

Y9:

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle – ‘*The Sign of the Four*’ Chapters 1-6 (21 hours)

Rationale and ambition for The Purbeck School English Curriculum:

- Our English curriculum aims to transmit a culturally enriching knowledge of literature to students by drawing from the literary Canon and also texts that reflect wider voices in a diverse society, developing the cultural capital of students at the school.
- Our English curriculum aims to develop empathetic and engaged citizens through careful text choice, reflecting contemporary concerns and debates such as those about class, gender and intolerance and discrimination.
- Our English curriculum aims to support students in developing confidence in expressing their own views and opinions.
- Our English curriculum aims to prepare students for work and life through the development of soft skills such as communication, teamwork, adaptability, problem solving, public speaking.
- Our English Curriculum aims to offer suitable challenge to students of all abilities.
- Our English curriculum aims to offer opportunities for creativity with written and spoken language.

Key concepts:

The concepts that The Purbeck School English curriculum aims to support student progression in are:

- 1.) **Form, structure and coherence** – understanding that texts are organised with intent.
- 2.) **Spelling, punctuation and grammatical rules** – understanding word classes, key spellings, sentence forms and varied punctuation.
- 3.) **Awareness of Impact and Intent** - Understanding that writing is shaped by the priorities of a writer and the needs of a reader, including the teaching of genre, audience and purpose.
- 4.) **Context** – understanding how production and reception shape meaning.
- 5.) **Evidence** - Understanding how to read and listen for meaning and use evidence from texts to support personal critical viewpoints.
- 6.) **Methods** - Understanding how writers and speakers choose from a variety of methods to communicate and engage readers and audiences.

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| <p>What are students going to be studying?</p> | <p>Students will be studying Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s ‘The Sign of the Four’</p> |
| <p>Why are students studying this content and what are the links to our rational and ambition?</p> | <p>In our English curriculum, it is essential to expose students to a range of texts that not only reflect the literary Canon but also represent diverse voices in a multicultural society. By teaching <i>The Sign of the Four</i>, we can fulfil the aims of our curriculum by providing students with a culturally enriching knowledge of literature, promoting empathy and engagement, and supporting the development of their own views and opinions.</p> <p>One of the aims of our English curriculum is to transmit a culturally enriching knowledge of literature. The literary Canon forms the foundation of this knowledge, and <i>The Sign of the Four</i>, written by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, is undoubtedly a part of it. This novella explores timeless themes of good versus evil, justice, and romance. By studying <i>The Sign of the Four</i>, students gain a deeper understanding of Victorian language, literary techniques, and the historical context of the Victorian era.</p> <p>Additionally, our curriculum emphasizes the importance of reflecting wider voices in a diverse society. While the Canon is significant, it is equally important to incorporate texts that represent various cultures and perspectives. <i>The Sign of the Four</i> fits this requirement as well since it offers opportunities for discussions on themes such as racism and colonialism which transcend time and cultural boundaries.</p> <p>Another aim of our English curriculum is to foster empathy and engagement among students by carefully selecting texts that reflect contemporary concerns and debates. <i>The Sign of the Four</i> addresses relevant issues such as class, gender, intolerance, and discrimination. The novel presents characters from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, highlighting the stark differences within the class system. This provides an opportunity for students to explore the dynamics of class and privilege, encouraging them to critically analyse the impact of social hierarchy.</p> <p>In addition, our English curriculum aims to support students in developing confidence in expressing their own views and opinions. By engaging in class discussions and participating in activities such as role-playing or creative writing, students are encouraged to voice their thoughts while providing evidence from the text to support their arguments.</p> <p>In conclusion, teaching <i>The Sign of the Four</i> aligns with the remits of our English curriculum by fulfilling multiple objectives. By incorporating this work of Victorian detective fiction into our curriculum, we provide students with a culturally enriching knowledge of literature, while also addressing contemporary concerns and debates related to class, gender, intolerance, and discrimination. Furthermore, <i>The Sign of the Four</i> supports the development of students' confidence in expressing their own views and opinions, allowing them to engage meaningfully with the text and nurturing their critical thinking skills.</p> |
| <p>How does this unit link back to content of prior learning?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of the Victorian period from the study of <i>Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde</i> (Y8). • Knowledge of literary genres such as the gothic as seen in <i>The Woman in Black</i> (Y9). • Knowledge of the Purbeck analytical writing mat as seen in units across KS3: <i>Animal Farm</i>, <i>Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde</i>, and <i>The Woman in Black</i> (Y7, Y8, Y9). • Presentation of women in Shakespeare’s <i>The Tempest</i> (Y7). |

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| <p>What is the essential Knowledge</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colonialism in Shakespeare’s <i>The Tempest</i> (Y7). <p>L1 and 2 - What students will know from reading chapter 1, 2, and 3 (45 mins audiobook):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Key biographical/ historical context introducing students to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle – <i>trained as a doctor and worked as a surgeon and medical officer</i>, the Victorian period (recall prior knowledge from ‘Jekyll and Hyde’) – <i>class divide/ poor areas and crime/ Victorian gentleman/ serialised publication in Lippincott’s monthly magazine</i>. ○ The key characters in the novel: Sherlock Holmes, Dr Watson, Mary Morstan, and Captain Morstan. ○ The key events of chapter 1, 2 and 3. ○ The setting of the novel: London. <p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Summarise key events of chapter 1, 2 and 3 in yellow books or booklets. ○ Write a list of important contextual links in yellow books. <p>L3 – What students will know about the characterisation of Sherlock Holmes in Ch.1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Key context relating to contemporary reception of Holmes and enduring fascination with the detective – students will watch a clip of Sherlock, ‘A Study in Pink’ (scene where Holmes meets Watson). ○ Big ideas in relation to how Sherlock Holmes is presented as an intelligent detective, the hero and eccentric. ○ Key historical context relating to Victorian attitudes to drugs – <i>cocaine was readily available and not viewed as illegal</i>. ○ How ch.1 – 4 form the exposition, introducing characters, setting and key plot details. <p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use exploratory talk to discuss meanings created by Doyle’s structural, method and language choices in presenting Holmes. ○ Write big ideas in yellow books and annotate key quotations from extract 1. ○ Define the word exposition and use in analytical writing. ○ Write an analytical paragraph explaining how Holmes is presented in the opening to ‘The Sign of the Four’ using ingredients of the writing mat. ○ Review analytical paragraphs identifying ingredients of the writing mat and set a target. <p>L4 – What students will know about the characterisation of Watson in Ch.1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Key literary context in relation to conventions of detective fiction as established by Edgar Allan Poe: intelligent detective, less intelligent assistant, mystery, clues, tension, and resolution. ○ Big ideas in relation to how Watson is presented as emotional, a gentleman, and in contrast to Holmes, used to create excitement of Holmes. ○ How Watson is used as the reader surrogate to elevate Holmes as the detective. ○ How Doyle uses the duality through his presentation of Watson and Sherlock Holmes to entertain. <p>Students will be able to:</p> |
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- Use **exploratory talk** to discuss meanings created by Doyle’s language, method and structural choices and possible **writer’s intentions** in relation to duality and the characterisation of Holmes and Watson (to entertain).
- **Write** big ideas on Watson and **select** key quotations as evidence from **extract 2**.
- **Write** a language paper 2, question 4 style response to How the writer conveys the different attitudes of the two characters based on **extract 2**.
- **Define** following terms: *reader surrogate/ duality/ conventions/ detective fiction*.

L5 – What students will know about the characterisation Mary Morstan in chapter 2:

- **Big ideas** in relation to **how Mary Morstan is presented** as a love interest, virtuous, and as a damsel in distress.
- **Recall** and relate prior knowledge of representation of women in previous texts studied (Y7 – presentation of Miranda in Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*).
- **Key historical context** in relation to expectations of women in the Victorian period using Coventry Patmore’s poem ‘The Angel in the House’: women were barred from public life and confined to home to oversee domestic duties/ expected to uphold good moral values/ considered inferior to men.
- **Key literary context** relating to the popularity of **romance fiction** in the Victorian period such as the works of the Bronte sisters and how Doyle borrows from this genre to engage a wider readership.
- How Doyle uses Mary Morstan as a **catalyst** for the mystery.

Students will be able to:

- Use **exploratory talk** to explore how meanings are created by Doyle’s language, method and structural choices in presenting Mary Morstan.
- **Write** big ideas and **select** key quotations for Mary Morstan from **extract 3**.
- **Annotate** a key extract and explain meanings created by Doyle’s structural, method and language choices from **extract 3**.
- **Define** following terms: *Romantic fiction/ subplot/ catalyst*.
- **Summarise** key context in relation to women and romance fiction.

L6- What students will know about writing a love letter from Dr Watson to Mary Morstan in chapter 2:

- **Key historical context** in relation to class divide and how classes did not mix, linking to possibility of wealth becoming problematic to their relationship.
- The **conventions of a letter**: address of sender/ recipient/ sign off/ layout/ paragraphs/ formal tone/ register.
- Use of **counter argument**: Watson as not being of the same social class.
- **Rhetorical devices** to persuade: APCFOREST.
- **Sentence types**: minor/ simple/ compound/ complex.
- **Accurate punctuation** including, full stops, commas, semicolon, question marks, colon, exclamation marks and brackets.

Students will be able to:

- **Summarise** key context in relation to class divide and romance.

- **Write** an unsent letter from Watson, declaring his love to Mary Morstan, using key writing skills from Mat and knowledge of rhetorical devices.

L7 – What students will know about the presentation of setting in chapter 3:

- Conan Doyle sets the novella in London, referring to specific place names throughout.
- **Key historical context** in relation to Victorian London e.g. fog known as the peasouper, London as an expanding metropolis; it was the largest city in the world for much of the era, London as the capital of the British Empire; but, also London as a place divided and rife with crime, particularly in the poorer areas.
- How Doyle uses **pathetic fallacy**, **personification**, and the **metaphor** of the city's 'monster tentacles' **to create mystery and tension through setting.**

Students will be able to:

- Use **exploratory talk** to discuss big ideas and explain meanings created by Doyle's structural, method and language choices in relation to presentation of setting.
- **Write** big ideas on setting and **select** key quotations as evidence.
- **Annotate extract 4** and explain meanings created by Doyle's structural, method and language choices.
- **Write** an analytical paragraph on setting, responding to target from lesson 3, including the ingredients from the writing mat.

L8– What students will know about how Doyle structures chapter 3 to interest the reader:

- How Doyle uses **structural techniques** to build tension in the extract and mystery to interest the reader.
- Key **structure terminology**: focus shifts/ introduces setting/ foreshadowing/ motifs/ cliff-hangers
- Key quotations and references that show structural choices.

Students will be able to:

- Using **exploratory talk**, discuss the meanings created through Doyle's structural choices and how this interests the reader.
- **Annotate extract 5**, identifying and explaining how structural choices interest the reader.
- **Write** a language paper 1, question 3 style response: How has Doyle structured the extract from chapter 3 to interest the reader?
- **Define** key structure terminology.
- **Review** and **improve** work according to the success criteria: quotations/ references/ structure terminology/ explain effects.

L9 – What students will know about planning and the first assessment:

- How to **plan** and approach an extract-based response: 1. Read question and highlight keywords; 2. Write down three big ideas; 3. Read the extract and find three quotations to support your big idea; and, 4. Add context to support your big ideas.
- Three **big ideas** in relation to the question *Explore how using Watson as a narrator creates the excitement, tension and mystery necessary for detective fiction.*
- **Key quotations** to be used to support **big ideas.**
- **Relevant context** supporting their response to the question.

Students will be able to:

- Using **exploratory talk**, **plan** a response to an extract-based question and **annotate** the extract (**extract 6**).
- **Complete** a **planning sheet** that responds to the question: *Explore how using Watson as a narrator creates the excitement, tension and mystery necessary for detective fiction*, using the key ingredients of the writing mat.

L10 and 11 – Assessment 1 and Feedback:

- *Explore how using Watson as a narrator creates the excitement, tension and mystery necessary for detective fiction* in the extract and other moments from ch.1-3.
- 1 hour writing assessment (open book).

L12 and L13 – What students will know from reading chapter 4, 5, and 6 (65 mins audiobook):

- The **key characters** in the novel: Thaddeus Sholto, Major Sholto, the ‘frightened housekeeper’, and Bartholomew Sholto.
- The **key events** of chapter 4, 5 and 6.
- Key **settings** of the novel: Thaddeus Sholto’s rooms and Pondicherry Lodge.

Students will be able to:

- **Summarise** key events of chapter 4, 5 and 6 in yellow books or booklets.

L14 – What students will know about the characterisation of Thaddeus Sholto and the setting of Sholto’s rooms in chapter 4:

- **Big ideas** in relation to **how Thaddeus Sholto is presented**: comic relief/ a hypochondriac/ nervous/ gothic traits.
- How **Sholto’s narrative** uses **analepsis**, offering further **clues**, deepening the mystery of ‘The Sign of the Four’.
- How the **description** of Sholto’s rooms contain **symbols of imperialism/ colonialism** to create mystery e.g. ‘two great tiger skins’.
- **Key historical context related to Empire**: What the British Empire was and its involvement with India/ The East India Company/ xenophobia/ racist views held by Doyle/ Conan Doyle as an advocate for the British Empire/ India as a source of fascination and fear.

Students will be able to:

- Using **exploratory talk**, discuss big ideas and the meanings created through Doyle’s language, method, and structural choices when presenting Thaddeus Sholto.
- **Write** big ideas and **select** key quotations to support Doyle’s characterisation of Thaddeus Sholto.
- **Annotate** a key extract and explain meanings created by Doyle’s structural, method and language choices to present both Thaddeus Sholto and the setting of his rooms (**Extract 7**).
- **List** Doyle’s use of symbolism, relating to the British Empire.

L15 – What students will know about how Doyle creates mystery and tension at Pondicherry Lodge in chapter 5:

- **Big ideas** in relation to how Doyle creates mystery and tension through the gothic setting, the reaction of characters, Watson as reader surrogate.
- How Doyle **characterises Holmes as the hero** through giving him a wide range of abilities: ‘boxer’.
- How Doyle **develops the Romantic subplot** involving Watson and Morstan.

- How the **characterisation of Morstan and Mrs Bernstone** reinforces the **gender stereotypes** discuss in chapter 2.
- **Key literary context related** to Gothic genre: gothic novels like Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* were popular in the 19th century/ gothic texts often explore themes of the unknown and supernatural/ they are typically set in neglected, decaying buildings such as castles. Recall this from work on *The Woman in Black*.

Students will be able to:

- Using **exploratory talk**, discuss big ideas and the meanings created through Doyle's language, method, and structural choices when presenting setting.
- **Write** big ideas and **select** key quotations to support Doyle's presentation of setting.
- **Write** big ideas and **select** key quotations to support Doyle's characterisation of stereotypical gender roles.
- **Annotate** a key extract and explain meanings created by Doyle's structural, method and language choices to present how Doyle builds mystery and tension through setting, description and reaction of characters (**extract 8**).

L16 – What students will know about creative writing based on conventions of the gothic genre:

- **Key literary context related** to Gothic genre: gothic novels like Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* were popular in the 19th century/ gothic texts often explore themes of the unknown and supernatural/ they are typically set in neglected, decaying buildings such as castles. Recall this from work on *The Woman in Black*.
- **Key ingredients of creative writing** as outlined on Purbeck creative writing Mat: variety of sentences/ range of punctuation/ methods and structure.

Students will be able to:

- **Write a description** of a gothic setting based on an image of a gothic building, using knowledge of conventions of gothic literature and key ingredients of the writing mat.
- **Review** and **improve** writing practice, identifying key ingredients, using the writing mat.

L17 – What students will know about Holmes skills of detection in chapter 6:

- **Big ideas** in relation to how Doyle presents Holmes as a skilful detective: use of animal imagery, description of action, reaction of Watson.
- How to **link** to other moments in the novel for example ch.1 and ch.3.

Students will be able to:

- Using **exploratory talk**, discuss big ideas and the meanings created through Doyle's language, method, and structural choices when presenting Holmes.
- **Annotate** key extract and explain meanings created by Doyle's structural, method and language choice in presenting Holmes (**extract 9**).
- **Write** an analytical paragraph using the ingredients of the Purbeck school analytical writing mat with a focus on **linking** to other moments.
- **Review** and **improve** writing practice, identifying key ingredients, using the writing mat.

L18 – What students will know about attitudes to the Police in chapter 6:

- **Big ideas** in relation to how Doyle presents Athelney Jones and the Police as comic/ ineffective and unintelligent.

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Key historical context relating to the Police, crime and detection: Victorian attitudes towards police were poor/ they were viewed as incompetent/ Police were not respected and viewed as an infringement on British social and political life/ Jack the Ripper presented horrible failings of the Police/ this led to the setting up of police detectives/ Met Police were established in 1829 – Sir Robert Peel (the ‘peelers’). ○ Doyle’s contrasting presentation of the police to Holmes elevates Holmes as the hero. <p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Using exploratory talk, discuss big ideas and the meanings created through Doyle’s language, method, and structural choices when presenting the Police and Athelney Jones. ○ Write big ideas and select key quotations to support characterisation of Jones and the Police. ○ Annotate extract, identifying and explaining the effects of Doyle’s language, method and structural choices to present the Police (extract 10). <p>L19 – What students will know about how Doyle structures chapters 1-6:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Structural shifts across chapters and how different moods are created: comic relief/ tension/ romance. ○ Key structure terminology: focus shifts/ introduces setting/ foreshadowing/ motifs/ cliff-hangers/ mood/ atmosphere/ exposition. ○ Effects of juxtaposition of chapters and moods. <p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use exploratory talk to discuss Doyle’s structural choices across chapters 1-6 and the effects of these structural shifts. ○ Identify structural shifts across chapters 1-6 using grid and explain the effects of these shifts. ○ Write an analytical paragraph detailing structural shifts across chapters 1-6 and how this interests the reader using ingredients from the analytical writing mat. <p style="text-align: center;">L20 and L21 Assessment 2 and Feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Explore how Conan Doyle presents Sherlock Holmes in the extract and novel as a whole (Extract 11).</i> ➤ 15 minutes planning as a class/ 45 minutes writing assessment (open book). |
| <p>How will this unit link to the content of future learning?</p> | <p>GCSE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Structural analysis of the text leads to students being ready for demands on Language Paper 1, Q3 and 4 and Q5 when crafting their own short pieces of writing. ● Analysis of extracts from the text will lead to students being ready for demands of Language Paper 1, Q2 and Q4 and Language Paper 2, Q3. ● Attitudes towards gender and class link to ‘An Inspector Calls’. ● Exploration of characterisation through action, description and dialogue are transferable skills to key GCSE Literature texts. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application of key literature skills (AO1, AO2, and AO3) will be applied and developed to other GCSE literature texts. • Assessments are focused on developing literatures skills both at character and thematic level. This will prepare students for future literature assessments on other GCSE texts. <p>A level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical context of the Victorian period and conventions of literary genres will link to the study of Thomas Hardy's <i>Tess of the d'Urbervilles</i> in year 12 and 13. |
| <p>Assessment 1: Success criteria –</p> | <p>➤ Timed essay 1 <i>What should students know and what should they be able to do?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Plan and write a response to the following question: <i>Explore how using Watson as a narrator creates the excitement, tension and mystery necessary for detective fiction in the extract and other moments from ch.1-3.</i> ○ Use key ingredients from the Purbeck School analytical writing mat. |
| <p>Assessment 2: Success criteria –</p> | <p>➤ Timed essay 2 <i>What should students know and what should they be able to do?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Plan and write a response to the following question: <i>Explore how Conan Doyle presents Sherlock Holmes in the extract and novel as a whole.</i> ○ Use key ingredients from the Purbeck School analytical writing mat. |