

A Christmas Carol

Revision for AQA GCSE Literature



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Publications

Acknowledgements

Activities by Andrew McCallum

Cover: Rebecca Scambler

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Teachers' Notes

These revision materials have been designed to use with students sitting the AQA GCSE English Literature paper. They have all been written with the assessment objectives that apply to the study of a 19th-century novel in mind. These are as follows:

Assessment Objective	Marks awarded
AO1 ■ Read, understand and respond to texts. Students should be able to: – maintain a critical style and develop an informed personal response – use textual references, including quotations, to support and illustrate interpretations.	12
AO2 ■ Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meanings and effects, using relevant subject terminology where appropriate.	12
AO3 ■ Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written.	6

While we recognise the importance of students understanding the assessment objectives, we also believe that separating them out too systematically into their constituent parts can hinder a proper understanding of the text – and so a coherent response in the final examination. With this in mind, several of the activities encompass all three assessment objectives at once. Consequently, you will find within the material activities that model and encourage the exploration of all of the following in different ways and at different times:

- writing in a critical style
- developing a personal response
- using textual references and quotations
- developing interpretations
- analysing language, form and structure
- using subject terminology
- exploring context

Teachers are free to photocopy and distribute the resources among students within their own institution, or to simply use them in the classroom. In the latter instance, we have designed several of the activities in ways that encourage detailed discussion about the novel. We believe this will help students extend their long-term memory of particular details and ideas, develop their understanding of personal response and recognise different possibilities available to them.

WHAT CAN YOU REMEMBER ABOUT *A CHRISTMAS CAROL*?

Total Recall: Factual Questions

There are lots of ways that you can use the questions on pages 6 and 7 to test your factual knowledge of *A Christmas Carol*. Here are some suggestions:

What I know, sort of know and don't know

1. Read a stave that you need to revise.
2. Read through the questions about this stave.
3. Divide the questions into ones you are sure you know the answer to, ones you sort of know and ones you do not know.
4. Join with a partner and together see if you can work out the answers to all the questions.
5. Finally identify the ones you are still not sure about and ask your teacher for the answer sheet.

Testing a partner

1. In pairs, choose a stave that you want to revise. (You can also do this activity for the whole book all at once.)
2. Look at the questions for your stave, or staves, and, in your head, place them in order of difficulty.
3. Take it in turns to ask your partner what you think is the hardest question available, until you have run out of questions to ask.
4. Keep a score and see who gets the most correct answers.

Which facts are most important?

1. With a partner, work through questions for a stave.
2. When you are confident that you know all of the answers, decide which five facts in that stave are the most significant to remember.

Generating Knowledge

Discussing *A Christmas Carol*

These questions have been designed for you to discuss in a number of different ways. It is important that you compare your ideas with others in order to generate as much knowledge as possible around each one.

Make sure that your teacher sometimes joins in too as they will have a particular expertise in studying literature that will add to the knowledge and understanding in the room.

■ Here are some of the ways you might use these questions:

- Have a go at answering all of the questions, focus on a few that you select yourself, or answer ones set by your teacher.
- Try to think of 3-5 things to say in response to each question that you tackle.
- In a small group, take a question each and take it in turns to try to talk non-stop about it for one minute.
- Take the same question as other members of your group and spend a few minutes writing a response. Read your different responses to each other and see how you have each approached it differently or in similar ways.
- In small groups, pick a question at random. See who can be the first to come up with five things to say about it.

Stave One

1. What do you notice about the narrative voice in the first few pages? You might like to comment on how it is established – tone, variation, and so on.
2. What examples of repetition can you find in the first few pages? Why do you think Dickens uses so much repetition here? What is its effect?
3. What do you notice about the way that the weather is described in this stave? What effect do these descriptions have on the reader?
4. What different ideas about Christmas do Scrooge and his nephew have? What is the effect of placing these side-by-side at the start of the novel?
5. The first stave establishes this as a ghost story. But is it scary? If so, how? If not, why not? And what kind of story is it exactly?
6. Why do you think Dickens chooses to have ‘two portly gentlemen’ come to Scrooge to ask him to contribute to charity? What is their effect on the reader?
7. How is Marley’s ghost presented? What emotions might readers feel about this ghost?
8. What does this first stave have to say about human nature?
9. How does Dickens show his skill as a storyteller in this opening stave, particularly in terms of building expectations?

Stave Two

1. What does the Ghost of Christmas Past look like? How does it match with your idea about what a ghost should look like?
2. Come up with ideas about why this stave might be criticised as being too sentimental.
3. How is young Scrooge presented? What emotions might readers feel about him?
4. How are the Fezziwigs portrayed and what is their significance in the novel?

KEY ASPECTS OF A *CHRISTMAS CAROL*

Character: Scrooge

‘Oh! But he was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone, Scrooge!’

This quotation comes from a long, descriptive passage at the start of the novel that leaves the reader in no doubt about Scrooge’s mean character. Most of the rest of the novel, however is about his *redemption*: how he comes to be saved from his own miserly and miserable life.

There are two lists on page 11, one giving examples of Scrooge’s miserliness and how he was perceived at that time in his life, the other showing moments on his path to redemption.

- Choose three from each list that make you feel sympathy for Scrooge.
- Choose three from the first list that you think make him sound the meanest.
- Choose three from the second list that you think most make him sound like a reformed character.
- Choose points from both lists that make him sound like a man psychologically scarred by various events in his life.
- Choose points from both lists that make his portrayal seem like a caricature rather than realistic.
- Choose what you consider to be the five most important points from each list.

Revision for AQA GCSE English Language

Acknowledgements

Written and edited by Andrew McCallum

Cover: Rebecca Scambler

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Introduction

The GCSE English Language examination is unusual in that it does not require any revision of content. Consequently, these 'revision' materials are designed to boost students' abilities in tackling various aspects of the reading and writing sections of both papers.

It is worth bearing in mind the following when using these materials:

- Teachers can take students through the activities sequentially, or in any order they wish. They can also choose to omit certain activities and add in different ones of their own.
- Teachers can use the materials in conjunction with the sample texts and examination papers included, or with alternative texts of their own choice.
- The materials are designed to remind students about key aspects of their exams, but also to help them to engage with those aspects in ways that will improve their general understanding and confidence.
- The materials can be used in classrooms, or photocopied for students to use at home as part of their general revision.
- The materials can be shared across a school or college, with teachers and students, but cannot be disseminated more widely.
- The materials have been designed using sample materials freely available on the AQA website as models. They are not in any way endorsed by AQA and teachers should use them alongside any guidance available from the official awarding body.

Reading (50%) Read and understand a range of texts to:	
AO1	Identify and interpret explicit and implicit information and ideas Select and synthesise evidence from different texts
AO2	Explain, comment on and analyse how writers use language and structure to achieve effects and influence readers, using relevant subject terminology to support their views
AO3	Compare writers' ideas and perspectives, as well as how these are conveyed, across two or more texts
AO4	Evaluate texts critically and support this with appropriate textual references
Writing (50%)	
AO5	Communicate clearly, effectively and imaginatively, selecting and adapting tone, style and register for different forms, purposes and audiences Organise information and ideas, using structural and grammatical features to support coherence and cohesion of texts
AO6	Candidates must use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation. (This requirement must constitute 20% of the marks for each specification as a whole.)

SAMPLE PAPERS FOR AQA ENGLISH LANGUAGE GCSE (9-1)

- Paper 1: Explorations in creative reading and writing
- Paper 2: Writers' viewpoints and perspectives

Paper 1: Explorations in Creative Reading and Writing

Time: 1 hour 45 minutes

[NB. These materials have been devised following the model offered by the awarding body in their sample materials. They have not been approved by the awarding body and teachers should use them in conjunction with their own understanding of the AB's assessment criteria.]

Source A

From *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*, by Richard Flanagan

This passage is from a novel set in Tasmania, Australia. In this part of the story, set in the late 1940s, Dorrigo Evans and his family, trapped in a car, escape from a ferocious forest fire.

A fireball, the size of a trolley bus and as blue as gas flame, appeared as if by magic on the road and rolled towards them. As the Ford Mercury swerved around it and straightened back up, Dorrigo found he had no choice but to ignore the burning debris that appeared out of the smoke and hurtled at them – sticks, branches, palings – sometimes hitting and bouncing off the car. He grunted as he worked the column shift up and down, spinning the big steering wheel hard left and right, white-walled tyres squealing on bubbling black bitumen, the noise only occasionally audible in the cacophony of flame roar and wind shriek, the weird machine gun-like cracking of branches above exploding. 5

They came over a rise to see a huge burning tree falling across the road a hundred yards or so in front of them. Flames flared up high along the tree trunk as it bounced on landing, its burning crown settling in a neat front yard to create an instant bonfire that merged into a burning house. Wedging his knee into the door, Dorrigo pushed with all his strength on the brake pedal. The Ford Mercury went into a four-wheel slide, spinning sideways and skidding straight towards the tree, slewing to a halt only yards from the flaring tree trunk. 10 15

No one spoke.

Hands wet with sweat on the wheel, panting heavily, Dorrigo Evans weighed their options. They were all bad. The road out in either direction was now completely cut off – by the burning tree in front of them and the fire front behind them. He wiped his hands in turn on his shirt and trousers. They were trapped. He turned to his children in the back seat. He felt sick. They were holding each other, eyes white and large in their sooty faces. 20

Hold on, he said.

He slammed the car into reverse, backed up towards the fire front a short distance, then took off. He had enough speed up to smash down the picket fence in the garden where the burning tree crown had landed. They were heading straight into the bonfire. Yelling to the others to get down, he double-declutched the engine into first, let the clutch out and flattened the accelerator. 25

Section A: Reading

Answer all questions in this section.

You are advised to spend about 45 minutes on this section.

[N.B. Each question specifies the Assessment Objective it is being marked against. This does NOT happen in the awarding body sample materials.]

1.

- Read again the first part of the Source from lines 1 to 9.
- List four things from this part of the text about Dorrigo's car.

[4 marks, AO1]

2.

- Look in detail at this extract from lines 10 to 24 of the Source:

A fireball, the size of a trolley bus and as blue as gas flame, appeared as if by magic on the road and rolled towards them. As the Ford Mercury swerved around it and straightened back up, Dorrigo found he had no choice but to ignore the burning debris that appeared out of the smoke and hurtled at them – sticks, branches, palings – sometimes hitting and bouncing off the car. He grunted as he worked the column shift up and down, spinning the big steering wheel hard left and right, white-walled tyres squealing on bubbling black bitumen, the noise only occasionally audible in the cacophony of flame roar and wind shriek, the weird machine gun-like cracking of branches above exploding. 5

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No one spoke.

Hands wet with sweat on the wheel, panting heavily, Dorrigo Evans weighed their options. They were all bad. The road out in either direction was now completely cut off – by the burning tree in front of them and the fire front behind them. He wiped his hands in turn on his shirt and trousers. They were trapped. He turned to his children in the back seat. He felt sick. They were holding each other, eyes white and large in their sooty faces. 20

Hold on, he said.

- How does the writer use language here to describe the danger faced by Dorrigo and his family?

You could include the writer's choice of:

- words and phrases
- language features and techniques
- sentence forms

[8 marks, AO2]

Section A: Reading

Answer all questions in this section.

You are advised to spend about 45 minutes on this section.

[N.B. Each question specifies the Assessment Objective it is being marked against. This does NOT happen in the awarding body sample materials.]

1.

- Read again the first part of **Source B** from **lines 1 to 11**.
- Choose **four** statements below which are **TRUE**.
- Shade the boxes of the ones that you think are true. Choose a maximum of four statements.

[4 marks, AO1]

A	It was unusual that the author agreed to play pool with her husband.	
B	The author is good at lots of sports.	
C	The author is determined to become a good pool player.	
D	The author is asking how to bring about change that makes people feel good.	
E	The author was not very good at pool when she started playing.	
F	The author's husband is a professional pool player.	
G	The author is married to a sports journalist.	
H	The author usually accepts a new challenge.	

Writing About a Single Sentence

Sometimes you might focus on writing about the effect of a single sentence.

Here's a particularly evocative sentence from *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*. (You will need to have read the whole of the extract to understand its context.)

As the Ford Mercury swerved around it and straightened back up, Dorrigo found he had no choice but to ignore the burning debris that appeared out of the smoke and hurtled at them – sticks, branches, palings – sometimes hitting and bouncing off the car.

- Below are some notes about the sentence, some technical, some about its effect. Use the notes to write an answer to the question:

How does the writer convey a sense of danger in this sentence?

You do not have to use all of the notes if you think some of them are not particularly useful to your answer.

- Next, find another sentence from the same extract that also conveys a sense of danger and write a response to the same question for that sentence.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is long and slithery, just like the path the car takes through the burning debris.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Placing the car at the start of the sentence in an extended adverbial clause, gives the sense that the subject (Dorrigo) is not fully in control.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Placing the objects that are hurtling at the car in parenthesis (' – sticks, branches, palings - ') increases the impression that Dorrigo has no control over what is going on – they are outside the car, just as they are outside the main part of the sentence.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is a complex sentence.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It uses lots of subordination.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The car is foregrounded in the sentence.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The sentence uses powerful verbs to do with force and movement.

Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde

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AO2 <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meanings and effects, using relevant subject terminology where appropriate.	12
AO3 <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Show understanding of the relationships between texts and the contexts in which they were written.	6

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- writing in a critical style
- developing a personal response
- using textual references and quotations
- developing interpretations
- analysing language, form and structure
- using subject terminology
- exploring context

Teachers are free to photocopy and distribute the resources among students within their own institution, or to simply use them in the classroom. In the latter instance, we have designed several of the activities in ways that encourage detailed discussion about the novel. We believe this will help students extend their long-term memory of particular details and ideas, develop their understanding of personal response and recognise different possibilities available to them.

WHAT CAN YOU REMEMBER ABOUT *STRANGE CASE OF DR JEKYLL & MR HYDE?*

Total Recall

There are lots of ways that you can use the questions on pages 6-7 to test your factual knowledge of *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. Here are some suggestions.

What I know, sort of know and don't know

1. Read the questions before re-reading the book, or individual chapters, and identify gaps in your knowledge.
2. Read a chapter, or cluster of chapters where you have gaps in your knowledge.
3. Re-read the questions about the chapter, or chapters.
4. Divide the questions into ones you are sure you know the answer to, ones you sort of know and ones you do not know.
5. Join with a partner and together see if you can work out the answers to all the questions.
6. Finally identify the ones you are still not sure about and ask your teacher for the answers (available on pages 40-41).

Testing a partner

1. In pairs, choose a chapter or cluster of chapters that you want to revise. (You can also do this activity for the whole book all at once.)
2. Look at the questions for your chapter, or chapters, and, in your head, place them in order of difficulty.
3. Take it in turns to ask your partner what you think is the hardest question available, until you have run out of questions to ask.
4. Keep a score and see who gets the most correct answers.

Which facts are most important?

1. With a partner, work through questions for a chapter, or cluster of chapters.
2. When you are confident that you know all of the answers, decide which five facts in that chapter, or cluster, are the most significant to remember.

Generating Knowledge

Discussing *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*

These questions have been designed for you to discuss in a number of different ways. It is important that you compare your ideas with others, including your teacher, in order to generate as much knowledge as possible around each one.

- Here are some of the ways you might use these questions:
 - Have a go at answering all of the questions, focus on a few that you select yourself, or answer ones set by your teacher.
 - Try to think of 3-5 things to say in response to each question that you tackle.
 - In a small group, take a question each and take it in turns to try to talk non-stop about it for one minute.
 - Take the same question as other members of your group and spend a few minutes writing a response. Read your different responses to each other and see how you have each approached it differently or in similar ways.
 - In small groups, pick a question at random. See who can be the first to come up with five things to say about it.

Chapter 1

1. Looking back on this chapter after reading the whole book, what clues does Stevenson include about what is going to happen? How effective is he at grabbing the attention of his readers?
2. How does Stevenson present the relationship between Utterson and Enfield? Is there anything that you think would be surprising about their behaviour for a modern reader? Are there any unanswered questions about their behaviour for readers from any period?
3. How effectively does Stevenson establish the setting in this chapter? You might like to think in particular about his use of contrasts and his description of the house into which Hyde goes.

Chapter 2

1. In what ways do the first two chapters develop like a detective story? In what ways does it develop differently?
2. Utterson calls on Dr Lanyon unannounced after midnight, yet this is not presented by Stevenson as unusual. Why do you think he has set the opening action at night-time?
3. What impression does Stevenson create of Utterson up to this point? You might, for example, think about why Utterson is so interested in Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde.

Chapter 3

1. In this short chapter we meet Dr Jekyll for the first time. What impression does Stevenson give of his character? How does his behaviour add to the element of mystery in the story as a whole?

Chapter 4

1. This chapter pays a lot of attention to the weather and to describing the part of London in which Hyde lives. How are both the weather and setting presented in order to create a Gothic effect?

KEY ASPECTS OF *STRANGE CASE OF DR JEKYLL AND MR HYDE*

Characters

The Victorian gentlemen

As well as the character of Jekyll, several other Victorian 'gentlemen' feature in the novel. Much of it is told from the point of view of Mr. Utterson, including what Mr. Enfield tells him. He also speaks to Dr. Lanyon, who in turn provides the narration for part of the story.

Some readers find these different characters difficult to tell apart. The statements below are designed to help you to think about why this might be and to explore the 'gentlemen' characters in the novel in more detail.

- In a pair, or small group, discuss reasons why you agree or disagree with the statements. Make sure to relate your responses to what happens in the novel.
- Choose a statement that interests you and find a short passage in the novel, about 200-300 words long that exemplifies it.
- Write a paragraph or two analysing closely how your passage exemplifies the statement and read this to the rest of the class.
- Draw on the ideas you have heard to write a full response to this question:

'How does Stevenson portray the role of the Victorian gentleman in *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*?'

Stevenson makes all of the gentlemen in his novel behave in similar ways to suggest the strength of the pressures on them to conform.

The gentlemen in the novel all repress their true emotions and selves: this is why they are so interested in Hyde, because he represents everything they are not allowed to be.

Part of the novel's power comes from what we are *not* told about the lives of the gentlemen. E.g. what does Jekyll do when he acts as 'an ordinary secret sinner'? Why do Utterson and Enfield meet so late at night? And why is Lanyon so against Jekyll's medical experiments?

Stevenson presents the Victorian gentlemen as relatively dull characters in order to make Hyde even more interesting.

Stevenson creates sympathy for the Victorian gentlemen because it is obvious that they lead frustrated lives.

The Sign of the Four

Revision for AQA GCSE Literature

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Activities by Richard Vardy

Cover: Rebecca Scambler

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- exploring context

Teachers are free to photocopy and distribute the resources among students within their own institution, or to simply use them in the classroom. In the latter instance, we have designed several of the activities in ways that encourage detailed discussion about the novel. We believe this will help students extend their long-term memory of particular details and ideas, develop their understanding of personal response and recognise different possibilities available to them.

WHAT CAN YOU REMEMBER ABOUT *THE SIGN OF THE FOUR*?

Total Recall: Factual Questions

There are many ways you can use the questions on pages 6-9 to test your factual knowledge of *The Sign of the Four*. Here are some suggestions:

What I know, sort of know and don't know

1. Read a chapter you are uncertain about or you need to revise.
2. Read through the questions about this chapter.
3. Divide the questions into those you are sure you know the answer to, those you sort of know and those you definitely do not know.
4. Join with a partner and together see if you can work out the answers to all the questions
5. Finally, identify the questions you are still unsure about and ask your teacher for the answer sheet.

Testing a partner

1. In pairs, choose a chapter you want to revise (or you can also do this activity for the whole book).
2. Look at the questions for your chapter – or chapters – and, in your head, place them in order of difficulty.
3. Take it in turns to ask your partner what you think is the most difficult question available, until you have run out of questions to ask.
4. Keep a score and see who gets the most correct answers.

Which facts are most important?

1. With a partner, work through the questions for a chapter.
2. When you are confident you know all of the answers, decide which three facts in that chapter are the most significant to remember.

The questions (answers on pages 47-50)

Chapter 1 – The Science of Deduction

1. What is the first thing we see Holmes do in the novel?
2. What is the name of the previous book (brochure) Watson wrote in relation to a Sherlock Holmes case?
3. How does Holmes know that Watson has been to the Post Office?
4. What object does Watson give to Holmes to test his skills of deduction?
5. What does Watson initially accuse Holmes of when Holmes passes the test?
6. What distinctive Victorian London weather phenomenon does Holmes describe towards the end of the chapter?
7. Why is Holmes so despondent towards the end of the chapter?
8. Who arrives at the end of this chapter?

Chapter 2 – The Statement of the Case

1. What are Watson's first impressions of Mary Morstan?
2. Who recommended Holmes to Mary Morstan?
3. Captain Morstan obtained twelve months' leave to come home. What happened to him after he arrived in London?
4. What does Mary Morstan receive on the same date every year?
5. Why does Holmes think Mary Morstan is a 'model client'?
6. How does Holmes work out that all the letters are from the same person?
7. Holmes fails to notice that Mary Morstan was an attractive woman. What does Watson call her as a result?
8. At the end of the chapter, Watson sits in the window with a book in his hand. His thoughts, however, are not with the book. What does he think about instead?

Chapter 3 – In Quest of a Solution

1. What mood is Holmes in when he returns at the beginning of the chapter?
2. Just before they leave, what does Holmes take out of his drawer and put in his pocket?
3. Miss Morstan hands Holmes a piece of paper with *The Sign of the Four* on it. What else is on the paper? Name one thing.
4. Jonathan Small is one of 'the four'. Can you name two of the remaining three?
5. What is the weather like when they travel through London?
6. What does Holmes say whilst they are in the carriage?
7. They arrive in a particularly wealthy street in London. True or false?
8. At the end of the chapter, a servant opens the door. Name one thing the servant is wearing.

Revising Contexts: Detective Fiction

'Crime fiction confirms our belief, despite some evidence to the contrary, that we live in a rational, comprehensible, and moral universe.'

P.D. James, Crime Fiction Writer

Detective fiction was enormously popular in the Victorian age. The new middle-class Victorian readers were fascinated not just by crime but by satisfying solutions. The genre is popularly believed to have begun in 1841 with Edgar Allan Poe's Dupin detective stories – Conan Doyle had certainly read and enjoyed them.

Like all genres, a shared set of common features began to emerge; many continue today in modern crime novels and TV series.

- Based on your own background studies of detective fiction, and/or your own familiarity with the genre through books and television, work in pairs to list some of the key features of detective fiction.
- Read the list of features of detective fiction on page 15 and compare with your own.
- Now apply these features to *The Sign of the Four*, using the table on pages 16-17 to help you.
- In pairs, compare your findings. Does *The Sign of the Four* contain all the elements we might expect in detective fiction?
- Finally, as a class, agree upon the four most significant passages in the novel that clearly confirm *The Sign of the Four* as a typical example of detective fiction. Think about what you could write about genre in an essay if one of those passages came up in the exam.

Revising Contexts: British Empire and Victorian Attitudes to Women

The statements on page 19 are on two influential contexts of *The Sign of the Four*:

- the British Empire
 - Victorian attitudes to women.
- Individually, select a statement from each section you find to be the most controversial or interesting.
 - In groups or as a class, share and discuss your reasons for selecting that statement.
 - You will be assigned one of the two sections. For your assigned section, select three statements. For each statement, find a key passage from the novel which most closely relates to it.

For example:

'Indian art and culture was fashionable and in many of the homes of Britain's middle-classes there was a taste for the 'exotic'

The description of Thaddeus Sholto's apartment at the beginning of Chapter 4, with its tiger-skins and Oriental vase, shows the fashionable influence of Indian culture.

- Find someone who looked at the alternative section and share your ideas.
- Finally, plan or write one of the following two essays:
 - Write about how Conan Doyle presents attitudes towards women in a single passage and in the novel as a whole.

OR

- Write about how Conan Doyle presents attitudes towards Non-Europeans in a single passage and in the novel as a whole.
- Swap essays across the class so that you get to read at least one essay with the same title as yours and one with the other title.