
JANE EYRE

BY CHARLOTTE BRONTË

EMC Full Text Study Edition



Classroom materials written and edited by Lucy Webster

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USING THIS BOOK

This book is part of the EMC Full Text Study Edition series of classic novels, each of which contains an original text, in full, along with an extensive range of activities for students to undertake before, during and after reading. We believe that these editions offer the perfect blend of guidance and challenge for developing readers who need to build their critical skills while also gaining a deep, secure understanding of their novel's narrative. To this end we have lightly glossed the text. As we believe that too much glossing slows reading down to the point where it becomes an obstacle to enjoyment rather than support, we have deliberately not glossed every difficult word.

The activities in our study editions cover many of the key areas that students need to look at when studying a novel, but due to limitations of space do not cover everything. As with all English and Media Centre resources, we encourage teachers to use the suggested activities alongside their own ideas and subject expertise.

The novel has been divided into 12 sections. These sections are not all of the same length but reflect sensible points to pause in the narrative. In some of the longer sections you may want to pause at the end of chapters to check understanding, speculate about the development of the story or to complete some of the 'Reading the Novel' tasks suggested on pages 11-13.

A note on the text

As with many 19th-century texts, different editions differ in punctuation and spelling, with some editions modernising both. The text in this edition is from www.gutenberg.org and has been checked against the Norton Critical Edition, edited by Richard J Dunn. Chapter numbering is sequential from 1 to 38. In the three-volume form, Volume 1 comprised Chapters 1-15, Volume 2 comprised Chapters 16-26 and Volume 3 comprised Chapters 27-38.

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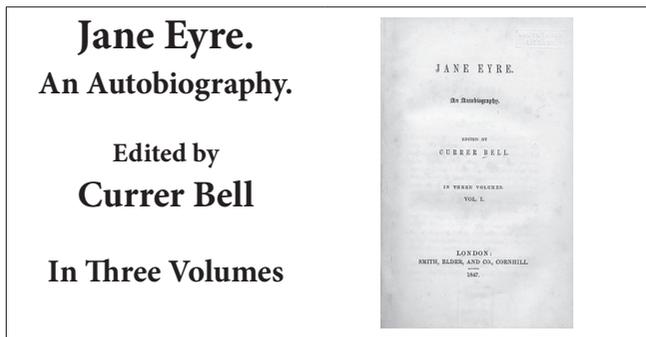
BEFORE READING

Exploring Your Expectations

The title

The novel you are going to read is normally known just as *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë. (You can see a selection of book covers for the novel on page 398 in After Reading.)

When first published, its full title was:



- In pairs share your first thoughts and questions about the original title. What do you think the first readers seeing this title page would expect from the book they were about to read?
- We know that *Jane Eyre* is a novel – a made-up story – by Charlotte Brontë. What sort of novel do you think it will be? Make a note of your first thoughts, then work through the activities below, adding to your expectations as you do.

Ingredients

Included on page 7 are some of the key 'ingredients' in *Jane Eyre*.

- Read the ingredients and think about the expectations you have of the novel, for example:
 - the type of novel it is (mystery, romance, adventure and so on)
 - the order you think the events might come in
 - the plot (i.e. what happens)
 - themes and issues it might explore.

An orphan	Two rescues
A cruel aunt	A revelation
A miserable school	An inheritance
A governess	A lie
A big house	A secret
Escape over the moors	A reconciliation
Two fires	A long-lost uncle
A mysterious visitor	An attic
An interrupted wedding ceremony	Mysterious noises and goings-on in the night

The settings

Jane Eyre is set in a number of different places. These are listed here, in the order Jane goes to them.

- Gateshead (a large house, owned by Mrs Reed, Jane’s aunt)
 - Lowood (a boarding school for poor and orphaned girls)
 - Thornfield Hall (a large house in the middle of the countryside)
 - Gateshead
 - Thornfield Hall
 - The moors (a bleak and wild landscape)
 - Moor House (a clergyman’s family house on the moors)
 - The school at Morton (a tiny school for village girls)
 - Thornfield Hall
 - Ferndean (a remote manor house, 30 miles from Thornfield Hall)
- Sketch out the journey Jane makes over the course of the book.
- What ideas do you get about the novel just from looking at the different settings? What do they add to your expectations of the novel?

Number crunching

The table below includes some key words in *Jane Eyre* (in order of the number of times they occur).

- What strikes you about them? Do any of the words seem to go together? Do any words stand out as being very different? What do they add to your expectations of the novel?

Not	1486	Silent	42	Stranger	31	Spirits	19
No	589	Strength	42	Observed	30	Bond	18
Little	332	None	40	Delight	29	Dreary	18
Never	277	Mother	39	Natural	29	Despair	16
Own	204	Existence	38	Beautiful	28	Endure	16
Away	145	Family	37	Promise	27	Cheerful	14
Without	138	Children	36	Plain	26	Conscience	14
New	101	Loved	35	Desire	25	Nobody	14
Strange	90	Afraid	34	Liberty	25	Tranquil	14
Home	80	Die	34	Lock/ed	24	Fearful	12
Alone	72	Friends	34	Solitude	22	Disappointment	11
Poor	57	Quietly	34	Contrary	21	Justice	11
Silence	55	Watched	34	Duty	20	Dreaded	10
Small	43	Dream	33	Nothing	20	Equal	10
Moon	42	Reader	32	Obedied	19		

CHAPTER I

There was no possibility of taking a walk that day. We had been wandering, indeed, in the leafless shrubbery an hour in the morning; but since dinner (Mrs. Reed, when there was no company, dined early) the cold winter wind had brought with it clouds so sombre, and a rain so penetrating, that further outdoor exercise was now out of the question.

I was glad of it: I never liked long walks, especially on chilly afternoons: dreadful to me was the coming home in the raw twilight, with nipped fingers and toes, and a heart saddened by the chidings¹ of Bessie, the nurse, and humbled by the consciousness of my physical inferiority to Eliza, John, and Georgiana Reed.

The said Eliza, John, and Georgiana were now clustered round their mamma in the drawing-room: she lay reclined on a sofa by the fireside, and with her darlings about her (for the time neither quarrelling nor crying) looked perfectly happy. Me, she had dispensed from² joining the group; saying, 'She regretted to be under the necessity of keeping me at a distance; but that until she heard from Bessie, and could discover by her own observation, that I was endeavouring in good earnest to acquire a more sociable and child-like disposition, a more attractive and sprightly manner – something lighter, franker, more natural, as it were – she really must exclude me from privileges intended only for contented, happy, little children.'

'What does Bessie say I have done?' I asked.

'Jane, I don't like cavillers³ or questioners: besides, there is something truly forbidding in a child taking up her elders in that manner. Be seated somewhere; and until you can speak pleasantly, remain silent.'

A small breakfast-room adjoined the drawing-room, I slipped in there. It contained a bookcase: I soon possessed myself of a volume, taking care that it should be one stored with pictures. I mounted into the window-seat: gathering up my feet, I sat cross-legged, like a Turk; and, having drawn the red moreen curtain⁴ nearly close, I was shrined⁵ in double retirement.

Folds of scarlet drapery shut in my view to the right hand; to the left were the clear panes of glass, protecting, but not separating me from the drear November day. At intervals, while turning over the leaves of my book, I studied the aspect of that winter afternoon. Afar, it offered a pale blank of mist and cloud; near a scene of wet lawn and storm-beat shrub, with ceaseless rain sweeping away wildly before a long and lamentable blast.

I returned to my book – Bewick's 'History of British Birds'⁶: the letterpress thereof I cared little for, generally speaking; and yet there were certain introductory pages that, child as I was, I could not pass quite as a blank. They were those which treat of the haunts of sea-fowl; of 'the solitary rocks and promontories'

1 Scolding, telling off, reproach

2 Exempted; Jane is not allowed to join the others on the others

3 People who argue

4 Moreen is a heavy fabric of wool or wool and cotton

5 Jane is describing the way she is hidden or enclosed in the window seat behind the heavy curtain

6 Jane quotes and paraphrases from the introduction to the second volume of this book (1804). The lines of poetry and six of the little scenes she describes are from volume 2 and one from volume 1 (1797)

by them only inhabited; of the coast of Norway, studded with isles from its southern extremity, the Lindeness, or Naze, to the North Cape –

Where the Northern Ocean, in vast whirls,
Boils round the naked, melancholy isles
Of farthest Thule; and the Atlantic surge
Pours in among the stormy Hebrides.

Nor could I pass unnoticed the suggestion of the bleak shores of Lapland, Siberia, Spitzbergen, Nova Zembla, Iceland, Greenland, with ‘the vast sweep of the Arctic Zone, and those forlorn regions of dreary space – that reservoir of frost and snow, where firm fields of ice, the accumulation of centuries of winters, glazed in Alpine heights above heights, surround the pole, and concentrate the multiplied rigours of extreme cold.’ Of these death-white realms I formed an idea of my own: shadowy, like all the half-comprehended notions that float dim through children’s brains, but strangely impressive. The words in these introductory pages connected themselves with the succeeding vignettes, and gave significance to the rock standing up alone in a sea of billow and spray; to the broken boat stranded on a desolate coast; to the cold and ghastly moon glancing through bars of cloud at a wreck just sinking.

I cannot tell what sentiment haunted the quite solitary churchyard, with its inscribed headstone; its gate, its two trees, its low horizon, girdled by a broken wall, and its newly-risen crescent, attesting the hour of eventide.

The two ships becalmed on a torpid sea, I believed to be marine phantoms.

The fiend pinning down the thief’s pack behind him, I passed over quickly: it was an object of terror.

So was the black, horned thing seated aloof on a rock, surveying a distant crowd surrounding a gallows.

Each picture told a story; mysterious often to my undeveloped understanding and imperfect feelings, yet ever profoundly interesting: as interesting as the tales Bessie sometimes narrated on winter evenings, when she chanced to be in good humour; and when, having brought her ironing-table to the nursery-hearth, she allowed us to sit about it, and while she got up Mrs. Reed’s lace frills, and crimped her nightcap-borders, fed our eager attention with passages of love and adventure taken from old fairy tales and older ballads; or (as at a later period I discovered) from the pages of ‘Pamela’, and ‘Henry, Earl of Moreland’.

With Bewick on my knee, I was then happy: happy at least in my way. I feared nothing but interruption, and that came too soon. The breakfast-room door opened.

‘Boh! Madam Mope!’ cried the voice of John Reed; then he paused: he found the room apparently empty.

‘Where the dickens is she!’ he continued. ‘Lizzy! Georgy! (calling to his sisters) Joan is not here: tell mamma she is run out into the rain – bad animal!’

‘It is well I drew the curtain,’ thought I; and I wished fervently he might not discover my hiding-place: nor would John Reed have found it out himself; he was

PAUSE POINT 1: CHAPTERS 1-4

Getting to know Jane

- Share your first thoughts about Jane and the way she is presented in the first four chapters.

Listed below are some of the ways in which you might describe Jane's character.

- On your own, choose the adjectives you think best fit with what you have seen of her so far (or add your own).
- Share your choices with a partner and see if you can agree on your top three adjectives.
- As a class, pool your impressions of Jane. Can you agree which adjectives seem to describe the most significant aspects of her character so far? You could display these on the wall, as part of your 'Jane's Journey of Life' board.

1. Independent	9. Plain	18. Depressed
2. Clear sense of right and wrong	10. Lonely	19. Resilient
3. Brave	11. Rebellious	20. Ungrateful
4. Imaginative	12. Determined	21. Naughty
5. Secretive	13. Passionate	22. Discontented
6. An observer	14. Dependent	23. Restless
7. Different	15. Grateful	24. Frightened
8. Aware of injustice and unfairness	16. Outspoken	25. Feisty
	17. Cheerful	

Because Jane is narrating her own story, we get a clear picture of her not only from what she says and does but from *how* she says it.

- Look again at the adjectives you selected. Choose one that you think can also be seen in Brontë's style of writing. Find a short passage which you think shows this well and annotate it with your ideas about how Brontë does this.

Readers respond – 2016

2016 was the 200th anniversary of Charlotte Brontë's birth. As part of the celebrations of her novels, the *Guardian* asked a range of writers and critics to talk about what *Jane Eyre* means to them. Three extracts from this article are included below. (You can read what all the novelists thought at <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/apr/16/charlotte-bronte-bicentenary-birth-jane-eyre-by-sarah-waters-margaret-drabble-jeanette-winterson>)

- Read the extracts. Choose a short quotation which does at least one of the following:
 - gives you a new idea
 - offers a critical view of the novel
 - says something you disagree with.
- Share your choice with a partner, then use it as the starting point for your own critical writing.

When I next read the book [...] I was struck by the extraordinary directness with which Rochester and Jane communicate. It thrills me, as it must have thrilled readers in 1847, how their talk transcends convention – cutting through politeness, forcing an intimacy that leaves them reeling, altered.

Esther Freud

[...] Brontë's very clever meshing of a plausibly rendered world with a world that is pretty much pure fantasy. I don't just mean fantasy in terms of those gothic elements, but in the bending of hard facts (the contemporary laws of the land) to bring Jane to her eventual reward. In this respect, the book is truthful about cruelty (Bertha's fate, especially), but it is also life-affirming. The central tension between actualities and make-believe ...

Andrew Motion

Jane Eyre is between two worlds and belongs in neither, although she will have to live in both during the course of the novel. She will be a beggar-maid, exposed on the moors, and a princess wooed by the King of Thornfield Hall, Mr Rochester. But if Jane Eyre has fairy tale and mythic qualities, she is also an intensely political creation. Jane genuinely does not believe that morality has anything to do with wealth, power or social standing. She repudiates the idea that women's mental capacities are less than those of men. She would rather live alone than accept a relationship that compromises her independence. Strong stuff even in our times, but revolutionary in 1847.

Helen Dunmore