

NMT B2 Task 2 practice (2)

Read the text. For questions (1-6), choose the correct answer (A, B, C, or D)

The Sign of the Four

The following excerpt is an abridged and adapted version of a chapter of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's novel 'The Sign of the Four'. The scene opens as Sherlock Holmes and Watson investigate the crime scene of a man's murder.

'Now, Watson,' said Holmes, rubbing his hands, 'although the case might seem simple now, there could be something else going on. We should not be overconfident. Now, to work! No time to waste. In the first place, how did these men come, and how did they go? The door has not been opened since last night. What about the window?' He carried the lamp across to it, thinking aloud, but speaking to himself rather than to me. 'The window is locked on the inside and its framework looks undamaged. Let us open it. Hm... There is no water pipe near and the roof is quite out of reach. Yet a man came through the window. How do we know? It rained a little last night, which explains this footprint on the window sill here. And here is a round muddy mark, and here again on the floor, and here again by the table. See here, Watson!'

I looked at the muddy circles. 'This is not a footmark,' I said.

'You are right. It is something much more valuable to us. It was actually made by something wooden, you see.'

'It is the wooden-legged man.'

'Indeed it is. But there was someone else, too - someone helping him. Could you climb that wall, doctor?'

I looked out of the open window. We were a good sixty feet from the ground. I looked around, but there were no openings in the brick wall that would allow anyone to climb up.

'It is absolutely impossible,' I answered.

'Without help it is. But suppose you had a friend up here, in this room, who threw down

that strong rope I see in the corner, securing one end of it to this great hook in the wall. Then, I think, if you were an active man, you might climb up, wooden leg and all. You would escape, of course, in the same way, and your friend would draw up the rope, untie it from the hook, shut the window, lock it on the inside, and get away in the way that he originally came. Clearly, this is how it was done, as there are blood marks on the rope, which show that someone used it recently. They also show,' he continued, picking up the rope, 'that our wooden-legged friend, though a good climber, was not a professional sailor. His hands were rather soft. He must have slipped down with such speed that he took the skin off his hand.'

'Very well,' I said, 'but how about this mysterious friend? How did he get into the room? The door is locked, and it would have been impossible to come through the window. Was it through the chimney?'

'The opening is too small,' he answered. 'As I always say, once you reject the impossible, what remains must be the answer, although it may sound ridiculous! In this case, we know that he did not come through the door, the window, or the chimney. We also know that he could not have been hidden in the room, as there is no place to hide. From where, then, did he come?'

'He came through the hole in the roof,' I cried.

'Of course he did. He must have done so. If you could hold the lamp for me, we will now move to the room above - the secret room in which the treasure was found.'

- 1 What does Holmes believe about the case?**
 - A. that he and Watson shouldn't doubt themselves
 - B. that he and Watson shouldn't waste time
 - C. that the case is simple
 - D. that Watson knows something

- 2 According to the first paragraph, which of the following is true?**
 - A. The door had been opened the night before.
 - B. It had rained heavily the previous night.
 - C. Someone broke the framework of the window.
 - D. There are footprints on the table.

- 3 What do the marks on the floor reveal about the person who entered the room?**
 - A. that he carried something valuable
 - B. that he had a wooden leg
 - C. the size of his shoe
 - D. how he entered the room

- 4 How did the man with the wooden leg get into the house?**
 - A. He climbed up using openings in the brick wall.
 - B. He climbed up the water pipe.
 - C. He forced open the window.
 - D. A rope was thrown down to him.

- 5 How did Holmes know the rope had been used?**
 - A. It had been moved from its original place.
 - B. He was an experienced sailor.
 - C. There was blood on it.
 - D. It was wrapped around the hook.

- 6 How does Holmes conclude that the man's friend came in through the roof?**
 - A. He found evidence in the chimney.
 - B. No other explanation was possible.
 - C. He found a blood mark on the roof.
 - D. He found prints on the roof.