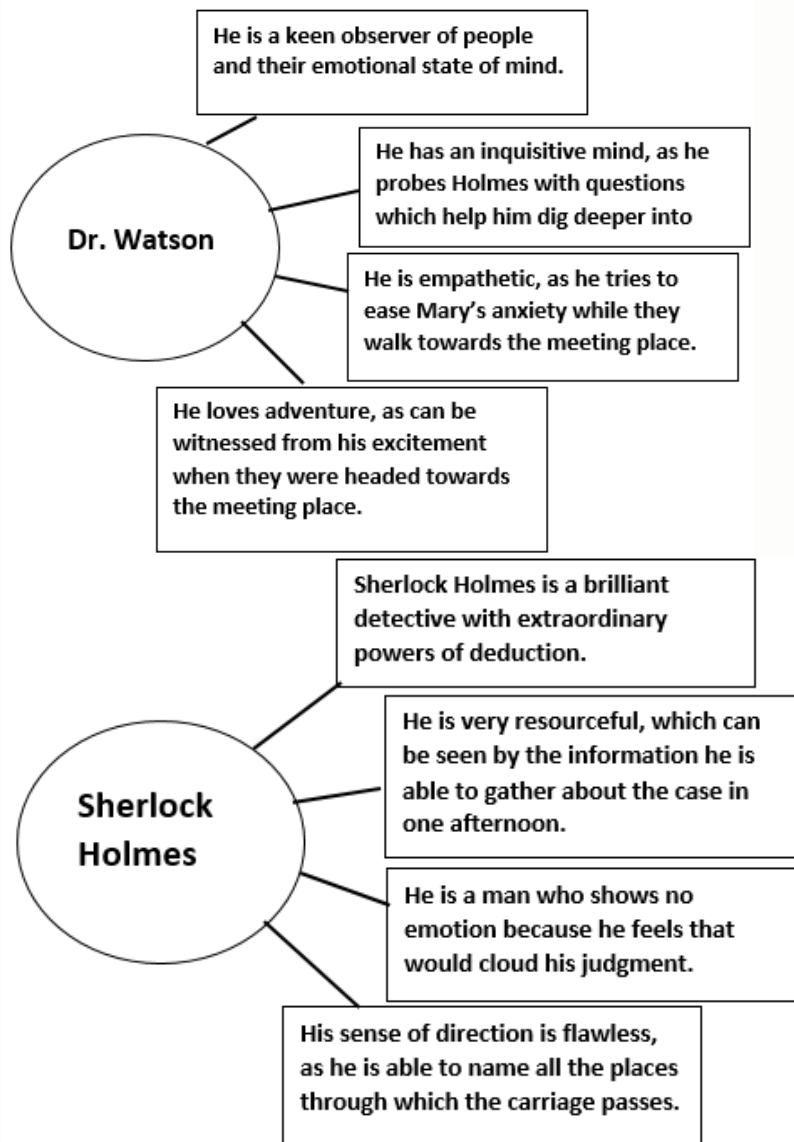


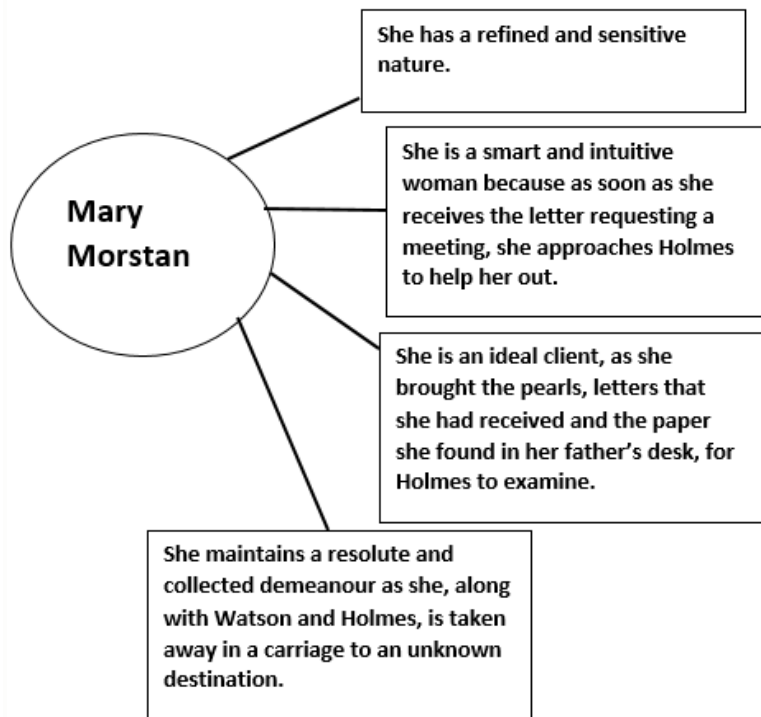
## 4.4 The Sign of Four -Sir Arthur Ignatius Conan Doyle

### BRAINSTORMING

#### CHARACTER:

(A1) (i) Read the extract again and complete the web by highlighting the qualities of the following character:





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

**Ans.** Dr. Watson meets Mary Morstan for the first time when she brings a case for Sherlock Holmes. He describes Mary as a woman with a firm step and calmness of manner. He continues his description of her as a young, graceful, well-gloved lady, who is impeccably dressed in a sober, greyish beige, untrimmed and unbraided dress with a dull turban that has a white feather on the side. He finds her costume to be plain and simple, which suggests that she is a woman of limited means. Her features 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, who happens to know women from various nations across three different continents, finds Mary's face to be indicative of her refined and sensitive nature. He 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 to be a very attractive woman with a deep, rich-toned voice and a beauty that has aged well with time. When Dr. Watson meets Mary Morstan for the second time, he describes her as wrapped in a dark cloak with her pale, composed and sensitive face. He says that she would have looked exceptional had she not been feeling uneasy about her strange situation. However, despite her discomfort, she displays perfect self-control. Watson also observes that as they drove to the Lyceum Theatre, the combination of the dull evening and the mysterious nature of their mission left her nervous and depressed. Finally, he notes that even while they are escorted to an unknown place, Mary's demeanour is as resolute and collected as ever.

Of most importance is Mary's disinterest in the inheritance of riches and her relief and happiness at finding out the treasure has been lost and her subsequent acceptance of Watson's proposal, proving once again that she is a virtuous woman.

**(iii) Sherlock Holmes is the leading character in the extract. Explain.**

**Ans.** At the beginning of the extract, we see that Miss Mary Morstan comes to meet Sherlock Holmes with a case. Through her conversation with Holmes, we come to know that in the past he had solved a case for Miss Morstan's employer, Mrs. Cecil Forrester. This is the first time we are introduced to Sherlock Holmes as a detective. Dr. Watson describes him as having clear-cut, hawk-like features. Upon listening to Miss Morstan's story, he is the one who questions her further. This helps the reader understand Holmes' importance in the extract, thus adding weight to his character. After Miss Morstan leaves, Holmes swings into action by going out to gain more information about the case. Upon his return, he shares his findings with Dr. Watson, which are quite commendable considering he was able to gain so much information in one afternoon. This further strengthens his character as the main lead in the story. An important point of observation is Holmes' stark refusal to let emotions come in the way of solving a case. This lack of emotion not only sets him apart from Watson, but also from the average reader, making him an extraordinary character. It is perhaps this complete focus on rationality and logic that enables Holmes to make quick advances in the case. On the carriage ride, Holmes deciphers the contents of the page that Miss Morstan shares with him, thus highlighting his intellectual prowess. On the second carriage ride, as the trio are being taken away to an unknown destination, Dr. Watson feels lost, but Holmes is able to clearly identify the places through which the carriage passes. Holmes is, therefore, depicted as the leading character in the extract through the qualities exhibited by him over the course of the story.

**(iv) Dr. Watson, the narrator, is one of the major characters in the novel. Illustrate**

**Ans.** Dr. John Watson is the narrator of the story. From his admiring description of Miss Mary Morstan and his appreciative expression of Holmes' abilities to his detailed account of the evening scene in London and his depiction of each emotion felt by the characters, Dr. Watson's insightful narration helps the readers experience the story through his eyes. However, Dr. Watson is not merely the narrator of the story; he is also Holmes' closest friend as well as his assistant. A doctor by profession, Watson is an empathetic man, who understands emotions and situations on a level that Holmes fails to understand. He is the second-most important character in the story, after Holmes. This is because he helps Holmes comprehend the sensitive aspects of situations, which is not Holmes' strong suit. Though Holmes is extraordinarily gifted, this does not stop Watson from arguing with him, making

him the only one capable of tolerating Holmes and proving that he is the perfect companion for the eccentric detective. His admiration for Miss Morstan shows us his romantic side and his hesitation to feel worthy of Miss Morstan's affection portrays him as a true gentleman. 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.

**(v) Holmes is always one step ahead of Dr. Watson in solving cases. Elucidate.**

**Ans.** Holmes possesses exceptional powers of observation and deduction. His rational thinking and logical approach help him analyze cases in a way that no one else can comprehend. The extent of Holmes' intellectual skills can be witnessed when he deciphers 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. Moreover, Sherlock's approach to his cases is devoid of emotion. He simply takes interest in the facts and does not leave room for personal bias to impair his judgment. 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 from a unique perspective. In Dr. Watson's opinion, Holmes is an automaton – a calculating machine – which makes him positively inhuman. 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. His emotional side leads him to sympathise and at times empathise with the clients. He excels in sensing a person's state of mind, a quality lacking in Holmes, which makes him more sensitive and humane. However, his personal opinion about everyone may be clouding his judgment, thus causing him to miss out on the subtle clues that Holmes never fails to pick. For instance, it takes Holmes a mere afternoon to make the important connection between Major Sholto and the anonymous sender of pearls, which Watson does not make even when Holmes presents him with the facts that he had obtained. This proves that Holmes is a master of deduction who thrives on mysteries and lives to resolve them. This is why Holmes is always one step ahead of Dr. Watson in solving cases.

**PLOT:**

**(A2) (i) Arrange the sentences in the correct sequence as per their occurrence in the extract:**

**(The answers are given directly and underlined.)**

**Ans.**

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

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

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

**Ans.** Mary comes to meet Sherlock with a case. For the past six years, an anonymous person has been sending a pearl to Mary on the same day each year. However, this year, she has received a letter 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. Though the sender warned Mary not to inform the police, he did tell her that she could have two friends accompany her. At this point, Mary is curious about the meeting but at the same time, the prospect of meeting a stranger alone is obviously unsettling. Thus, as a compromise, she decides to not call the police but enlists 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 the unveiling of the mystery of the anonymous sender and of the bigger, main plot of the novel.

b. 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 is because it hints that someone is trying to make amends for some wrongful action that has somehow harmed Mary.

**c. 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. Though at this point, the characters are unaware of even the existence of such a treasure, the paper is proof that the story narrated by Jonathan Small, upon his arrest, is actually true. It is also important because it is the first moment when the titular 'the sign of four' is introduced to the story. Finally, Sherlock makes many quick deductions from the paper which serves to demonstrate his intellectual abilities, yet again.

#### **SETTING:**

**(A3) (i) Cite various references (lines) from the extract that tell us about the time and period of the events.**

<b>Lines</b>	<b>Time and period</b>

**Ans.**

<b>Lines</b>	<b>Time and period</b>
<b>1. My father was an officer in an Indian regiment...</b>	<b>Prior to 1878; India under the rule of the British Empire</b>
<b>2. In the year 1878 my father, who was senior captain of his regiment,</b>	<b>1878; ten years ago, London</b>

obtained twelve months' leave and came home.	
3. This morning I received this letter, which you will perhaps read for yourself.	1888; present day morning, London
4. The envelope too, please. Postmark, London, S.W. Date, July 7.	1888; present day, London
5. He and papa were in command of the troops at the Andaman Islands, so they were thrown a great deal together.	Prior to 1878; India under the rule of the British Empire

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

**Ans.** The extract begins in present-day (1888) London when Miss Mary Morstan comes to meet Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson with a case. She begins to narrate the events that have occurred in the past. 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). The next reference to India is made when Mary says, “There was nothing in it to suggest a clue, – some clothes, some books, and a considerable number of curiosities from the Andaman Islands. He had been one of the officers in charge of the convict-guard there”, explaining that there was nothing in her father’s luggage, except his belongings and some curiosities from Andaman Islands, a place where he was stationed as one of the officers in charge of the convict-guard (before 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 scene is brought back to present-day London (1888) in the line – “A singular case,” remarked Holmes - as Holmes listens to the details of Mary’s case and admits that is indeed a remarkable one. In the evening, Mary meets Holmes and Dr. Watson for the second time and we are taken once again to the past where a reference has been made to India – “He and papa were in command of the troops at the Andaman Islands, so they were thrown a great deal together.” — where she tells



Holmes and Watson about how Major Sholto and her father were in command of the troops at the Andaman Islands and hence spent a great deal of time in each other's company (before 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.

**(iii) 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.** As the trio headed towards the Lyceum Theatre in their cab, Dr. Watson described the September evening as dull, with a thick misty fog that lay low upon the great city and mud-coloured clouds slowly moving over the muddy streets. The first place that they come across is the Strand, where the street lamps look like misty spots of dim light, throwing a faint circular glimmer upon the wet pavement. The bright yellow lights in the shop-windows shone out into the steamy, foggy air and threw a misty, irregular glow across the crowded street. The faces of the countless people, who passed through these narrow bars of light, seemed eerie and ghostlike. The trio then reaches Lyceum Theatre, where the side-entrances were already crowded with people while horse-drawn carriages and four-wheelers constantly flowed at the front and shirtfronted men and beshawled and bediamonded women alighted from these rides. From 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, which looked like the monstrous tentacles of the city. Their journey ended in this neighborhood where they drew up at the third house on a new terrace.

**(iv) 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 set against the backdrop of the Victorian Empire. Back then, India was under colonial rule and was a very important colony for the British. Often called as "the crown jewel", India was associated with wealth and riches. Under colonial rule, British officers were often stationed in India. In this particular extract, Mary's father, Captain Morstan of the 34th Bombay Infantry, was stationed in India at the penal colony of the Andaman Islands. Her father's friend, Major Sholto, was also stationed in the same regiment. Thus, the theme of imperialism is evident in the details of the extract. In addition, when Holmes, Watson and Mary Morstan arrive at the house of the anonymous sender of pearls, Watson finds the presence of an 'Indian' servant to be strange. This, too, hints at the imperialist attitudes of Englishmen who viewed people from the east (Indians) with suspicion.

**Wealth:**

Another theme of the extract is that of wealth. The pearls, which Miss Morstan receives, represent the theme of wealth. Wealth is also symbolized in the setting of the Lyceum theatre, where the rich and affluent arrive in all their glory. This setting hints at the bigger theme of the Agra treasure, which dominates the novel and of which the characters have no idea.

**Fear of anything foreign:**

The disappearance of Captain Morstan as soon as he returned from India, indicates that the events that transpired in India are somehow responsible for his unfortunate fate. Thus, from the point of view of the main characters, 'abroad' (India) is associated with the theme of evil. Similarly, the appearance of an "Oriental figure" (referring to a person from the East; in this case, India) against the setting of a third-rate house in a suburb of south London leaves the characters wary of his presence. This highlights the biased attitudes of the main characters towards "the East" due to which they view it as a place of intrigue and suspicion. In addition, the "oriental figure", who is the servant of the man who sends the anonymous letters, uses the word "Sahib" to refer to his master. This further alienates him and categorizes him as foreign to the readers, making them doubtful of his presence at the house. The writer has thus weaved the theme of "fear of anything foreign", which was prevalent at the time, into this extract by the way of the male servant.

**Mystery:**

Captain Morstan was a British officer who was stationed in India and was in charge of the convict-guard at the Andaman Islands. His immediate disappearance on

returning to London suggests that his disappearance is connected to the events that occurred in India and contributes to the mystery that Holmes is trying to solve. Because the characters consider India as “foreign”, elements and characters associated with India are viewed as mysterious and intriguing. Another example of this is the paper found in Captain Morstan’s desk which bears the name of four men. Not only do the contents of the paper not make sense to the characters but also the names of the men, being of Indian origin, contribute to the sense of mystery due to their “foreign” nature. Similarly, the presence of an Indian servant at the house in south London represents another link to the “East” (India) and is viewed as strange by the main characters. Finally, the gothic description of London as the character's journey to meet the anonymous sender adds to the theme of mystery by creating a dark and gloomy image of London.

**Justice:**

The assumption that Major’s Sholto’s heir is trying to be just to Mary by offering her pearls as compensation highlights the theme of justice. This, too, is related to the events that happened in India, because Major Sholto denies 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, it is in London where the majority of the action occurs. In this particular extract, two different sides of London have been shown – the fashionable north and west London with the Langham Hotel, the Strand, and Lyceum Theatre frequented by the wealthy crowd and the unfashionable south London suburbs, lined with dull brick houses and third rate two-storied villas. Over the course of the story, all the characters in the story eventually end up in London as this is where the climax of the story takes place.

**(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”. The writer has also used the sophisticated upper class of London that arrives in cabs and horse drawn carriages outside the Lyceum Theatre as a

symbol of wealth, to hint at the riches that the treasure has the potential to bestow upon Mary Morstan, about which she has no idea.

**(c) 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, the place is central to all the drama that unfolds in the novel. The treasure, which drives the actions of the characters in the story, comes from Agra. The chain of events that alters the lives of all the major characters in the story sets off in Agra. Even in the extract, the pearls that Mary receives are from a chaplet that was a part of the Agra treasure and the piece of paper that Mary shares with Holmes contains the blueprint of the Agra Fort, the original hiding place of the treasure.

**(e) 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 charge of the convict-guard in Andaman Islands; and the second time when she discloses that Major Sholto, her father's friend, was also in charge of the convict-guard in the Andaman Islands. In the context of the novel, the Andaman Islands are vital to the story as this is where the lives of Captain Morstan and Major Sholto get entangled in the Agra treasure crime, thus setting off a disastrous chain of events.

**(vi) Complete:**

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

**(The answer is given directly.)**

<b>India</b>	<b>Importance</b>	<b>London</b>	<b>Importance</b>
Andaman Islands	Major Sholto and Captain Morstan were stationed here and in charge of the troops; Jonathan Small	Baker Street	The residence of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson. This was the place which Mary

	was also imprisoned here.		Morstan came to, to consult Holmes.
Agra	Jonathan Small was a gatekeeper at the Agra fortress when he was forced to be an accomplice in the theft of the Rajah's jewels.	Langham Hotel	This was the place Mary's father stayed at when he came to London. He invited Mary to the hotel to meet him; but disappeared before her arrival.
Bombay (Now Mumbai)	Major Sholto, and Captain Morstan were both from the regiment 'the 34th Bombay Infantry'.	Lyceum Theatre	Mary was supposed to meet the writer of the anonymous letter or his messenger at the third pillar from the left outside the Lyceum Theatre.
-	-	River Thames	Jonathan Small, who tried to escape by boat along the river Thames, was captured. His accomplice Tonga was killed.

#### THEME:

(A4) (i) Write in brief the theme of the extract.

Ans.

#### ☺ Wealth:

When Mary Morstan visits Holmes and Watson to enlist their help, Watson describes her as one "dressed in the most perfect taste" while also appearing to be of "limited means". Her simple, but beautiful appearance is set up in contrast to the potential riches of the Agra treasure that she might receive. Morstan then outlines the details of her case, wherein she receives a mysterious letter from an anonymous person asking her to meet him. This anonymous sender has been sending her pearls for the last six years. These precious pearls represent the theme of wealth. Finally, the meeting point suggested by the sender of the letter is 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.

#### ☺ Logic versus Emotion:

Another evident theme in the extract is that of logic versus emotion. On the one hand, the narrator of the story, Dr. Watson, admires Miss Morstan's beauty and is attracted to her; and on the other, Holmes views Miss Morstan as a mere unit or factor in a problem. Dr. Watson represents the sensitive, emotional, and empathetic

side of man, while Holmes embodies the analytical, rational, and intellectual side.

☺ **Imperialism:**

Miss Morstan's revelation of her father and Major Sholto being officers in the 34th Bombay Infantry, represents the theme of imperialism. The story has been written during a time when the Victorian Empire was flourishing. India was under British rule and a lot of British officers were stationed in the Indian colony. In addition, the suspicious nature of the main characters towards India and those associated with it (the male servant) highlights the imperialist attitude of the British, which was common at the time.

☺ **Justice:**

Sherlock deduces that Major Sholto's heir knows something about Captain Morstan's disappearance and is trying to compensate for the loss suffered by Mary all those years ago. This represents the theme of justice in the extract.

☺ **Victorian Gothic and mystery:**

The gothic theme has also been woven into the extract by the writer's description of London as being enveloped in a "dense drizzly fog", with the street lamps throwing "splotches of diffused light" and the glare from the shop windows creating a "murky shifting radiance" across the crowded street. This kind of dark and gloomy setting also adds to the theme of mystery that is central to this novel. The "monster tentacles" also refer to the gothic style, which was associated with evil and monstrosity.

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

**Ans.** Miss Mary Morstan comes to meet Sherlock Holmes with a case. She narrates the story of her father's disappearance under mysterious circumstances ten years ago. She then shares the intriguing 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. They both agree and decide to meet Mary at six in the evening to head to the place of the meeting together.

**(iii) 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. However, the central idea that dominates the extract is that of justice. All the events in the given extract are the result of the anonymous letter requesting a meeting with Miss Mary Morstan. This letter has been sent by the same person who

has been sending the pearls to Miss Morstan for the past six years. As deduced by Holmes, the act can be viewed as compensation being given for the loss suffered by Miss Morstan, because the letter mentions her as a “wronged woman”. Miss Morstan’s decision to seek Holmes’ assistance and the decision to go to the meeting place are the outcomes of the letter sent by the anonymous person.

(iv) Give reasons:

(The answers are given directly and underlined.)

Statement	Reason/s
(a) Miss Morstan plans to meet Sherlock Holmes	<u>An anonymous person who has been sending precious pearls to Miss Morstan through the mail since the past six years has now sent a letter requesting her to come for a meeting. Though he asks her not to call the police, he tells her that she can bring two friends. Fearing for her safety, but at the same time curious about the outcome of the event, Morstan decides to enlist Holmes’ help, who is known to be a master detective.</u>
(b) Miss Morstan gives the reference of Mrs. Cecil Forrester	<u>Mrs. Cecil Forrester, who is Miss Morstan’s employer, had been impressed with Holmes’ kindness and skill back when he had helped her to unravel a little domestic complication and it is through her that Morstan hears of Sherlock Holmes.</u>
(c) It’s a singular case	<u>Ten years ago, Miss Mary Morstan’s father, Captain Morstan, had just returned to London and had asked Mary to come and meet him at the Langham Hotel. However, before Mary could meet him, he disappeared under mysterious circumstances. There were no clues hinting at what might have happened and her father’s only friend in London, Major Sholto, whom the Captain might have met, declared that he didn’t even know that the Captain was in London. The absurdity of the details involving Captain Morstan’s disappearance causes Holmes to admit that it is indeed an extraordinary one.</u>
(d) Holmes needed some references	<u>Holmes was intrigued after hearing Miss Morstan’s story. They had decided to go to the meeting place in the evening. However, before that, Holmes wanted to get as much information as possible about the case. Therefore, he went to look at the backfiles of the Times to find more details pertaining to the case.</u>
(e) Miss Morstan received a pearl every year	<u>Based on Holmes’ deduction, the pearls were being sent to Miss Morstan as compensation for being deprived of her father. Since Miss Morstan started receiving the pearls shortly after Major Sholto’s death, Holmes had reason to believe that</u>



	<u>Sholto's heir knew something about Miss Morstan's father's disappearance and was thus trying to compensate for the "wrong" that had been done to her all those years ago.</u>
<b>(f) The coachman confirmed that neither of Miss Morstan's companion was a police officer</b>	<u>The letter from the anonymous sender clearly stated that Miss Morstan should not inform the police, as that would ruin everything. However, if she was unwilling to come alone, she could bring two friends with her. The coachman, acting on behalf of the anonymous sender, was simply trying to confirm that the condition mentioned in the letter had been met.</u>

#### LANGUAGE:

**(A5) (i) 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.** This line is spoken by Dr. Watson when Holmes tells him that he didn't really observe Miss Mary Morstan's attractiveness. Though Dr. Watson knows Holmes really well, he finds it astonishing that he can be so inhuman as to not notice beauty. Holmes' character is known for having razor-sharp intelligence, a keen eye, and extraordinary powers of deduction. However, the character is also emotionally detached and views his clients as mere units or factors in a problem. Holmes believes that emotional qualities get in the way of logical reasoning and he does not want his judgment to be biased by the personal qualities of his clients. Since humans are, by their very nature, emotional beings, Watson compares Holmes to a machine because of his ability to remain unaffected by emotion.

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

**Ans.** This line is spoken by Dr. Watson when Holmes shares his findings with Watson. Upon hearing that Miss Morstan has been receiving the pearls as compensation for the deprivation of her father, Watson is surprised. He is curious to know what justice the letter sent by the anonymous person could be referring to because the only injustice that Miss Morstan could have suffered is the loss of her father.

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

**Ans.** This line was spoken by Sherlock Holmes as the trio was being taken towards south London. Holmes could pin-point the exact streets through which the carriage passed. From Wordsworth Road, to Lark Hall Lane, to Stockwell Place, to Robert

Street and then to Cold Harbour Lane, 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.

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

Ans.

Dialogue	Speaker	To Whom it is said	Tone, Style, Significance, etc.
"...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, Complimentary Style: Exposition Significance: Miss Morstan says this to inform Holmes 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, Courteous 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: Intriguing, Inquisitive Style: Interrogative Significance: Holmes is genuinely impressed by the uniqueness of Miss Morstan's case. He wants to know about

			the event that has made Miss Morstan approach him now.
<b>“Are you the parties who come with Miss Morstan?”</b>	The coachman	Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson	Tone: Enquiring Style: Clarifying Significance: The coachman, acting on behalf of the anonymous sender of the letter, wanted to make sure that Holmes and Watson were Miss Morstan’s companions as the letter mentioned that Miss Morstan could bring two friends in case she was distrustful.
<b>“The Sahib awaits you.”</b>	The khitmutgar	The trio – Miss Mary Morstan, Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson	Tone: Polite, Welcoming Style: Direct, Informative Significance: This dialogue highlights that the anonymous sender of the letter, who has invited Miss Morstan, is waiting for her. This dialogue is also indicative of the influence of the servant's native language. The word ‘Sahib’ is the Hindi term for ‘Sir’. The servant language emphasizes the extent to which he seems out-of-place in the suburban London setting.