

| TEXT: <i>Jane Eyre</i> PLOT | | CHARACTERS | | METHOD | | | ENABLING LANGUAGE |
|--|---------------------------|---|---|-------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Gateshead: Jane Eyre, aged 10 years old, lives unhappily at Gateshead with her widowed Aunt Reed and cousins Eliza, John and Georgiana. When Jane has a fight with John, she is punished by being confined to the sinister 'red-room'. After a violent protest and fainting fit, she is removed from Gateshead to Lowood School. Jane accuses Mrs Reed of cruelty and deceitfulness, voicing her passion at injustice. | | CHARACTER NAME / BRIEF BIO. Jane Eyre: the story's narrator, who narrates the novel as a grown-up woman – looking back at her past, including her childhood. From this retrospective position, she sometimes observes the differences between her child self and her adult self. Mr Rochester: At first, he is Jane's employer, twenty years her senior. He is wealthy and powerful, yet hides a secret past. He falls for Jane and proposes to her. Eventually he marries Jane, and she describes herself as his equal. Mrs Reed: Jane's Aunt allows Jane to live with her and her children, after promising this to - her husband - Jane's Uncle, before he died. Aunt Reed is mean-spirited and sends Jane away to Lowood, knowing it won't be nice. Before her death, Jane forgives her Aunt. | | FORM | LANGUAGE | STRUCTURE | Charactonym: When a name of a fictional character indicates their personality traits or characteristics. |
| Lowood School: Jane endures much physical hardship and psychological torment, but she makes friends with the kind Miss Temple, and Helen Burns, a sympathetic and religious girl. Brocklehurst punishes and humiliates Jane. However, Miss Temple defends Jane. Helen contracts consumption and dies. An inquiry into the typhus outbreak at Lowood leads to an improved school; Jane completes two years as a teacher there. Aged 18 she applies to Mrs Fairfax for a governess post at Thornfield Hall. | | | | Bildungsroman | Metaphor | Linear structure, with elements of proleptic narrative | Eponymous: The character named in the title of the novel. |
| Thornfield Hall: Once working as a governess, Jane walks alone in the grounds of Thornfield and frequently hears the laughter of Grace Poole, a servant. On a midsummer evening Jane walks in the orchard and encounters Rochester. Prompted by deception, Jane reveals her love for Rochester. Edward proposes to her; she accepts. At Jane's marriage ceremony, Richard Mason intervenes and says that Rochester is already married to his sister. Rochester admits the truth and reveals the confined Bertha to be a mad woman. Jane's hopes are destroyed. | | Jane is: an orphan, an imaginative dreamer, a passionate rebel, independent and resourceful and has a strong sense of morals. | | First person narration | Pathetic fallacy | Foreshadowing | Feminist: Ideas, practices and actions based upon the belief of the equality of women and girls. |
| Moor House at Marsh End: Jane leaves Thornfield with nothing, and wanders the fields of Marsh End and begs due to hunger. She is admitted to Moor House by St John, a young clergyman. He and his sisters, Diana and Mary, care for her until she revives. Later, St John discovers that the Rivers are Jane's cousins: their uncle is dead and Jane has inherited 20,000 pounds and is now independent. She shares the money equally between them. | | Mr Brocklehurst: the strictly religious missionary and owner of Lowood School. Seen as a hypocrite of the cruelest kind, due to the contrast between the treatment of his own family and of the poor and vulnerable pupils at Lowood. | Bertha Mason: Rochester's 'mad' wife who is contained in his attic for some time. Her presence in the house is felt when mysterious events occur. She eventually burns down Thornfield Hall. | Homodiegetic narrator | Juxtaposition | Changes in character | Gothic: A genre characterised by common stylistic features, including: haunted settings, supernatural events and characters. |
| Fern Dean: Jane is inspired to seek out Rochester; she leaves and finds Thornfield in burnt ruins. She learns from the innkeeper that Bertha burnt it down, that she is dead, and Rochester is blinded and crippled. Rochester apologises for his wrongs and proposes again: she accepts. They are married; Adele is sent to a school. The narrative finishes ten years in to Jane's happy marriage. | | Miss Temple: The superintendent of Lowood School in Jane's time as a student / teacher there. A benevolent woman who becomes a mother figure for Jane. | St. John Rivers: A young, handsome clergyman, who takes Jane in to live with his sisters. Later, they discover that they are cousins. He is initially portrayed as noble and kind, but is gradually revealed to be controlling and destructive. | Tone | Sensory Imagery | Tension | Motif: A recurring image, word or idea which may establish mood, create symbolic unity and support the theme. |
| KEY THEMES EXPLORED | | VICTORIAN CONTEXT | | AO1 | AO2 | AO3 | Protagonist: The central character who undertakes the actions in the narrative. |
| Marriage | Treatment of women | Marriage was a necessity to most women in Victorian England. A working-class woman's wage was below subsistence level: she could not live on her income alone. Women typically stayed in the family home until they were married. | | Personal response + textual detail. | Analysis of form, language + structure. | Understanding of the relationship between texts + contexts. | Satire: A cultural form of criticism of political and social ideas, sometimes humorous. |
| Self identity + development | Religion | Wealthy men enjoyed the best legal rights. Women, especially working-class women, were disadvantaged. Once married, women had few legal rights, including rights to own property such as houses, their belongings and other valuables. | Brönte felt very sure that her work would be dismissed as inferior if it was known to be written by a woman, and so she submitted her work to publishers under a male pseudonym. | | | | Social class: groups in society who may share levels of income, education, cultural or political values. |
| Equality | Independence + dependence | The literary 1840s are often characterised as the period of the 'social problem' novel, which dwelt upon the living conditions of the working poor. While <i>Jane Eyre</i> does consider some contemporary issues, the novel is different, and unusual, in its concerns, with its focus on a middle-class woman's identity and her self-development. | | | | | Symbolism: The use of symbols to communicate and develop ideas or represent deeper meaning. |