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**English**

**Literature**

******Revision Guide**

**-A Sign of Four**

**Information Included**

A Sign of Four Quotes

A Sign of Four Linking extracts (use with Literature Anthology)

AO 2 Methods – A Sign of Four

AO 3 Context – A Sign of Four

A Sign of Four Sample Answers

**Key ‘A Sign Of Four’ Quotes**

-all dotted and scarred with innumerable puncture-marks – **drug taking**

-His great powers, his masterly manner, and the experience which I had had of his many extraordinary qualities **– Watson about Sherlock**

-"My mind rebels at stagnation”. – **Sherlock**

-‘But I abhor the dull routine of existence’. - **Sherlock**

-‘The only unofficial consulting detective’ – **Sherlock**

-‘The work itself, the pleasure of finding a field for my peculiar powers, is my highest reward.’ – **Sherlock**

-‘Detection is, or ought to be, an exact science, and should be treated in the same cold and unemotional manner.’ – **Sherlock**

-‘you do not follow my train of thought or observe the small facts upon which large inferences may depend.’ – **Sherlock**

-‘Crime is commonplace, existence is commonplace’ - **Sherlock**

-"You really are an automaton,--a calculating-machine!" I cried. "There is something positively inhuman in you at times." –**Watson about Sherlock**

-‘A client is to me a mere unit’ - **Sherlock**

-What was I, an army surgeon with a weak leg and a weaker banking-account, that I should dare to think of such things? – **Watson about Mary**

-but the day had been a dreary one, and a dense drizzly fog lay low upon the great city’. – **description of London**

-richest and glossiest of curtains - **Thaddeus’s house**

-‘The cursed greed which has been my besetting sin through life’ – **Major Sholto**

-‘he was averse to part with them …… my brother was himself a little inclined to my father's fault’.- **Thaddeus on Bartholomew**

-‘We had plenty of money ourselves. I desired no more’ – **Thaddeus**

-selfishness took me by the soul, and that my heart turned as heavy as lead within me. – **Watson on hearing about Mary’s fortune**

-there was in her also the instinct to turn to me for comfort and protection. – **Mary + Watson**

-beady eyes gleaming and deep-set like those of a bird.

-like those of a trained blood-hound – **animalistic descriptions of Sherlock**

**Athelney Jones**

-Wheezed

-‘Let us apply common sense to the matter.’

-in a sneering voice, but impressed none the less,

**From paper**

-trained and experienced

-well-known technical knowledge and his powers of minute observation

-prompt and energetic action of the officers of the law

**Does show recognition**

-I think he would have made a most promising officer (on Sherlock)

**Mary after being at Pondicherry Lodge**

-She was weak and helpless, shaken in mind and nerve.

-the angelic fashion of women

-an impassable barrier between us – **the treasure**

**Baker Street Irregulars**

-‘It is the unofficial force’ – **Sherlock**

-‘They can go everywhere, see everything, overhear every one.’ – **Sherlock**

**Descriptions about Tonga’s race (Sherlock’s book)**

-‘fierce, morose, and intractable people’

-'They are naturally hideous’

-‘distorted features’

-‘Women are never to be entirely trusted’ - **Sherlock about women**

-‘which never brought anything but a curse yet upon the man who owned it’ – **Small on Agra Treasure**

**End**

-"The division seems rather unfair," -

-‘Emotion is opposed to true cold reason’

-"For me," said Sherlock Holmes, "there still remains the cocaine-bottle." And he stretched his long white hand up for it.

**Linking Extracts – A Sign Of Four**

**Sherlock**

Extract 1 - First introduction to Sherlock Holmes

Extract 2 - Watson’s reaction to Sherlock’s drug taking

Extract 3 - Sherlock’s views on his role and the police

Extract 4 - Sherlock’s approach to problem solving

Extract 5 - Sherlock’s views on society

Extract 7 - Different reactions towards Mary Morstan

Extract 10 - Watson’s reactions to Mary / Sherlock’s abilities / London

Extract 18 - Sherlock’s skills at the crime scene

Extract 19 - Description of Sherlock while problem solving

Extract 20 - The arrival of the police

Extract 21 - Sherlock’s methods to solve crime – Toby

Extract 23 - Sherlock’s approaches to crime solving – Baker Street Irregulars

Extract 24 - Presentation of Police in newspaper

Extract 25 - Introduction to Baker Street Irregulars

Extract 28 - Police’s changing views on Sherlock

Extract 29 - Sherlock’s organisation towards the chase

Extract 30 - The boat chase

Extract 32 - The Capture of Jonathan Small

Extract 37 - Jonathan Small’s view of justice

Extract 38 - The Ending of the novel

**Watson**

Extract 2 - Watson’s reaction to Sherlock’s drug taking

Extract 4 - Sherlock’s approach to problem solving

Extract 8 - Watson’s recognition of his feelings towards Mary

Extract 10 - Watson’s reactions to Mary / Sherlock’s abilities / London

Extract 15 - Impact of treasure on Mary Morstan

Extract 16 - The developing relationship between Mary and Watson

Extract 22 - Watson’s thoughts regarding Mary

Extract 27 - Mary’s reaction to events so far

Extract 34 - Returning the treasure to Mary

Extract 35 - Mary and Watson declare their love

Extract 38 - The Ending of the novel

**Watson + Mary’s relationship**

Extract 8 - Watson’s recognition of his feelings towards Mary

Extract 10 - Watson’s reactions to Mary / Sherlock’s abilities / London

Extract 15 - Impact of treasure on Mary Morstan

Extract 16 - The developing relationship between Mary and Watson

Extract 22 - Watson’s thoughts regarding Mary

Extract 27 - Mary’s reaction to events so far

Extract 34 - Returning the treasure to Mary

Extract 35 - Mary and Watson declare their love

Extract 38 - The Ending of the novel

**Mary**

Extract 8 - Watson’s recognition of his feelings towards Mary

Extract 10 - Watson’s reactions to Mary / Sherlock’s abilities / London

Extract 15 - Impact of treasure on Mary Morstan

Extract 16 - The developing relationship between Mary and Watson

Extract 22 - Watson’s thoughts regarding Mary

Extract 27 - Mary’s reaction to events so far

Extract 34 - Returning the treasure to Mary

Extract 35 - Mary and Watson declare their love

Extract 38 - The Ending of the novel

**Jonathan Small + Tonga**

Extract 12 - Wealth and secrecy involving the treasure

Extract 17 - Reactions to the missing treasure

Extract 26 - Description of character of Tonga

Extract 30 - The boat chase

Extract 31 - The killing of Tonga

Extract 32 - The Capture of Jonathan Small

Extract 33 - The differing roles of the treasure

Extract 36 - The character of Jonathan Small developed

Extract 37 - Jonathan Small’s view of justice

**Role of police**

Extract 3 - Sherlock’s views on his role and the police

Extract 5 - Sherlock’s views on society

Extract 20 - The arrival of the police

Extract 24 - Presentation of Police in newspaper

Extract 28 - Police’s changing views on Sherlock

Extract 19 - Sherlock’s approach to problem solving

Extract 21 - Sherlock’s methods to solve crime – Toby

Extract 25 - Introduction to Baker Street Irregulars

**Role of money**

Extract 11 - Description of Thaddeus Sholto’s house

Extract 12 - Wealth and secrecy involving the treasure

Extract 13 - Major Sholto’s outline regarding the treasure

Extract 14 - Thaddeus and Bartholomew’s differing views on treasure

Extract 15 - Impact of treasure on Mary Morstan

Extract 33 - The differing roles of the treasure

Extract 34 - Returning the treasure to Mary

Extract 35 - Mary and Watson declare their love

**Thaddeus + Bartholomew**

Extract 11 - Description of Thaddeus Sholto’s house

Extract 12 - Wealth and secrecy involving the treasure

Extract 13 - Major Sholto’s outline regarding the treasure

Extract 14 - Thaddeus and Bartholomew’s differing views on treasure

Extract 33 - The differing roles of the treasure

**AO2 – Writer’s Methods – A Sign of Four**

**Key Structural points**

* Subplot – contrast mystery + crime with romantic – each plot represents Sherlock or Watson. Contrast in these match their characters
* Cyclical Structure
* Starts + ends – Sherlock taking drugs – shows how easily his brain becomes bored again
* Foreshadowing - Inference + deduction of Watson’s shoe + watch foreshadow his skills at crime scene
* Narrated by Watson – provides bridge to Sherlock’s thoughts. More approachable + relatable character
* Reader follow crime chronologically with characters
* Use of other narrators to fill in story – Mary, Thaddeus, Small – to tell their viewpoints
* Embedded narrative – ‘story within a story’ of Jonathan Small

**Contrasts**

* Sherlock vs Watson – logical + reasoned vs emotive + feelings
* Mary vs lower class women
* Sherlock vs Jones – Sherlock natural ability vs Jones doing as job
* Sherlock vs Sholtos – Sherlock driven by sense of solving crimes vs Sholtos driven by wealth
* Sherlock vs Jonathan Small – same as above!
* Jones vs Sholtos + Small

**AO3 – Context – A Sign of Four – Victorian Era**

* **Rigid + strict social hierarchy –** treasure would have been ‘barrier’ between Mary + Watson. Use of dialogue of working class + the Baker Street Irregulars. However, Sherlock transcends these barriers to work with everyone.
* **Role of women limited – expected to rely on men – Angel of the House + weaker sex –** Mary has suitable job – governess – work in domestic sphere with children, Mrs Hudson + Mrs Bernstone jobs as housekeepers + Mrs Bernstone’s fear is shown at Pondicherry Lodge. Told about Watson’s feelings to protect and comfort Mary throughout.
* **Growing crime due to population increase**
* **Fear of unknown = racist attitudes as British Empire expanding** – represented through Tonga
* **Move from reliance on religion towards more scientific approach –** Sherlock personifies this change
* **Negative view on police as struggled to cope with increase of crime + population growing fear of safety due to high profile crimes -** Jones personifies / is microcosm for police

**Key Words**

1. Narcissistic
2. Foreknowledge
3. Simile
4. Dramatic irony
5. Cyclical structure
6. Foreshadow
7. Dominance
8. Submissive
9. Subservient
10. Role reversal
11. misogynistic
12. derogatory
13. juxtaposition
14. remorse
15. reflection
16. hierarchy
17. business
18. portray
19. dehumanise
20. objectify

**The Sign of Four Extract 3**

**How does Conan Doyle present his views on his role and the role of this police in this extract and throughout the novel?**

In this extract Conan Doyle presents Sherlock Holmes and his role as complex and unique. Conan Doyle uses language to show Holmes’ superior thinking skills and presents a contrast to that of the police.

Firstly, in the extract we can see that Conan Doyle presents Holmes as man who bores easily when he almost makes a plea **‘give me the most abstruse cryptogram or the most intricate analysis’.** This suggests to the reader that the work he does is a basic need for a man like Holmes. By the use of the adverb **‘most’** suggests to the reader that Holmes is capable of solving the most complex of problems, and anything less does not provide him with enough mental stimulation. This work is a basic need for a man like Holmes and if he does not have problems to solve he is willing to experiment on his own mind through drug taking; which was witnessed at the beginning of the novella, when through Watson’s narration the reader discovers that his **‘forearm and wrist [are], all dotted and scarred with innumerable puncture marks’.** The reader is able to see that if Holmes does not have the mental stimulation of having problems to solve then he needs another way to stop his mind from stagnating.

Conan Doyle has also presented Holmes’ role as being unique because he has invented his own profession as **‘the only unofficial consulting detective’.** This suggests to the reader that Holmes is a character of great intellect as nobody else is capable of doing the work he does. It can also suggest that he likes to do things in his own way and may find it difficult to cope with any other methodology apart from his own. The use of the adverb ‘only’ demonstrates his superiority and possible arrogance on his part. This can be seen later on in the novella when we are able to contrast Holmes’s methods to Jones’s at Pondicherry Lodge. Holmes operates logically and acts almost like an animal ‘**like those of a trained bloodhound-picking out a scent’** presenting to the reader someone who follows the scent of each clue, taking a new path each time a dead end is reached. The use of the animalist imagery heightens Sherlock’s skills and shows the reader that his senses are greater than human. This is in contrast to Athelney Jones who Conan Doyle uses to highlight the negative perception of the police force in Victorian England. He is also used as a foil to highlight Sherlock’s skills. Conan Doyle has used repeated examples of animal imagery to show Sherlock’s great deal of care and focus; however, we do not see Jones make any effort to search the room. Instead he states they must go on **‘facts’** despite not looking for any.

Again Conan Doyle presents the role of the police through Athelney Jones to show the negative perception of the police force in Victorian England. He has used a list of adjectives **‘stout, portly man…red faced, burley and plethoric’** to describe the appearance of Jones suggesting to the reader that Jones is a somewhat comical character. His **‘red face’** and his blustering nature contrasts with the composure of Sherlock who is described as **‘swift, silent and furtive’.** This conveys to the reader that the police force are not to be taken very seriously and they appear incompetent next to Sherlock.

Conan Doyle also presents Holmes as being very dismissive of Jones and the way the police force work when he says they are **‘out of their depth…which…is their normal state’** suggesting that the police force are usually ineffective and are incapable of doing their job properly. Again we see the contrast between Holmes and Jones when Holmes refers to himself as an **‘expert’** and **a ‘specialist’** suggesting to the reader that there is nobody else quite like him. By using the nouns **‘expert’** and **‘specialist’** puts forward to the reader that he has a great deal of knowledge and is very skilled in his chosen profession, however there is also an air of arrogance about him when he criticises the police. He feels he is far superior and believes that his skills cannot be challenged. We can also see that Holmes can be dismissive of close friends such as Watson when he is very honest with Watson about his feelings on his writing in the Study in Scarlet. He says **‘I glanced over it’** suggesting to Watson that it was not worth a closer look. Again this shows Sherlock does not like to compromise in any way, and he is presented as not really valuing the opinions of others. By using the verb ‘**glanced**’ demonstrates to the reader that Holmes believes that his skills are far superior to those of Watson; he does not believe that anything Watson has written will add any value to the case.

Though connected with logic, Conan Doyle presents Holmes as inventive and creative in his approach to his work. His use of disguise, his contacts, is methods of questioning are just some examples. In contrast Conan Doyle presents Jones in a humorous way. He does this to undermine his character and show the views of the public towards the police. This is evident when he says **‘no room for theories’** but follows this with a theory! Although Sherlock tries to show him evidence, we see Jones’ dismissive attitude towards this as he calls it **‘hocus-pocus’.** This shows us the lack of respect he has towards the crime scene in contrast to Sherlock who has shown a high amount of care. We have seen his use of short sentences and questions to show he has been taking in details which Jones dismisses. Conan Doyle presents their attitudes towards the crime scene completely differently, showing Sherlock’s superior skills and Jones’s incompetence.

The role of Holmes is key to keeping the plot moving forward and Conan Doyle presents him as accomplished and skilled in his chosen profession. This is in complete contrast to Jones whose role appears to be to entertain rather than take part in any serious detective work. Conan Doyle is contrasting the two characters to explore Sherlock’s fine skills as a detective but is also criticising the work of the police in the Victorian era.