes the reader more interested. At the end of the story Dr Watson declares that he is going to marry Mary. Mary is very pleased to hear this news.

The candidate has drawn on two more episodes in the book but doesn't deal with them. I can remember some more pertinent descriptions of Mary and how the relationship between her and Watson develops. Other examples could include: the episode where they hold hands like two children; the episode where Watson accompanies Mary home; her reaction to the empty treasure chest in Chapter 4; when Sherlock Holmes reacts to Dr Watson's announcement, you might give your perspective on his attitude to women.

Remember, the more direct quotations you can give the higher your mark will be, as long as you use them in your own words (PEE). One-word quotations would be sufficient for the second part of the question. When revising, link suitable adjectives that you are more likely to remember to the

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