

JANE EYRE

Close Reading Worksheet One Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7

Provide detailed answers in your workbook.

Chapter 1

1. Report the point of view. Identify the speaker and the atmosphere.
2. What do Jane's comments about Bewick's *History* reveal about her?

Chapter 2

3. Explain Jane's relationship to the Reeds.
4. Report the advice given by Bessie and Miss Abbott.
5. Report two reasons for Jane's emotional upheaval.

Chapter 3

6. Why does Jane feel sheltered and protected with Mr. Lloyd present?
7. What solution is Mr. Lloyd considering for Jane's misery? What does Jane think of the idea?

Chapter 4

8. How is Jane treated in the meantime?
9. Explain this quote: "Something of vengeance I had tasted for the first time."
10. Quote Bessie's perceptive yet ironic comment about Jane's submissiveness.

Chapters 5 and 6

11. Report the order and type of a day's activities at Lowood School.
12. Quote the major points of the philosophy of Helen Burns.

Chapter 7

13. Mr. Brocklehurst justifies the severity of living conditions at Lowood. Quote three of his defenses.
14. Why is Jane made the butt of Mr. Brocklehurst's sermon?

Application

You are Mr. Brocklehurst. Write a report for a local publication where you discuss the advantages of sending a girl to Lowood.



Your teacher will assign one or more of these activities. Each activity presents a problem or conflict situation. As you respond, think of actual experiences or use your imagination to invent experiences or combine actual and imaginary experiences. Also, follow the steps or clues for development outlined in the directions. To help yourself get started, jot some notes on this paper.

1. A situation or situations may demand that you take a stand, that you act on a principle and stick with it. Taking that stand may be extremely difficult because it may bring you temporary unhappiness (losing some friends or being alone, for example). In your journal write about a time that you did or did not act on principle. Identify the problem, explain what happened, and report in detail your feelings.
2. Each of us may be dissatisfied with the person we are. If only we could change something (or several things) about ourselves, life would be so much better. Suddenly, you can change three things about yourself. What are they? Write a narrative poem or an essay to share with one or two friends or classmates. Present both what you would like to change and your reasons.
3. Not knowing what somebody thinks of you can be frustrating, especially when you care about that person. In a stream-of-consciousness essay, let your mind explore the question, "What does he (or she) think of me?" Add as many more questions as you can. Let one question lead to another.

• TEACHER'S GUIDE

Jane Eyre

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Biographical Information

Charlotte Brontë, the third child of a country minister, was born in 1816 in Yorkshire England. When she was four, her family moved to the village of Haworth, where they remained for the rest of their lives. (Much of the village is now a museum of the Brontës). The deaths of her mother in 1821 and of her two older sisters in 1825 left her as the eldest of four remarkable children. In 1829 she and her brother Branwell began writing a series of tales about an imaginary kingdom called Angria. Her own experiences as a student and governess at several schools provided her with much of the material for *Jane Eyre* and her other novels. At the same time she fostered her sisters' talents and in 1846 published a volume of poems with them under the pseudonyms Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell. The next year she published *Jane Eyre*, an immediate success. Within the next two years Branwell, Emily, and Agnes all died. Charlotte lived on in Haworth, wrote several more novels, and died in 1855.

Major Works

None of Charlotte Brontë's other novels approach *Jane Eyre* in importance or popularity. The best-known of her other books are

- *Villette* (1853) — A poor young woman takes a teaching position in a Brussels girls' school where she wins over both the headmistress and a harsh professor.
- *Shirley* (1849) — Romance and the Industrial Revolution are mingled in this tale of the Yorkshire mills.

Chief Characteristics

In *Jane Eyre* Charlotte Brontë introduced a new type of heroine to English fiction. Jane wins our sympathy because she is intelligent and independent, not because she is rich, noble, or beautiful. Jane's struggle to escape the subservient role society has decreed for her makes her the forerunner of all the modern heroines — and heroes — who try to live moral but not conventional lives. The lives of Jane Eyre and of Brontë's other heroines clearly represent the author's own experiences and her desire for freedom and equal status with men.

Because she is so close to her own characters emotionally, Brontë is able to depict their feelings to a degree also uncommon in the fiction of her day. Jane tells her story in the first person, often in the present tense, in such a vivid fashion that we experience her emotions as if they were our own and accept her feelings as the crucial element of the novel. Thus, Brontë reproduces in fiction the romantic poets' stress on the importance of the individual's inner life.

Jane Eyre is also romantic in the different sense of being a story filled with the startling and marvelous. Many of its plot devices and characterizations — the secret hidden in the attic, the somber and enigmatic ruler of the isolated estate, the telepathic call between Rochester and Jane, are borrowed from the Gothic novels of Brontë's day. But the story's emphasis on moral choices and its rewarding of the heroine place *Jane Eyre* just as much in the tradition of folk and fairy tale — compare the story of "Beauty and the Beast," for example. Together with her vivid use of nature as both scene and symbol, this dependence on traditional forms places Brontë fully in the romantic tradition in all its aspects.

Related Reading

- In Charles Dickens's *Hard Times*, another strong young Victorian girl struggles against a rigid educational system.
- Edith Wharton's *Ethan Frome* depicts the tragic conclusion of a love between a young girl and a married man.
- Daphne DuMaurier's *Rebecca* is a modern tale of the mysterious, in which a young bride finds her husband's late wife to be as strong a presence as a living woman could be.
- Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* parallels Jane Eyre in its setting and symbolism, as well as in many aspects of its plot.

Postreading Writing Activity

It has been said about the protagonist (Jane) that "in her progress towards the truly human she enlists our admiration and affection." Agree or disagree with that statement. Write an argumentative essay in which you support your decision by referring to specific events and characteristics.