

# Contents

<b>Teachers' notes</b>	4–5	<b>Wuthering Heights</b>	
<b>Background</b>		<b>Key events and themes</b>	
The Brontës: a family history	6–7	The plot 1	35
The Romantic and the Gothic	8	The plot 2	36
Society and literature	9	An inhospitable place	37
The Brontës at the movies 1 and 2	10–11	The orphan child	38
		A different world	39
		Confessional	40
		A strange kind of love	41
		Two heavens	42
		A sad farewell	43
		The <i>Gimmerton Gazette</i>	44
		A ghost story	45–46
<b>Jane Eyre</b>		<b>Characters</b>	
<b>Key events and themes</b>		Heathcliff	47
The plot 1	12	Catherine	48
The plot 2	13	Edgar and Isabella	49
Openings	14	Hindley and Hareton	50
A spiteful letter	15	Cathy and Linton	51
Good Christians	16	Crossword	52
Inspector's report	17		
A script	18	<b>Wider reading</b>	
Using evidence	19	<i>The Woman in Black</i> : Setting and the supernatural	53
Party!	20	<i>Cold Comfort Farm</i> : Speech characterisation	54–55
Rochester's journal	21	'Odour of Chrysanthemums': Grief	56
Omens	22	'The Destructors': Two destructors	57
Happy families	23		
The eagle and the sparrow	24	<b>Exam and essay practice</b>	
The <i>Millcote Herald</i>	25	<b>Jane Eyre</b>	
		Progress	58
		It's not what you say	59
		Rivals	60
		<b>Wuthering Heights</b>	
		Villain or anti-hero?	61
		Love and relationships	62
		Two narrators	63
		<b>Answers</b>	
		Selected answers	64



# Teachers' notes

## Background (Pages 6–11)

These pages provide important biographical detail about the lives led by the Brontës, the English literary heritage evident in their work and their social, historical and literary context. In addition, many films have been made of both *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*. These pages encourage students to analyse the differences between one of the novels and any of the films, and could lead to a piece of media coursework.

## Key events and themes – *Jane Eyre*; *Wuthering Heights*

### The plot (Pages 12–13, 35–36)

Students sequence the action as it occurs in each novel. This could be carried out as a means of keeping track while they are reading or as a revision exercise.

## *Jane Eyre*

### Openings (Page 14)

This comprehension exercise focuses on the very beginning of *Jane Eyre*. It also provides a useful incidental opportunity to consider the differences between direct and reported speech.

### A spiteful letter (Page 15)

Students must have read at least as far as the end of Chapter 4. More capable pupils should give as much consideration to the style of the letter as to the content.

### Good Christians (Page 16)

This exercise focuses on the importance of collecting textual evidence to support critical judgements. Students compare the different personalities of Helen Burns and Mr Brocklehurst.

### Inspector's report (Page 17)

In this task, students write the report mentioned at the beginning of Chapter 10. Discussion prior to writing should focus on the expectations of the mid-nineteenth century as well as the content and style of the report itself.

### A script (Page 18)

This page requires students to produce a script of the unwritten scene between Mr Rochester, his wife and Grace Poole, following the fire in Rochester's room. Teachers may wish to discuss what would be lost by introducing Mrs Rochester to the audience at this stage of the drama.

### Using evidence (Page 19)

This focuses on the development of Jane Eyre's personality and shows students how to support their conclusions with the use of textual evidence.

### Party! (Page 20)

Students consider part of the social context of the novel. Teachers may wish to point out exact page references for less able classes.

### Rochester's journal (Page 21)

As well as focusing on Rochester's view of events, this page gives useful information about the timing and nature of the events leading up to the failed wedding.

It is important that more able students be given the opportunity to write in a style appropriate to Rochester.

### Omens (Page 22)

Students will need to have read the whole of the book before beginning the exercise. They will need to have a basic understanding of omens, symbols and the use of personification.

### Happy families (Page 23)

This activity can be used for GCSE oral work.

Students will need to scan through the details of life at Moor House given in Chapters 28 to 35.

### The eagle and the sparrow (Page 24)

This reading exercise deals with events that take place at the close of the novel.

### The Millcote Herald (Page 25)

In this exercise, students practise writing in a journalistic style. It is also useful as revision of the second half of the novel.

## Characters

### *Jane Eyre* (Pages 26–28); *Wuthering Heights* (Pages 47–51)

These pages cover the novel's central figures. For *Jane Eyre*, teachers may wish to advise their students on whether they require notes on the older or the younger Jane.

## Crossword

### *Jane Eyre* (Page 29); *Wuthering Heights* (Page 52)

This provides revision practice for *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*.

## Wider reading

### Schooldays (Page 30)

In this exercise, a comparison is made between the experiences of Jane Eyre at Lowood and those endured by Billy Casper in *A Kestrel for a Knave*.

### Men and women (Page 31)

Jane Eyre's strength of character is contrasted with the weakness of the little governess in Katherine Mansfield's story of the same name. Students should try to highlight the problem faced by the little governess' exposure to an unfamiliar world.

### Ghostly tales (Page 32)

Students are asked to compare the ghostly, Gothic elements of *Jane Eyre* with those of a twentieth-century story by Susan Hill.

### Crimes of passion (Page 33)

An unusual wide-reading exercise, since the twentieth-century text, *The Crucible*, is actually set before *Jane Eyre*. The restrictive social circumstances faced, in particular by John Proctor, should be emphasised.

### Wilderness (Page 34)

Students need to read 'To Build a Fire' by Jack London. They should concentrate on the way that each protagonist deals with nature. Jane's initially warm response to Mother Nature on her first night should be contrasted with her later viewpoint.

# The Brontës: a family history

The father of Charlotte and Emily Brontë, Patrick Brunty, was born in 1777 to a poor, illiterate family in Drumballyroney, Northern Ireland. Through hard work and perseverance, Brunty educated himself and managed to obtain teaching positions at church schools. When he was twenty-five, a local vicar, recognising his talent, ambition and industry, helped him to obtain a position at St John's College, Cambridge. He studied there for four years, living a sober life on a tiny allowance that he supplemented with fees gained from coaching other students. It was at Cambridge that he changed his name to the more fashionable sounding Brontë. He was ordained in 1806. After serving in several parishes, he moved to Yorkshire and met Maria Branwell, with whom he fell in love and married. The couple had six children, Maria, Elizabeth, Charlotte, Branwell (the only boy), Emily and Anne. In 1820, the family moved to the parsonage in the village of Haworth on the Yorkshire moors. Soon after, Mrs Brontë died and Patrick Brontë was left alone to look after the six children.

Family life continued at Haworth Parsonage with the help of Mrs Brontë's humourless but capable sister Elizabeth Branwell. In 1824, however, a new school was opened by the Reverend Mr Carus Wilson at Cowan Bridge and Mr Brontë sent his four eldest daughters to study there. Life at the school was unimaginably harsh and the regime was uncompromising and strict. The eldest daughter, Maria, was sent home in ill health and died soon after. Ten-year-old Elizabeth returned home shortly after, only to die as well.

The remaining children stayed at home, living with their father and Aunt Branwell. They developed a rich imaginary life, isolated from the outside world. Charlotte and Branwell created a fantasy world called Angria based around a set of twelve wooden soldiers. Emily and Anne created a different and no less incredible world in what they called the Gondol saga. The stories written and enacted by the children were fantastic and melodramatic, often containing scenes of violence and murder. Not surprisingly, the children kept their activities a secret from their father and from their strict Aunt Branwell. They wrote their dramatic stories on tiny notepads in letters too small for adults at the parsonage to read.

As they grew up, the Brontës became increasingly attached to one another and disassociated from an outside world about which they knew little and cared less. In his late teens, Branwell went to London to study painting at the Royal Academy but found the whole business unnerving and returned to the parsonage after only a few days. Emily suffered similarly when she went to teach at Miss Patchett's School at Law Hill, Halifax. She hated teaching there and told her pupils that she preferred the school dog to any of them. As they moved out of their teens and into their early twenties, the other sisters held down intermittent jobs as governesses. None of them, with the exception of Anne, enjoyed the work in the slightest.

The Brontë sisters became increasingly determined not to have to spend their lives working in this way. They were too intelligent and accomplished to be happy working for people with money but no talent. They decided to set up their own school at Haworth Parsonage and Charlotte and Emily persuaded Aunt Branwell to fund them for a year of study in Brussels. This, they hoped, would give them the experience they needed to run their own school successfully. When Aunt Branwell died in 1842, Emily returned to the parsonage to act as housekeeper. Charlotte returned to Haworth in 1844, leaving Brussels and her married tutor, Monsieur Heger, with whom she had fallen deeply yet hopelessly in love. The Brontës set up their school and suffered another terrible blow: no parents applied to send their children there and the whole scheme had to be abandoned.

At the same time, Branwell began his steady decline. He had always been wilful, talented yet headstrong, and he found it difficult to sustain appropriate relationships with an outside world that was strict and uncompromising. He had already been sacked from jobs as a tutor and a railway clerk. In June 1845, he lost another tutoring post, this time for having an affair with the wife of his employer, and he returned to the relative safety of Haworth. It was to prove a temporary respite, however, and he took to frequenting local inns on an ever increasing basis. His addiction, not only to alcohol but also to opium, became more serious and he turned life at the parsonage into a nightmare. He died from tuberculosis in 1848, at the age of thirty-one.

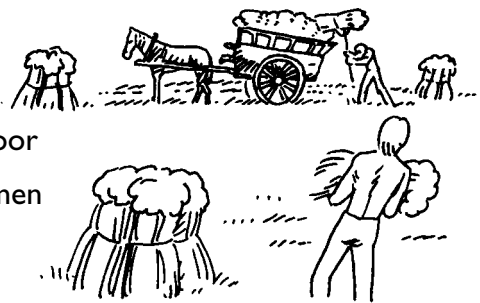
# Society and literature

The Brontës lived in the first half of the nineteenth century. Important changes were taking place during this period, yet in some respects, life continued as it had done for hundreds of years.

1. Use your school library or the Internet to research the following six areas of life in the first half of the nineteenth century. You may find it useful to approach this as a group exercise, with different members of the class choosing their own research areas.



- Agriculture and rural life
- Transportation
- The differences between the lives of the rich and poor
- The roles of men and women
- Education
- The family



When you have finished collecting information, present your findings to the rest of the class.

2. During the nineteenth century, an important movement called **realism** developed in literature. Realism, as the name suggests, concerned itself with the realities of people's lives. Realist writers were tired of novels, plays and poems that did not deal with the world as it actually was. Some of the best known British writers influenced by realism were Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell and George Eliot.

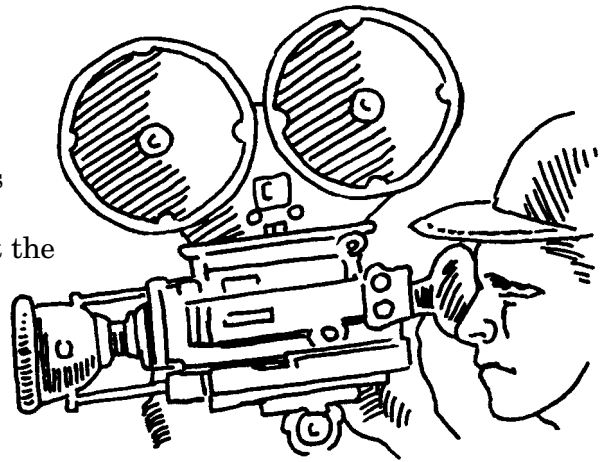
Use your school library to find out about at least *one* of the novels written by Dickens, Gaskell or Eliot. Write a brief summary of the plot, focusing especially on the social concerns that are raised.

3. Now think about your Brontë novel. How does it reflect the time in which it was written? Write a summary using the six areas of society mentioned above as subheadings.
4. If you have looked at the page on the Romantic and the Gothic, write a one-page answer to the following question.
  - Which literary tradition had the more important effect on Charlotte and Emily Brontë: the Romantic or the realist?

# The Brontës at the movies I

## Introduction

It is inevitable that film versions of novels will be different from the original text; film is a very different medium from a book. For one thing, the film-maker has to compress many hours of reading time into a more limited time of viewing. To do this, he or she has to edit the story quite significantly while still trying to keep the main themes and ideas.

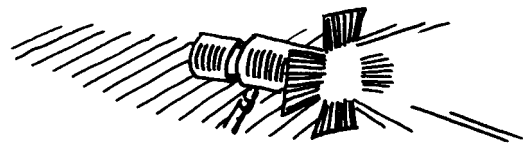


1. In pairs, discuss other differences that exist between a film and a book.
2. Now watch the first twenty minutes of your Brontë film. As you are watching, jot down the changes to the story that the director has made and the effects, either positive or negative, that you think they have had. Use a table like the one below to record your responses.

Original book	Change made in the film	Effect of the change
Starts with Jane Eyre talking about the weather.	Starts with Jane Eyre listening to Mrs Reed talking to her children.	Highlights the issue of isolation. We have an immediate sense of Jane as an outsider.

3. Now, also in pairs, discuss your first impressions of the film and how it has been put together. Consider the following questions.

- Despite the changes, has the director managed to cover the main themes and ideas in the first part of the story?
- Are any of the characters very different from the ones at the start of the book?
- Does what you have seen in the film help you to understand certain aspects of the book more clearly?
- Are there any additions to the film that you found confusing or unnecessary?



4. Finally, on your own, write a short review of the start of the film in which you comment on its positive and negative aspects.

