

YORK NOTES for  
**GCSE**

**AQA PRACTICE  
TESTS**

**New for GCSE (9–1)**



# THE SIGN OF THE FOUR

**AQA PRACTICE TESTS WITH ANSWERS**



YORK NOTES



# **THE SIGN OF THE FOUR**

## **AQA PRACTICE TESTS WITH ANSWERS**

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# PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

## How to use these practice tests

This book contains seven GCSE English Literature exam-style practice tests for *The Sign of the Four*. All the York Notes tests have been modelled on the ones that you will sit in your AQA GCSE 9–1 English Literature exam.

There are lots of ways these tests can support your study and revision for your AQA English Literature exam on *The Sign of the Four*. There is no 'right' way – choose the one (or ones) that suits your learning style best:

### 1 Alongside the York Notes Study Guide for *The Sign of the Four*

Do you have the York Notes Study Guide for *The Sign of the Four*?

These tests will allow you to try out all the skills and techniques outlined in the Study Guide. So you could:

- choose a question from this book
- read the sections of the Study Guide relevant to the question, i.e. Plot and Action; Characters; Themes, Contexts and Setting; Structure, Form and Language
- use the Progress Booster exam section of the Study Guide to remind yourself of key exam techniques
- complete the question.

### 2 As a stand-alone revision programme

Do you know the text inside out and have you already mastered the skills needed for your exam?

If so, you can keep your skills fresh by answering one or two questions from this book each day or week in the lead-up to the exam. You could make a revision diary and allocate particular questions to particular times.

### 3 As a form of mock exam

Would you like to test yourself under exam conditions?

You could put aside part of a day to work on a practice test in a quiet room. Set a stopwatch so that you can experience what it will be like in your real exam. If some of your friends have copies of this book then several of you could all do this together and discuss your answers afterwards.

Or, you could try working through Part Two of this book slowly, question by question, over a number of days as part of your revision, and save the further questions in Part Three to use as a mock test.

## How to use the answer sections

This book contains a mixture of annotated sample answers and short (indicative content) answers that will help you to:

- identify the difference between Mid, Good and Very High Level work
- understand how the Assessment Objectives are applied
- grade your own answers by comparing them with the samples provided.

The answers can also give you additional ideas for your responses and help you to aim high.

**Points for improvement are given to show the difference between Mid, Good and Very High Level work.**

QUESTION 1, MID LEVEL ANSWER

**AO1**  
Again, quotation not embedded fluently

**AO1**  
Quotation not embedded, explained or developed

Conan Doyle also presents Watson as lacking in confidence somewhat. In the extract he uses questions to show Watson's self-doubt, 'What was I, an army surgeon with a weak leg ...'. He feels like he is not good enough for Miss Morstan and that she would not find him attractive. Later in the novel he is worried when he finds out Miss Morstan will inherit the treasure and because of the emphasis on social status at the time, he feels Miss Morstan will end up being of a higher social status than him because of her wealth.

Although Watson is nervous, he is still a brave and trusted assistant to Sherlock Holmes. He is always part of the action when tension is high, such as the visit to Pondicherry Lodge and the boat chase along the Thames, 'Jonathan I shall leave to you.' He is there as an assistant to Holmes through the action, 'That you, Watson?' he cried. He is a sensitive and supportive friend to Holmes but to Miss Morstan too which is perhaps what makes her like him.

**AO1**  
Informal expression

**AO3**  
A clearer detail linked to context

MID LEVEL

**Comment:**  
This is a sensible response which deals with the key ideas raised in the extract. There are a number of clear points made about Watson's character, most of which are supported appropriately and some of which offer useful inferences or suggestions. There is some mention of method, for example narrative perspective and contrast, but little close analysis of language. The response touches on some contextual issues but does not explore or explain these closely enough.

**For a Good Level:**

- Make more connections between the extract and the wider text.
- Embed quotations more fluently, use consistently formal expression and avoid long sentences.
- Develop ideas and inferences.
- Consider context in a more subtle way.

**Sample answers show the key points and ideas you could have included, with examiner-style annotations linked to the Assessment Objectives.**

**Each annotated sample is awarded a level with an examiner-style comment.**

## Assessment Objectives and weightings

Your work on *The Sign of the Four* will be examined through the three Assessment Objectives (AOs) listed below:

<b>AO1</b>	Read, understand and respond to texts. You should be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● maintain a critical style and develop an informed personal response</li> <li>● use textual references, including quotations, to support and illustrate interpretations.</li> </ul>
<b>AO2</b>	Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meanings and effects, using relevant subject terminology where appropriate.
<b>AO3</b>	Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written.

The marks allocated by AQA for each Assessment Objective are as follows:

<b>AO1</b>	12 marks
<b>AO2</b>	12 marks
<b>AO3</b>	6 marks
<b>Total (per question)</b>	30 marks

Knowing the number of marks allowed for each AO is important, as this will help you to achieve the right balance of key skills and techniques in your answer.



## Mark scheme

The annotated sample answers that follow Questions 1 to 4 in this book have been given a Level based on the mark schemes below.\*

### Lower Level

<b>AO1</b>	You give some relevant responses to the set task and use some suitable references.
<b>AO2</b>	You identify some of the writer's methods but do not always comment effectively on them.
<b>AO3</b>	You show some awareness of contextual factors but find it difficult to link them to the text.

### Mid Level

<b>AO1</b>	You give a clear response and select suitable references and quotations.
<b>AO2</b>	You make clear references to the writer's methods to support your points.
<b>AO3</b>	You make clear links between some aspects of context and the text.

Turn to page 8 for the mark schemes for Good to High and Very High Levels.

\* These are 'student-friendly' mark schemes and are a guide only.



**Good to High Level**

<b>AO1</b>	You demonstrate very effective understanding of the task and text, and choose references and quotations carefully.
<b>AO2</b>	You analyse carefully and comment consistently well on the writer's methods, interpreting ideas.
<b>AO3</b>	You make very effective links between context and the text.

**Very High Level**

<b>AO1</b>	You have a broad, conceptualised idea of the text, and make well-judged and wide-ranging use of references and quotations.
<b>AO2</b>	You are analytical and explore the text precisely and convincingly. You comment in finely tuned detail on the writer's use of language, form and structure.
<b>AO3</b>	You write convincingly and relevantly about a wide range of contextual factors.

Now you know what you're aiming for, you can begin the practice tests.

Turn to page 10 for Question 1.\*

\* *The extracts from The Sign of the Four used in these Practice Tests are taken from the Collins Classic edition, 2015.*



## PART TWO: YORK NOTES PRACTICE TESTS WITH ANNOTATED SAMPLE ANSWERS

### Question 1

Read the following extract from Chapter 2 of *The Sign of the Four* (page 16).

In this extract, Dr Watson reflects on his first meeting with Miss Morstan.

I sat in the window with the volume in my hand, but my thoughts were far from the daring speculations of the writer. My mind ran upon our late visitor, – her smiles, the deep rich tones of her voice, the strange mystery which overhung her life. If she  
5 were seventeen at the time of her father's disappearance she must be seven-and-twenty now, – a sweet age, when youth has lost its self-conscious and become a little sobered by experience. So I sat and mused, until such dangerous thoughts came into my head that I hurried away to my desk and plunged  
10 furiously into the latest treatise upon pathology. What was I, an army surgeon with a weak leg and a weaker banking-account, that I should dare to think of such things? She was a unit, a factor, – nothing more. If my future were black, it was better surely to face it like a man than to attempt to brighten it by mere  
15 will-o'-the-wisps of the imagination.

Starting with this extract, explore how Conan Doyle presents the character of Dr Watson.

Write about:

- how Conan Doyle presents Dr Watson in this extract
- how Conan Doyle presents Dr Watson in the novel as a whole.

[30 marks]

[illegible]

## Annotated sample answers

Now, read the three sample answers that follow and, based on what you have read, try to allocate a level to your own work. Which of the three responses is your answer closest to? Don't be discouraged if your work doesn't seem as strong as some of the responses here – the point is to use these samples to learn about what is needed and then put it into practice in your own work. Conversely, you may have mentioned relevant ideas or points that don't appear in these responses; if this is the case, give yourself a pat on the back – it shows you are considering lots of good ideas.

### Sample answer A

A02

Considers a method the writer uses, with support, but quotation could be more fluently embedded

*Dr Watson is Sherlock Holmes's assistant. He is an interesting character. He is also the narrator of the novel and the story is told through his eyes because he says, 'I sat in the window ...'. In the extract we see that Watson is thinking back over the meeting with Miss Morstan. He is worried about her and thinks she is involved in a 'strange mystery'. This helps us to think about the mystery ahead and how it may be solved.*

Useful structural point, simply put

A02

A02

Another method is touched on and supported, but the sentence could be shorter

*Watson is a close friend of Holmes and knows all of his cases. He is a writer as well as a doctor and has written up some of Holmes's cases as stories. He seems to be more imaginative than some of the other men in the novel because Conan Doyle uses him as a contrast to Holmes who is very methodical and rational, "My dear Watson, try a little analysis yourself," said he' with a touch of impatience and we get the impression Watson is a bit more of a dreamer. In the extract he is thinking about Miss Morstan, not just because of the mystery but because he also finds her attractive. He comments on 'her smiles, the deep rich tones of her voice' and this implies he has paid attention to Miss Morstan. This is different from Holmes's view of her as a client, 'a unit, a factor'. However, he describes his reaction to her using the phrase 'dangerous thoughts' and knows that he should not be thinking of her in this way telling us something about the way middle-class men felt they should behave to middle-class women at the time.*

Shows knowledge about Watson's character and makes a useful inference

A01

A03

Touches on a point of context but does not explore or develop it; another long sentence

*As well as caring about Miss Morstan and the case, Watson is very sensitive. He does sometimes feel hurt by how blunt Holmes can be, for example when Holmes is insensitive about Watson's brother's death, 'I sprang from my chair and limped impatiently about the room with considerable bitterness in my heart' and when Watson announces his engagement to Miss Morstan at the end, 'I was a little hurt'.*

Develops the idea of contrast and makes a link to the language choices in the extract

A02

A01

Shows a wider knowledge of the text linked to a point about Watson's character; quotation could be embedded more fluently

A01

Again, quotation not embedded fluently

Conan Doyle also presents Watson as lacking in confidence somewhat. In the extract he uses questions to show Watson's self-doubt, 'What was I, an army surgeon with a weak leg ...'. He feels like he is not good enough for Miss Morstan and that she would not find him attractive. Later in the novel he is worried when he finds out Miss Morstan will inherit the treasure and because of the emphasis on social status at the time, he feels Miss Morstan will end up being of a higher social status than him because of her wealth.

Informal expression

A01

A clearer detail linked to context

A03

A01

Quotation not embedded, explained or developed

Although Watson is nervous, he is still a brave and trusted assistant to Sherlock Holmes. He is always part of the action when tension is high, such as the visit to Pondicherry Lodge and the boat chase along the Thames, 'Jonathan I shall leave to you.' He is there as an assistant to Holmes through the action, "That you, Watson?" he cried.' He is a sensitive and supportive friend to Holmes but to Miss Morstan too which is perhaps what makes her like him.

**MID LEVEL**

**Comment:**

This is a sensible response which deals with the key ideas raised in the extract. There are a number of clear points made about Watson's character, most of which are supported appropriately and some of which offer useful inferences or suggestions. There is some mention of method, for example narrative perspective and contrast, but little close analysis of language. The response touches on some contextual issues but does not explore or explain these closely enough.

**For a Good Level:**

- Make more connections between the extract and the wider text.
- Embed quotations more fluently, use consistently formal expression and avoid long sentences.
- Develop ideas and inferences.
- Consider context in a more subtle way.

## Sample answer B

A02

Begins by establishing Watson's role as part of the structure of the novel

Conan Doyle presents us with an interesting character in Dr Watson, in that he is not just a character and part of the action, but he is also the framework narrator for the novel and he holds together all of the storytelling that takes place.

A01

Uses some effective textual details to explore the language choices connected to Watson as well as establishing the key idea of the extract

In this extract we are told his thoughts and reflections on the meeting with Miss Morstan when he tells us, 'My mind ran upon our late visitor'.

Watson reveals his human and more romantic side compared with the 'automaton' Holmes, in that he clearly finds Miss Morstan very attractive and refers to her with softened romantic language, such as 'a sweet age', 'her self-control was perfect', 'the sweet face of Mary Morstan looking down upon me.' However, his sense of doing right means that he dismisses these thoughts as 'dangerous' suggesting that he has a strong moral code and is highly respectful of women.

A01

A useful and relevant inference made from a textual detail, fluently embedded

A03

A clearly expressed idea linked to a contextual aspect of the novel, but could be developed further

In addition, he clearly has doubts about himself when he questions how Miss Morstan could ever be interested in an 'army surgeon with a weak leg'. Watson sees himself as not being worthy of her. This is emphasised even more later on in the novel when it seems likely that Miss Morstan will become very wealthy through the inheritance of the Agra treasure. Watson says, 'The Agra treasure intervened like an impassable barrier between us' – he worries she will be of a higher social status than him as a result.

A01

An interesting and perceptive idea

Watson's feelings of doubt could stem from his relationship with Holmes who Watson believes is something of a 'genius' in comparison to himself. Holmes's reputation and 'mind that rebels against stagnation' could be an intimidating thing for Watson as Holmes does, on occasion, behave very insensitively towards him. Even at the end of the novel after all the support Watson has given, Holmes tells Watson, 'I really cannot congratulate you' on the news of his engagement. However, it is clear that Holmes values Watson's company, loyalty and friendship and he accompanies Holmes through all of the major action in the novel.

A01

This could be explored further

A02

Watson is used as a device by Conan Doyle to reflect on the action, asking 'How, for example, could you describe with such confidence the wooden-legged man?' In this way Watson acts on our behalf, asking the questions of Holmes we want to ask in order to keep track of the mystery.

A clearly expressed consideration of one of the writer's methods

AO2

A final consideration of another possible aspect of the writer's craft

Conan Doyle seems to present Watson as a clear contrast to Holmes. However, he is also a contrast to other men in the novel like Athelney Jones, who is pompous where Watson is polite, and Thaddeus Sholto, who likes to create the impression he is well-mannered, but angers Watson with the blunt way that he tells him about Captain Morstan's death. Watson exclaims: 'I could have struck the man across the face so hot was I at this callous and off-hand reference to so delicate a matter.'

Watson's kind and sensitive nature seems to be rewarded when he discovers Miss Morstan shares his feelings of attraction. The treasure, which has symbolised a potential obstacle between them, is not to be found in the 'Benares box'. Though Holmes is the hero of the main plot, Watson then appears as a contrasting romantic hero as he wins the hand of Miss Morstan in a sentimental scene when he claims, 'the golden barrier was gone from between us'.

AO1

Some perceptive links to the rest of the novel showing a wider knowledge of the plot and events

AO2

Good final quotation but not analysed

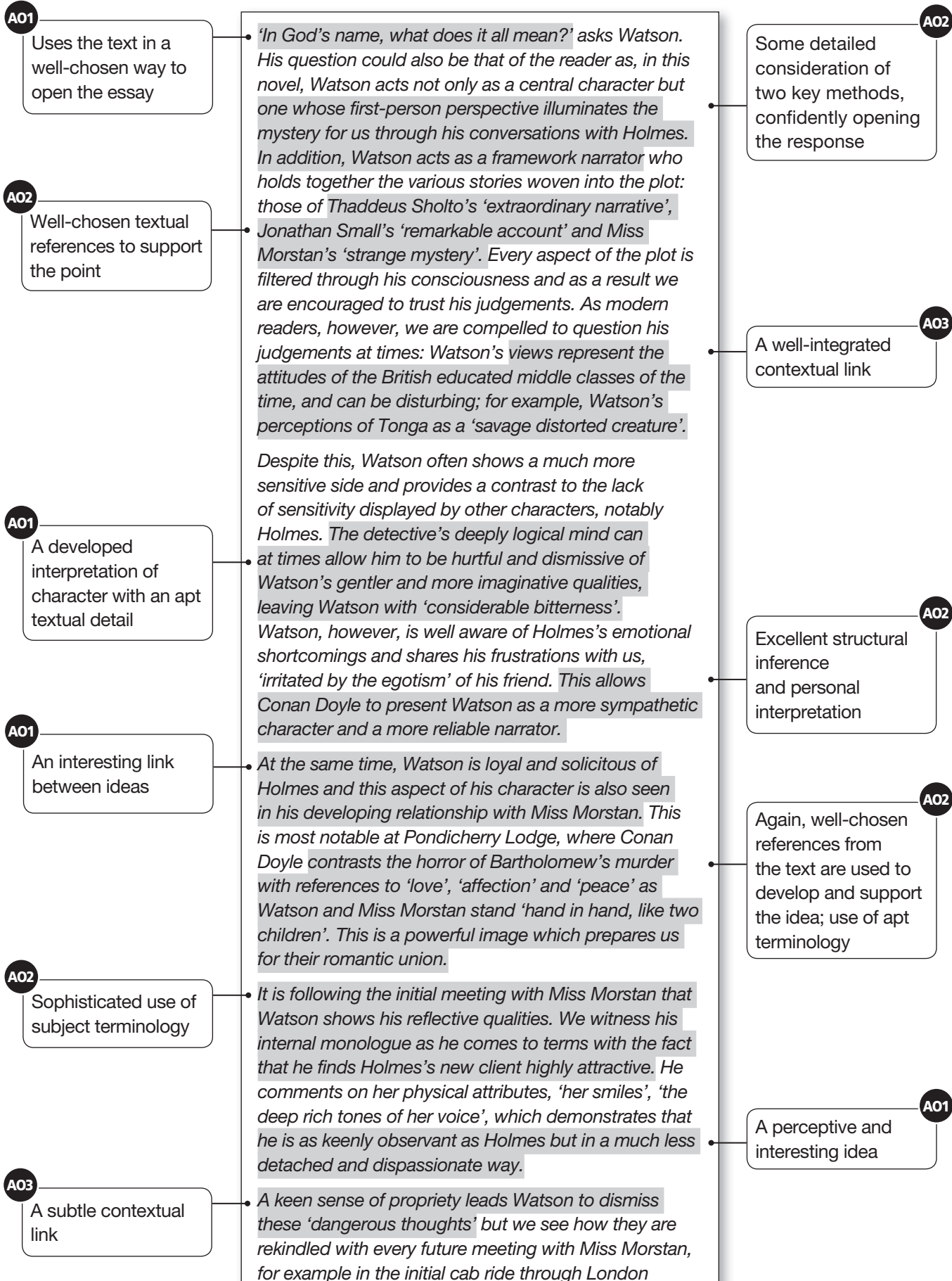
**GOOD LEVEL**
**Comment:**

This is a generally confident response, which shows a good knowledge of the novel and of Watson's role within it. There is a wide range of supporting material drawn not just from the extract but from the whole text. Many of the textual details have thoughtful comments and inferences drawn from them and there is an attempt to embed quotations into the response. There is an emphasis on the craft of the writer and there is some clear consideration of how Conan Doyle is utilising Watson as a device to drive the action forward. Some subtle contextual details are integrated into the response.

**For a High Level:**

- Develop a more mature style which considers other possible interpretations and inferences.
- Make more effective use of quotations to develop inferences.
- Explore the craft of the writer with more precision and fluency to pinpoint the effects in a more developed way.

## Sample answer C





A02

A further consideration of a different method

A03

Makes integrated links with social context

A03

A final well-supported idea which links understanding of character to wider contextual issues

when he notes her 'self-control was perfect', and at Thaddeus Sholto's house. Here Watson's hyperbole is almost humorous when he feels he could have 'struck the man across the face' for his lack of sensitivity in revealing the news of Captain Morstan's death.

Whilst being considerate of others, Watson is also self-deprecating and anxious about his own status. This is shown when he asks, 'What was I, an army soldier with a weak leg ...?', revealing his self-doubt as to his worthiness to be a partner to Miss Morstan. Watson also faces anxieties about how the treasure would elevate Miss Morstan from a 'needy governess to the richest heiress in England'. This is presented as an obstacle to a potential courtship, showing us how deeply entrenched ideas of class and status may have affected love relationships at the time.

Watson is used by Conan Doyle in many ways therefore: as a contrast to the brutality of the main plot, the dynamism of Holmes's thought processes and the heavy handed pomposity of Athelney Jones. Watson is also the romantic hero of the gentler sub-plot, which symbolises a restoration to order following the chaos of the main action and its dangerous links to colonised lands and 'savagery'. The romanticised vision of England is one that Watson clings to during the 'wild, dark business which had absorbed us', again revealing more of those conservative British values of the time, which are so evident elsewhere in the novel.

A02

Another strong and useful observation on method

**VERY HIGH LEVEL**

**Comment:**

This response shows a wide-ranging knowledge of the text and selects extremely apt quotations, which are embedded skilfully within the response. The ideas are mature and complex. Conan Doyle's methods and techniques are explored in a knowledgeable way and are again supported with apt and well-judged textual details. The response makes subtle and perceptive use of contextual ideas which link to the main points about Watson's character and lead to a confident response.

## Question 2

Read the following extract from Chapter 8 of *The Sign of the Four* (pages 67–8).

In this extract, Sherlock Holmes and Watson arrive at Mordecai Smith's boatyard and Holmes speaks to Smith's son and wife.

'Dear little chap!' said Holmes, strategically. 'What a rosy-cheeked young rascal! Now, Jack, is there anything you would like?'

The youth pondered for a moment. 'I'd like a shillin',' said he.

'Nothing you would like better?'

5 'I'd like two shillin' better,' the prodigy answered, after some thought.

'Here you are, then! Catch! – A fine child, Mrs. Smith!'

'Lor' bless you, sir, he is that, and forward. He gets a'most too much for me to manage, 'specially when my man is away days at a time.'

10 'Away, is he?' said Holmes, in a disappointed voice. 'I am sorry for that, for I wanted to speak to Mr. Smith.'

'He's been away since yesterday mornin', sir, and, truth to tell, I am beginnin' to feel frightened about him. But if it was about a boat, sir, maybe I could serve as well.'

'I wanted to hire his steam launch.'

15 'Why, bless you, sir, it is in the steam launch that he has gone. That's what puzzles me; for I know there ain't more coals in her than would take her to about Woolwich and back. If he'd been away in the barge I'd ha' thought nothin'; for many a time a job has taken him as far as Gravesend, and then if there was much doin' there he might ha' stayed over. But what good is a steam launch without coals?'

'He might have bought some at a wharf down the river.'

20 'He might, sir, but it weren't his way. Many a time I've heard him call out at the prices they charge for a few odd bags. Besides, I don't like that wooden-legged man, wi' his ugly face and outlandish talk. What did he want always knockin' about here for?'

'A wooden-legged man?' said Holmes, with bland surprise.

25 'Yes, sir, a brown, monkey-faced chap that's called more'n once for my old man. It was him that roused him up yesternight, and, what's more, my man knew he was comin', for he had steam up in the launch. I tell you straight, sir, I don't feel easy in my mind about it.'

Starting with this extract, explore how Conan Doyle presents issues of class and status.

Write about:

- how Conan Doyle presents issues of class and status in this extract
- how Conan Doyle presents issues of class and status in the novel as a whole.

[30 marks]



## Annotated sample answers

Now, read the three sample answers that follow and, based on what you have read, try to allocate a level to your own work. Which of the three responses is your answer closest to? Don't be discouraged if your work doesn't seem as strong as some of the responses here – the point is to use these samples to learn about what is needed and then put it into practice in your own work. Conversely, you may have mentioned relevant ideas or points that don't appear in these responses; if this is the case, give yourself a pat on the back – it shows you are considering lots of good ideas.

### Sample answer A

**A02** Quotation not embedded fluently nor analysed

**A01** Another useful inference, which briefly touches on a contextual issue though not developed; expression rather informal

**A02** Effect is touched on here, but could be developed

**A03** A useful contextual observation based on evidence of language used

*In the extract, Conan Doyle presents the differences between the classes through the use of dialogue. Holmes begins a conversation with Mrs Smith to try and get hold of information about Smith and the steam launch. By asking questions he is able to find out the details he is looking for: "A wooden-legged man?" said Holmes, with bland surprise.'*

*Conan Doyle's description of Mrs Smith earlier in the chapter presents her as working class. She is described as being 'stoutish' and 'a red-faced woman with a large sponge in her hand'. This implies she has a hard life looking after her children and the boatyard, 'when my man is away days at a time.' She is also presented as comical, chasing her child with the sponge, and gossiping to Holmes and giving him almost too much information with no suspicion, saying, 'I tell you straight, sir, I don't feel easy in my mind about it.' It's almost like Mrs Smith trusts Holmes straight away because he is a 'gentleman'.*

*Conan Doyle uses the adverb 'strategically' to show us Holmes is using the Smiths. Holmes uses the phrase 'people of that sort' and the pronoun 'them' to describe Mrs Smith and others from her class. This implies that he may have a low opinion of the working classes and looks down on them.*

*However, we see that Holmes needs the help of lower-class people to help him in his investigation. He needs information from Mrs Smith. At Pondicherry Lodge, he is let into the house because he had wrestled McMurdo the prizefighter, who is guarding the place. He is also well known by Mr Sherman who tells Watson, 'A friend of Mr Sherlock is always welcome.' People from the working classes all seem to have much more respect for the upper classes than the upper classes have for them. Mrs Smith, Mr Sherman and McMurdo all call Holmes and Watson 'Sir'.*

**A02** Identifies a key method and comments on its use

**A01** Makes a useful inference supported by textual details; last quotation not embedded fluently

**A02** Technical use of language with some relevant examples

**A01** Shows a clear knowledge of the text and its events

A01

Contrast could be brought out more clearly

A01

Concludes with an interesting and supported observation and a thoughtful inference

*In another example, Holmes describes the workers as 'Dirty looking rascals' later in the novel when they are on the Thames. This implies the people are trouble-makers and not people who have worked hard all day. It seems to show that the upper classes do not have respect for people of a lower class.*

*However, we see that some of the lower-class characters have their own ranking system. Mrs Smith sees Jonathan Small as not being respectable and calls him 'a brown, monkey-faced chap'. Her suspicions are right though as he was a convict and ends up back in custody at the end of the novel. It seems that society at the time was very structured and that your social status and class can affect where you end up in life.*

A03

Repeats idea about social context, which could be developed

## MID LEVEL

### Comment:

This is a generally sensible response, which explains a number of ideas clearly in relation to the task. The answer uses several textual references and supporting quotations, though these are not always embedded and used skilfully. Some of the writer's methods are identified, but these tend to be connected with language use only and there is room for some further development here. There are also some useful observations about social context, though again these could be explored in more detail.

### For a Good Level:

- Make more effective use of quotations.
- Consider other methods Conan Doyle uses in the novel.
- Develop contextual ideas so that they blend usefully into the overall response.

## Sample answer B

Holmes and Watson show their upper middle-class status when we see Holmes try to get information from Mrs Smith in this extract. Holmes flatters Mrs Smith's son to win her trust. In return, she gives him all of the information he needs. Mrs Smith immediately puts her trust in the gentleman detective, whereas she was suspicious of the 'monkey-faced chap' that Holmes is seeking – the escaped convict Jonathan Small. This implies that there was a strict social hierarchy at the time where everyone had their place.

An interesting supported observation which is linked to a thoughtful inference

A03

Mrs Smith's class is shown through her mode of speech. The dialogue between Holmes and Mrs Smith is contrasting because Holmes is presented using standard English, representing the speech of the upper middle classes of the time, 'Dear little chap', whereas Mrs Smith and Jack are represented in dialect: 'I'd ha' thought nothin'', 'He tapped at the winder'. Conan Doyle uses this technique elsewhere in the novel too, through the presentation of Mr Sherman. His dialect adds comedy to the episode with Watson, such as when he says, 'Don't mind that, sir: it's only a slow worm. It hain't got no fangs.'

Quotations are not smoothly embedded

A01

The portrayals of these characters show the working class as people who are uneducated, easily tricked and who are quick to show respect to their 'betters'. 'Step in, sir', says Mr Sherman when he knows a friend of Holmes is calling. 'The Aurora, sir', says Mrs Smith in answer to Holmes's question. That same level of respect is not always returned or deserved as we can see in other parts of the novel.

A more thoughtful observation supported with some apt references

A01

This point could be further developed

A01

Before the boat chase on the Thames, Holmes refers to the workers leaving the yards as 'Dirty looking rascals' and patronises them due to their appearance, 'I suppose every one has some little immortal spark ... You would not think it, to look at them.' This is the same attitude that leads to racist judgements being made about Tonga. Tonga has very little status in the novel, because he is a native of the Andaman Islands. Holmes's reference book describes the Islanders as 'naturally hideous' and 'a terror'. Holmes and Watson both refer to Tonga as 'a savage'. He is described as 'serving' Jonathan Small. Conan Doyle shows us that status at the time was unfair and always put the 'civilised' white man at the top.

A strong collection of textual evidence used to make a thoughtful point about social context

A03

Jonathan Small, a white man, is also treated badly. Though Mrs Smith, in the extract, 'don't feel easy

Explores one of the writer's methods with effective evidence

A02

A well-planned connection and link to wider exploration of the novel

A02

AO3

An interesting contextual point, but it's not clear whether Conan Doyle himself is hypocritical or merely presents the hypocrisy in society

*in my mind' about him, Small's story helps to show us how the British officers behaved towards him. Though both Major Sholto and Captain Morstan have military status, they behave in an immoral way, implying there was a great deal of hypocrisy in the social hierarchy of the time.*

*This hypocrisy also can be seen in the way Conan Doyle presents the status of women. Miss Morstan is a respectable middle-class woman, but without money or a profession of her own she relies on other people. Mrs Forrester points out to her that 'your fortune depends upon the issue of this search', which would provide her with an inheritance from her wayward father. This implies that within the upper and middle classes there were divisions of status based on gender as well as the divisions created by the class system.*

AO1

Another interesting and thoughtful point though not supported with textual detail here

AO3

A useful idea which could have been more skilfully incorporated into the main essay and developed further

**GOOD LEVEL**

**Comment:**

This is a well-planned and organised response which explores a number of ideas in detail and shows a strong knowledge of the text. The text has been used thoughtfully to support ideas that are integrated into the interpretation. There is consideration of the writer's method and at times this is linked to context. This could have been developed further however, and a more conceptualised critical view taken.

**For a High Level:**

- Explore the text with more of an overview.
- Look at alternative interpretations or deeper meanings for some of the AO1 ideas.
- Build AO2 and AO3 exploration more seamlessly into the response.



## Sample answer C

"The main thing with people of that sort," said Holmes, as we sat in the sheets of the wherry, "is never to let them think that their information can be of the slightest importance to you." Though Holmes is undoubtedly using a technique by which to elicit information and move his case forward, the value judgements he makes here as a white upper middle class British man become immediately apparent. He makes a clear and divisive distinction between himself and Watson and the working-class woman with whom he is in conversation. These same disparaging attitudes are seen later in the novel when Holmes refers to the workers leaving the boatyard with the noun phrase 'Dirty looking rascals', the implication of which immediately sets up a connection between their position in life and their perceived respectability.

A strong critical start, using the text judiciously and linking a contextual factor straight away

AO3

AO1  
Ranges through the text skilfully to build an argument

While Holmes takes a superior stance, Watson notes that the working-class individual has been reported as 'a soul concealed in an animal'. Similarly, the author of Holmes's reference book on the Andaman Islanders sets up a superior tone and relegates the native islanders to the status of beasts when they are described as 'naturally hideous' and 'fierce'. Indeed, this attitude is one that Holmes and Watson subscribe to themselves when they brand Tonga a 'savage' and shoot him in cold blood during the chase along the river. Watson's narrative uses language which relegates Tonga's status to that of less than human, describing him in abstract terms as being 'marked with all bestiality and cruelty'. Described as 'shrieking', 'gnashing' and 'menacing', Tonga is presented as a trapped, cornered wild animal, not a terrified man far away from home in fear for his life.

Close reading of language with precise references

AO2

This is in stark contrast to the way Tonga is described by Jonathan Small, as a companion who was 'stanch and true'. He was loyal to Small despite the fact he was stripped of equal status due to the colour of his skin and suffered the indignity of being exhibited 'at fairs and other such places as the black cannibal'.

More exploratory knowledge of the text shown with judicious references and well-embedded quotations

AO1

AO1  
A further well-expressed and planned link

In the same way that Small commands Tonga's loyalty, Holmes commands the loyalty of other working-class characters throughout the novel. Somewhat ironically, given his attitudes and views, it is through the help and assistance of those characters that he is able to investigate more thoroughly. Without his acquaintance with McMurdo, for example, he would not gain entry to the murder scene at Pondicherry Lodge. He also makes use of

AO2

Further consideration of method with judicious details

the dog provided by Mr Sherman, and he employs the skills of the Baker Street Irregulars to make an initial search of the boatyards along the Thames. These characters automatically defer to Holmes and Watson, always using the mode of address 'Sir' in their dealings with them.

Conan Doyle presents these characters in a colourful and stereotypical way. He creates character through the use of their idiolect. This is often done for comic effect, for example when we hear Mr Sherman admonishing Watson as a 'drunken vagabone' or imagine the gossiping and superstitious tone of Mrs Smith who, 'don't feel easy in my mind' as she speculates on the shady character of Small.

Mrs Smith, however, places her immediate trust in the gentleman detective, she defers to him and shares both her concerns and the key information Holmes needs. His class and status carry with it a perception of respectability and trustworthiness.

This is more than ironic, however, when we consider the behaviour of other white British men with status in the novel. Captain Morstan and Major Sholto would be, on the surface, representatives of the British Empire and all of its values overseas. Their behaviours are far from respectable and their actions become criminal – though they are never brought to justice in the way that the working-class conscript Small is, or the brutal way that Tonga is punished for his complicity and loyalty.

Creating a mask of respectability, the upper middle classes show flawed values and judgements as fickle and unsubstantiated as those Mrs Smith has for the 'brown, monkey-faced chap' whom she is so inherently suspicious of.

AO3

A conceptualised idea bringing together the whole essay conclusively, subtly linking context to meaning

AO2

Well embedded quotation

**VERY HIGH LEVEL**

**Comment:**

This is a wide-ranging and conceptualised critical response. It shows a strong knowledge of the text and explores ideas by drawing on evidence, which is precise and judiciously chosen. Contextual points are subtly blended in to the points made for AO1 and AO2 rather than being dealt with in isolation. Expression is mature and convincing, leading to a well-structured argument.