RAISING ACHIEVEMENT · THE SIGN OF FOUR · DRILL 1

Give me problems

Sherlock Holmes

Today: how Conan Doyle presents Holmes’s need for work

30 minutes

Do Now

Know

1. Who narrates The Sign of Four?
2. In which year did the novel first appear in print?
3. Which teacher of Conan Doyle’s was one model for Holmes?
4. What does “abhor” mean?
5. What is a “cryptogram”?

Do Now: answers

Know

1. Who narrates The Sign of Four?
   Dr. Watson

2. In which year did the novel first appear in print?
   1890

3. Which teacher of Conan Doyle’s was one model for Holmes?
   Joseph Bell

4. What does “abhor” mean?
   To hate something very much

5. What is a “cryptogram”?
   A message written in code

Focus reminder

Know

What the Sign of Four question asks you to do

Start with the extract: find two or three short quotations that answer the question.

Write “Conan Doyle presents…”. Holmes, Watson and Small are people Conan Doyle made, so write about his choices.

Then move to the novel as a whole: where else does Conan Doyle show this? Use at least two other chapters.

Say why: what did Conan Doyle want his first readers to think about?

Holmes explains the cocaine

Read

Arthur Conan Doyle · 1890 · Chapter 1

He did not seem offended. On the contrary, he put his fingertips together and leaned his elbows on the arms of his chair, like one who has a relish for conversation.

"My mind," he said, "rebels at stagnation. Give me problems, give me work, give me the most abstruse cryptogram or the most intricate analysis, and I am in my own proper atmosphere. I can dispense then with artificial stimulants. But I abhor the dull routine of existence. I crave for mental exaltation. That is why I have chosen my own particular profession—or rather created it, for I am the only one in the world."