

## The Sign of Four

1] Read the extract again and complete the web by highlighting the qualities of the following character:

**Dr.  
Watson.**

He is a keen observer of people.

He has a Curious ( जिज्ञास)

He is empathetic.

He loves adventure.

**Sherlock  
Holmes.**

He is a brilliant detective.

He has a perfect knowledge of everything.

He is a man who shows no emotion.

He loves adventure.

**Mary  
Morstan**

She has a pure and sensitive nature.

She displays exceptional self-control

She is an ideal client.

She maintains collected demeanour



(ii) Describe the character of Mary Morstan from Dr. Watson's point of view.

**Ans:** Mary Morstan and Dr. Watson meet each other the first time when she comes to take the help of Sherlock Holmes in a case. Dr. Watson describes Mary as very young attractive woman with a deep, rich-toned voice, graceful, well-gloved lady. who is impeccably dressed in a sober, greyish, pale plain and simple dress with a dull turban that has a white feather on the side which suggests that she is a woman of limited means. Her aspects of face are not regular and her complexion is not bright, but her expression is sweet and friendly and her large blue eyes are remarkably spiritual and sympathetic. Dr. Watson even describes her emotional state of mind as agitated, because he witnesses her lip tremble and her hand quiver as she takes her seat. Dr. Watson finds Mary is not feeling uneasy about her strange situation, but she displays perfect self-control driving to the Lyceum Theatre.

3] Sherlock Holmes is the leading character in the extract. Explain.

**Ans:** The main character in the novel is the private detective, Sherlock Holmes. He is presented through the viewpoint of his friend, Dr John Watson, the narrator of the story. At the beginning of the extract, Miss Mary Morstan comes to meet Sherlock Holmes with a case. Through her conversation with Holmes and during their conversation Dr. Watson wants to leave from there so that she does not feel an embarrassing one and after listening to Miss Morstan's story, Holmes is the one who questions her further. This helps the reader understand Holmes' importance in the extract, It shows, Holmes is the leading character in the extract.

#### 4) Dr. Watson, the narrator, is one of the major characters in the novel. Illustrate

**Ans:** Dr. Watson is the narrator of the story and Sherlock Holmes' loyal assistant. He is a doctor by profession whose insightful narration helps the readers experience the story through his eyes. He is the second-most important character in the story, after Holmes. This is because he helps Holmes to understand the sensitive aspects of situations, which is not Holmes' strong suit (side). All the qualities attributed to Dr. Watson, along with his relationship to the protagonist, Sherlock Holmes, and his narrative viewpoint, make him one of the major characters in the novel.

#### 5] Holmes is always one step ahead of Dr. Watson in solving cases. Elucidate.

**Ans:** There's no example in the extract where Watson is superior to Holmes. Mostly Watson stands back and watches admiringly and helps him to solve the case.

Holmes' intellectual skills can be witnessed when he deciphers (decode) the piece of paper that Miss Morstan gives him in the carriage and also when he is able to name every place the carriage passes through, despite not knowing the intended destination.

His ability to rise above the fear and anxiety felt by an ordinary person in a tense situation sets him apart and gives him the power to look at the situation than Watson. On the other hand, though Dr. Watson is a keen observer, he is no match for Sherlock Holmes. His analytical skills are not as refined as Sherlock's. Unlike Holmes, Dr. Watson does not treat the clients as mere units or factors. This is why Holmes is always one step ahead of Dr. Watson in solving cases.

#### Q.2 (i) Arrange the sentences in the correct sequence as per their occurrence in the extract:

Jumbled Incidents	Correct Sequence
(1) Holmes put a revolver in his pocket. (2) Holmes gave Winwood's book 'Martydom of Man' to Dr. Watson. (3) Mary received a large and lustrous pearl through the post. (4) Mary's father was an officer in an Indian regiment. (5) Mary Morstan was a well-dressed young lady.	(5) Mary Morstan was a well-dressed young lady. (4) Mary's father was an officer in an Indian regiment. (3) Mary received a large and lustrous pearl through the post. (2) Holmes gave Winwood's book 'Martydom of Man' to Dr. Watson (1) Holmes put a revolver in his pocket.

#### (ii) Discuss the importance of the following statement in light of the extract.

(a) The trio – Holmes, Dr. Watson, and Mary decide to visit Lyceum Theatre.

**Ans:** Mary tells Holmes about the letter which she has received from the anonymous sender requesting her to go to the third pillar from the left, outside the Lyceum Theatre. The letter suggested that Mary had been wronged in some way and that she shall have justice. The sender warned Mary not to inform the police, but she could bring two friends with her. Thus, she decides to not call the police but takes the help of a detective, Holmes, to accompany her. They both agree and the trio decides to visit Lyceum Theatre. This statement is important because Mary's decision to approach Holmes and his subsequent approval to


accompany her lead to reveal the mystery of the anonymous sender and of the bigger, main plot of the novel.

**(2) Mary received Pearls every year on the same day.**

**Ans:** Mary's father had disappeared ten years ago and a few years after his disappearance, she saw an anonymous advertisement in the newspaper asking her for her address. Upon her employer's advice, she gave her address and began receiving a large pearl in the mail each year. These pearls that Mary receives are central to Mary's mysterious case. The reason this statement is important, because it hints that someone is trying to make amends for some wrongful action that has somehow harmed Mary.

**(3) Holmes carefully examined the paper given by Mary.**

**Ans:** The paper that Mary gave to Holmes was found in her father's desk. Mary told Holmes that no one had been able to understand the contents of the paper. Though she didn't think it was relevant to the case, she thought Holmes would like to see it and that's why she had brought it with her. Holmes, too, did not think that the paper was relevant to the case at hand. However, he told Mary that it was an important document and that she should preserve it carefully as it may prove to be of use later. After examining the paper, Holmes also declared that the matter was deeper and more complicated than he had initially thought and that he might have to reconsider his approach to the case. The paper, in fact, contained the location of the treasure that Jonathan Small and his three conspirators had hidden in the Agra Fort. This statement is important because this is the first time the location of the treasure surfaces in the story.




वर्ग ११ आणि १२ वी करीता  
**अरसोड इंग्लीश क्लासेस**  
Call : 9822716201

AN ISO 9001 : 2015 Certified Classes

**अरसोड इंग्लीश क्लासेस**

• ISO Certified Classes • Regular Online Test • PDF Notes

Join from  
Anywhere  
**ONLINE  
CLASSES**



**Q. 3 (1) Cite various references (lines) from the extract that tell us about the time and period of the events.**

Lines	Time and Period
1] My father was an officer in an Indian regiment	Before 1878; India under the rule of the British Empire
My father, who was senior captain of his regiment, obtained twelve months' leave and came home.	1878; ten years ago, London
3. This morning I received this letter, which you will perhaps read for yourself.	1888; present day morning, London



वर्ग ११ आणि १२ वी करीता  
**अरसोड इंग्लीश क्लासेस**  
Call : 9822716201

AN ISO 9001 : 2015 Certified Classes

**अरसोड इंग्लीश क्लासेस**

• ISO Certified Classes • Regular Online Test • PDF Notes

Join from  
Anywhere  
**ONLINE  
CLASSES**



**(2) How does the series of actions go from London to India? Explain by citing references from the extract.**

**Ans:** Miss Mary Morstan tells Sherlock Holmes the past events related to her father, when she comes to meet him in London. The first reference to India is made in the line – “My father was an officer in an Indian regiment who sent me home when I was quite a child”, where Mary tells Holmes and Watson that her father had been stationed in India (before 1878).

The scene shifts to London with the line – “He telegraphed to me from London that he had arrived all safe, and directed me to come down at once, giving the Langham Hotel as his address”, where Mary tells them about her father's return to London, ten years ago (1878).

She refers to India yet again in the line – “Only one that we know of,— Major Sholto, of his own regiment, the 34th Bombay Infantry” – where she mentions the regiment of which her father and Major Sholto were a part (before 1878).

The scene shifts to London yet again in the line – “We communicated with him, of course, but he did not even know that his brother officer was in England”, where Mary explains how Major Sholto didn't even know that Mary's father had returned to England when she contacted him ten years ago (1878).



The very next line brings us back to present-day London (1888) – “By the way, a curious paper was found in papa’s desk which no one could understand.” – where Mary tells Sherlock about a piece of paper that had been found in her father’s desk when he had disappeared ten years ago and whose contents no one had been able to understand. Thus, the action of the plot moves back and forth between India and London.

**(3) The extract begins when Mary Morstan meets Sherlock Holmes at his house. After that Holmes, Dr. Watson, and Mary visit some places in London. Explain in detail the various places mentioned in the extract.**

**Ans:** When Sherlock Holmes, Dr. Watson and Mary go towards the Lyceum Theatre in their cab, the first place that they come across is the Strand, where the street lamps look like misty spots of dim light. The trio then reaches Lyceum Theatre, where the side-entrances were already crowded with people. At the Lyceum Theatre, the trio was escorted by a small, dark, brisk coachman in a horse-drawn carriage. The carriage passed through Rochester Row Street, then through Vincent Square, then along Vauxhall Bridge Road, and headed over to the Surrey side, adjoining the Thames. As the carriage crossed over a bridge, a passing view of a stretch of the Thames, with the lamps shining upon the water could be seen. On the other side of the bridge, they landed on Wordsworth Road, followed by Priory Road, Lark Hall Lane, Stockwell Place, Robert Street, and Cold Harbour Lane, all of which are among the less fashionable regions of London. This rundown neighborhood is questionable and forbidding and full of dull brick houses with some public houses at the corner. These are followed by two-storied villas, each with its small garden in the front, and then followed again by a continuous line of new brick buildings. Their journey ended in this neighborhood where they drew up at the third house on a new terrace (line).

**(4) Basically the setting of the extract is in London but it has some references of India, too. Explain how the settings of the extract contribute to the theme of the novel.**

**Ans:** The novel has many dominant themes which are highlighted by the setting of the extract as follows:

#### **Imperialism:**

The story of ‘The Sign of Four’ is when India was very important colony for the British. In this extract, Mary’s father, Captain Morstan was posted in India. Her father’s friend, Major Sholto, was also posted in the same regiment. Thus, the theme of imperialism is evident in the details of the extract. ‘Indian’ servant in the house of the anonymous sender of pearls is another example of imperialism.

#### **Wealth:**

Another theme of the extract is that of wealth. The pearls, which Miss Morstan receives, represent the theme of wealth. Also at Lyceum theatre the rich people arrive in all their vehicles. This setting hints at the bigger theme of the Agra treasure.

#### **Mystery:**

Captain Morstan disappears when he returns London, suggests that his disappearance is connected to the events that occurred in India and that mystery Holmes is trying to solve. Another example of mystery is the paper found in Captain Morstan’s desk which bears the name of four men and the red cross which is unable to understand.

#### **Justice:**

Major Sholto’s son, Thaddeus Sholto is trying to do justice with Mary by offering her pearls as compensation highlights the theme of justice, because he knows that Major Sholto had denied knowing about Captain Morstan’s return to London.

**(v) Describe in brief the importance of the following place in the extract.**

#### **(a) London**

**Ans:** Sherlock Holmes, Dr. Watson, Miss Mary Morstan, and the anonymous sender of the letter – all live in London. Though there are references about India in the extract, but most of the events happen in London where two different sides of London have been shown first is fashionable like Lyceum Theatre frequented by the wealthy crowd and the unfashionable suburban London, lined with dull brick houses and third rate two-storied villas. Finally the story ends up in London.

#### **(B) Lyceum Theatre**

**Ans:** The Lyceum Theatre is important in the extract because the anonymous sender of the pearls requests

Miss Mary Morstan to meet with him at the third pillar from the left outside the Lyceum Theatre. This is the place that promises to unfold the mystery of the anonymous sender and reveal the story of how Mary is a “wronged woman”. It is a fashionable area of London where wealthy people frequently visit.

### Edinburgh

**Ans:** Mary Morstan’s father was an officer in an Indian regiment. He sent Mary to England when she was still a child. As a motherless child who had no relatives in England, Mary was placed in a comfortable boarding establishment in Edinburgh, where she lived till she was seventeen. This place is important because Mary Morstan, one of the major characters in the story, spent her childhood there.

### (D) Agra

**Ans:** Though there is no direct mention of Agra in this particular extract, but the treasure due to which all the actions occurs in the story comes from Agra. The pearls that Mary receives, are from a chaplet that was a part of the Agra treasure and the piece of paper that Mary gives to Holmes is the blueprint of the Agra Fort, where the treasure had been hidden.

### Andaman Islands

**Ans:** The Andaman Islands are referred twice in the given extract – once when Mary reveals that her father, Captain Morstan, was one of the officers in Andaman Islands; and the second time when she discloses that Major Sholto, her father’s friend, was also in the Andaman Islands. In the context of the novel, the Andaman Islands are vital to the story.

**(6) Which places/cities in India and England are mentioned/have appeared in the extract? Also write about their importance.**

India	Importance	London	Importance
Agra		Lyceum Theatre	
Andaman Islands		Edinburgh	

### Q. 4 (1) Write in brief the theme of the extract.

#### (a) Wealth:

**Ans:** Mary Morstan tells the details of her case to Holmes and Watson, wherein she receives pearls for the last six years. These precious pearls represent the theme of wealth. Finally, the meeting point, the Lyceum theatre, which is located in the upper-class neighborhood of London’s West End. This adds to the theme of prosperity and hints at the existence of the treasure, of which the characters have no idea.

#### (b) Logic versus Emotion:

**Ans:** The second noticeable theme is logic versus emotion. When Dr. Watson, admires Miss Morstan’s beauty and is attracted to her, Holmes considers Miss Morstan as a mere unit or factor in a problem. Here Dr. Watson represents the sensitive, emotional, and empathetic side of man, while Holmes is the symbol of analytical and intellectual person.

#### (c) Imperialism:

**Ans:** The novel has been written when India was under British rule and a lot of British officers were posted in Indian show imperialism. In addition, the suspicious nature of the male servant highlights the imperialist attitude of the British, which was common at the time.

#### (d) Justice:

**Ans:** Sherlock concludes that Major Sholto’s heir comes to know something about Captain Morstan’s mysterious disappearance and is trying to do justice by helping Mary for the loss suffered by her all those years ago. This represents the theme of justice in the extract.

### (2) Write 4-5 sentences about the meeting of Miss Morstan with Holmes.

**Ans:** Mary Morstan visits Holmes and Watson to enlist (get) their help in a case and narrates the story of her father’s disappearance under mysterious circumstances ten years ago. She then shares the attractive case of

the pearls that she has been receiving for the past six years by an anonymous sender, who now wants to meet with her. She requests Holmes and Watson to accompany her to the meeting and they both agree.

**(3) Write the central idea of the given extract of the novel, “The Sign of Four”.**

**Ans:** Various themes/central ideas are highlighted in the given extract of the novel. One of them is justice. All the events in the given extract are the result of the anonymous letter requesting a meeting with Miss

Dialogue	Speaker	To whom it is said	Tone, Style, Significance etc.
----------	---------	--------------------	--------------------------------

Mary Morstan. When Holmes thinks deeply, he guesses that it is an attempt of giving compensation to Miss Morstan, because the letter mentions her as a “wronged woman”. Miss Morstan’s decision to seek Holmes’

Statement	Reason/s
(a) Miss Morstan plans to meet Sherlock Holmes -- -----	An anonymous person sends a letter requesting her to come for a meeting so Morstan decides to enlist Holmes’ help, who is known to be a master detective.
(b) Miss Morstan gives the reference of Mrs. Cecil Forrester -----	Mrs. Cecil Forrester had been impressed with Holmes’ kindness and skill back when he had helped her to unravel a little domestic complication
(c) It’s a singular case -----	Captain Morstan, Mary’s father, had just returned to London and disappeared mysteriously. There were no clues hinting at what might have happened
(d) Holmes needed some references -----	Holmes decided to go to the meeting place in the evening. Before that he went to look at the backfiles of the Times to find more details about the case.
(e) Miss Morstan received a pearl every year -- -----	Miss Morstan’s father disappeared and Sholto’s heir was thus trying to give compassion for the “wrong” that had been done to her.
(f) The coachman confirmed that neither of Miss Morstan’s companion was a police officer ----- ----	The letter from the anonymous sender clearly stated that Miss Morstan should not inform the police

assistance and the decision to go to the meeting place are the outcomes of the letter sent by the anonymous person.

**(4) Give reasons:**

**Q. 5. (1) Elaborate the following line in the light of the novel/extract, “The Sign of Four” -**

**(a) “You really are an automaton – a calculating machine.”**

**Ans:** It is said by Dr. Watson when Holmes tells him that he didn’t really observe Miss Mary Morstan’s attractiveness. Dr. Watson finds it astonishing that he does not notice beauty so Watson compares Holmes to a machine because of his ability to remain unaffected by emotion. Holmes views his clients as mere units or factors in a problem.

**(b) “The letter speaks of giving her justice. What justice can she have?”**

**Ans:** It is said by Dr. Watson when Holmes shares his information with Watson. He is curious to know what justice the letter sent by the anonymous person could be referring. Holmes explains the justice is that Miss Morstan has been receiving the pearls as compensation for the deprivation of her father,

**(c) “Our quest does not appear to take us to very fashionable regions.”**

**Ans:** It is said by Sherlock Holmes as the trio was being taken towards south London. Holmes could pinpoint the exact streets through which the carriage passed. Finally they were being taken to a rundown, working-class neighborhood of London.

**(ii) Following are some dialogues of the major characters in the extract. Find out who the speaker is, his/her tone, style, significance, etc. of the dialogue.**

“....you have once enabled my employer, Mrs.Cecil Forrester, to unravel a little domestic complication. She was much impressed by your kindness and skill.”	Miss Mary Morstan	Sherlock Holmes	Tone: Admiring Style: Without fear Significance: Miss Morstan says that she has come to visit him upon the suggestion of her employer, whom he had helped on a case before.
“You will, I am sure, excuse me.”	Dr. Watson	Sherlock Holmes	Tone: Polite Style: Direct Significance: Dr. Watson wanted to take his leave as he thought Miss Morstan might want to discuss her case with Holmes in private.
“Your statement is most interesting. Has anything else occurred to you?”	Sherlock Holmes	Miss Mary Morstan	Tone: Curious Style: Interrogative Significance: Morstan’s case impressed Holmes. He wants to get more information about her case.
“Are you the parties who come with Miss Morstan?”	The coachman	Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson	Tone: Curious, Clarifying Style: Interrogative Significance: The coachman, wanted to make sure that Holmes and Watson were Miss Morstan’s companions.
“The Sahib awaits you.”	The khitmutgar	The trio –Miss Mary Morstan, Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson.	Tone: Polite, Welcoming Style: Direct, Informative Significance: This dialogue is indicative of the influence of the servant's native language. The word ‘Sahib’ is the Hindi term for ‘Sir’.