



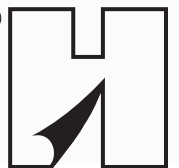
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STUDY GUIDE

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STUDY GUIDE OBJECTIVES

This study guide serves as a classroom tool for teachers and students, and addresses the following Common Core Standards and Connecticut State Arts Standards:

COMMON CORE STANDARDS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Reading Literature: Key Ideas and Details

- **Grades 9-10:** CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- **Grades 9-10:** CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
- **Grades 11-12:** CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
- **Grades 11-12:** CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.3 Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).

NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARDS FOR THEATRE

Theatre/Responding

- **TH:Re7.1.HSI-a.** Respond to what is seen, felt, and heard in a drama/theatre work to develop criteria for artistic choices.
- **TH:Re8.1.HSI-a.** Analyze and compare artistic choices developed from personal experiences in multiple drama/theatre works.
- **TH:Re8.1.HSI-b.** Identify and compare cultural perspectives and contexts that may influence the evaluation of a drama/theatre work.
- **TH:Re8.1.HSI-c.** Justify personal aesthetics, preferences, and beliefs through participation in and observation of a drama/theatre work.
- **TH:Re8.1.HSI-b.** Use new understandings of cultures and contexts to shape personal responses to drama/theatre work.
- **TH:Re9.1.HSI-b.** Consider the aesthetics of the production elements in a drama/theatre work.
- **TH:Re9.1.HSI-c.** Formulate a deeper understanding and appreciation of a drama/theatre work by considering its specific purpose or intended audience.

Theatre/Connecting

- **TH:Cn10.1.HSI-a.** Investigate how cultural perspectives, community ideas and personal beliefs impact a drama/theatre work.
- **TH:Cn11.2.HSI-b.** Use basic theatre research methods to better understand the social and cultural background of a drama/theatre work.

GUIDELINES FOR ATTENDING THE THEATRE

Attending live theatre is a unique experience with many valuable educational and social benefits. To ensure that all audience members are able to enjoy the performance, please take a few minutes to discuss the following audience etiquette topics with your students before you come to Hartford Stage.

- How is attending the theatre similar to and different from going to the movies? What behaviors are and are not appropriate when seeing a play? Why?
 - > Remind students that because the performance is live, the audience affects the performance! No two audiences are exactly the same and no two performances are exactly the same—this is part of what makes theatre so special.
- Theatre should be an enjoyable experience for the audience. Audience members are more than welcome to applaud when appropriate and laugh at the funny moments. Talking and calling out during the performance, however, are not allowed. Why might this be?
 - > Be sure to mention that not only would the people seated around them be able to hear their conversation, but the actors on stage could hear them, too. Theatres are constructed to carry sound efficiently!
- Any noise or light can be a distraction, so please remind students to make sure their cell phones are turned off. Texting, photography, and video recording are prohibited. Food and gum should not be taken into the theatre.
- Students should sit with their group as seated by the Front of House staff and should not leave their seats once the performance has begun.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Charlotte Brontë

By Krista DeVellis

Charlotte Brontë was born in 1816 and grew up in the village of Haworth, Yorkshire. Her father, Patrick Brontë, served as the pastoral minister in Haworth. When Charlotte was only five years old, her mother, Mary Brontë, passed away and her aunt Elizabeth begrudgingly stepped in to help raise Charlotte and her siblings. This aunt was not a kind caregiver, and the children were quickly sent away to boarding schools. Her two older sisters, Maria and Elizabeth, became ill while away at school and died young. After their sisters' deaths, the four remaining children returned home to Haworth. Patrick Brontë, an avid reader himself, encouraged the children to pursue knowledge and read from his home library. Charlotte's sisters, Emily and Anne, and her brother, Branwell, would often read and play together. Their home on the moors sat beside miles of wide-open grasslands dotted with shrubs and jagged rocks, which inspired many fanciful tales. They soon began writing their own stories in tiny handmade notebooks.

Being on the upper end of the working class meant that once they came of age all of the children needed to earn an income. Branwell had a rocky career, starting as a tutor. He was fired for reportedly having an affair with the lady of the house. Next he worked as a clerk for the railroad, but was fired when the numbers showed he had been pocketing money. He struggled with alcoholism and an addiction to opium, resulting in a financial burden on the family.

The options in the Victorian era for proper ladies' work were slim, so all three of the Brontë sisters worked as governesses for some time. Eventually they decided that they might start their own school based out of the Haworth parsonage. Charlotte and Anne studied in Brussels for a year to prepare to have their own school. It was in Brussels that Charlotte reportedly fell in love with her teacher. He was married, however, and did not reciprocate her affection. She returned to Haworth with a broken heart not only because of her unrequited love, but also because there was not enough interest in their budding school for it to run. The sisters thus turned their focus to publishing their writing for money. In 1846, they published their first book of poems under the pen-names Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell, to hide their female identities. The poetry book did not sell well, but their luck turned the following year when *Jane Eyre* was well-received.

Through the success of *Jane Eyre*, Charlotte and her sisters published other books under the false names. Emily wrote *Wuthering Heights*, and Anne wrote *Agnes Grey* and then *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*. People of the time speculated that the authors might be women from the strength and prominence of the female characters; however, it was not common knowledge for quite some time. In 1848, tragedy struck the Brontë family with a series of illnesses. Branwell died first of tuberculosis, shortly followed by Emily, and then Anne in 1849. Charlotte was again left heartbroken. She turned once more to her writing and published her final novel, *Villette*, in 1853. In 1854, after living a single life, Charlotte accepted a second marriage proposal from the Reverend Arthur Bell Nicholls. Their married life was cut short, however, when Charlotte died in 1855 from pregnancy complications.



Photograph of Charlotte Bronte, 1854.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Many people describe *Jane Eyre* as autobiographical. What parallels do you see between Charlotte Brontë's life and her character Jane's?
2. The Brontë Sisters all initially published their works under male pen-names. Would you rather hide your identity as an author in order to be published, or keep your name and run the risk of not being heard? Explain.
3. Charlotte's love of books and writing was shared throughout her family. In what ways are you influenced by your own family? Do you have similar interests, or very different ones?

THE GOTHIC NOVEL

By Carly Oliver

The Gothic novel is a genre of fiction that became popular during the late 18th century. Its popularity continued through the early 19th century, when Gothic elements began to bleed into mainstream Victorian fiction. Gothic elements feature prominently in *Jane Eyre*, as well as in some of today's popular entertainment. Below is a list of a few characteristics of Gothic fiction:

Supernatural or Seemingly Supernatural Elements:

This could be a ghost, a witch, a vampire, a monster, or something else that seems supernatural but actually has a completely rational explanation.

A Strange, Spooky Setting:

Ruined abbeys, decaying mansions, and haunted castles will all do, especially if you throw in a sinister, reclusive owner and plop them down in the middle of nowhere.

A Young Heroine in Danger:

Her innocence contrasts with the corrupt nature of the story's villain to establish a power struggle. If she faints frequently, so much the better.

A Cursed or Evil Villain Who Violates the Law and Social Customs at Will:

Powerful and dangerous, he acts without restraint and endangers the life and/or virtue of the story's heroine.

Really Bad Weather:

Thunder and lightning abound. It is stormy, misty, rainy, or windy. All the time.

Some Famous Gothic Novels:

- *Dracula* by Bram Stoker
- *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley
- *Rebecca* by Daphne du Maurier
- *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll And Mr. Hyde* by Robert Louis Stevenson



QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What Gothic elements do you see in *Jane Eyre*?
2. Can you think of any modern stories (novels, films, videogames, comics, etc.) that contain Gothic elements? Describe them.
3. Why do you think humans are drawn to entertainment that contains terrifying elements, like the Gothic novel? Do you enjoy frightening stories? Why or why not?
4. Once you have seen the show, do you think that the character of Jane in the Hartford Stage production fits the description of a gothic heroine? Why or why not?

Gothic castles like this one provided many dark corners and drafty halls to set the scene for such novels. Photograph of Dromore Castle circa 1900.

VICTORIAN EDUCATION: WHAT IS A GOVERNESS?

By Jess Black

The education system of Victorian England was very different than the one that exists in today's society. Public schools as we know them today were not common until the 1890s when certain laws made public education available to everyone. The type and quality of education children received was mostly determined by class: upper class children were sent to expensive private schools or their families hired a governess, while lower class children did not receive much education because their parents could not afford to pay for schooling.

If they had enough money to be educated, another factor that affected a child's education during this time was gender. At the age of 8, boys were sent away to school, where they studied academic topics to prepare them to become businessmen. Girls stayed with their families at home and often got their education through a governess. The topics that girls studied were vastly different than what boys studied. The most common topics that were deemed suitable for an upper class girl to learn were reading, writing, arithmetic, French, geography, drawing, dancing, playing the piano, and etiquette on how to conduct oneself properly in society. According to Victorian History scholar Kathryn Hughes, an upper class girl's education was designed to "attract an eligible suitor in a very crowded marriage market." In the play *Jane Eyre*, Jane attends Lowood Charity School, a boarding school for poor and orphaned girls. She attends this school for six years as a student, and eventually teaches here for two years. Lowood is known for its "strict schedule, its rules and systems" (Brontë). Her schooling here greatly affects how she behaves as an adult. Mr. Rochester even compares her life to that of a nun at one point during their discussions of Jane's past.



A watercolor drawing depicting Jane, Rochester, and Adelle.
Painted by Frederick Walker, A.R.A. in 1899.

employer's home was complicated. A governess was not a servant, the lowest position, but she was also not a part of the family, the highest position. Her role lay somewhere in between, and for that reason many governesses were isolated and lonely.

Many early 19th-century novels, such as *Jane Eyre*, feature a governess as the protagonist. Hughes speculates that the position was so popular in novels because "the governess was a blank slate onto which all possibilities were open, so that novelists could write any plot that they wanted (Hughes)." Charlotte Brontë most likely chose to feature a governess in her novel because of the freedom in storytelling the position afforded, and also because Brontë herself worked as a governess for several years during her lifetime. Jane was able to create her own destiny by becoming a governess and leave her old life behind. She could make her own money and live away from her abusive family. Becoming a governess for Jane meant starting a new life.

After her time at Lowood, Jane begins work as a governess for Mr. Rochester's ward at Thornfield Hall. In Victorian society, governesses were young women from the middle class who had received an education. Governesses were employed by a wealthy family to live with and teach the children of the family. Becoming a governess was one of the only ways a middle class woman could have an independent source of income without being labeled as working class. It was reported that in 1851, 25,000 women made their living working as governesses (Hughes). For a family to employ a governess was a sign of status and high class; it showed that the family had enough money to pay someone to live in their home and teach their children. The governess' position of status in her

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. In Victorian England, two large factors that affected a child's education were class and gender. What factors affect a child's education today?
2. Why was the governess' position of status in the family so complicated? Why were they seen as "in between?"
3. If you lived in Victorian England, would you want to be a governess? Why or why not?
4. How did becoming a governess give Jane a new start at life?

ETIQUETTE RULES DURING THE VICTORIAN ERA

By Malena Gordo

Etiquette Rules: the formal rules of correct or polite behavior in society or among members of a particular profession.

Victorian era: in British history, the period between approximately 1820 and 1914, corresponding roughly but not exactly to the period of Queen Victoria's reign (1837-1901).

Queen Victoria: is associated with Britain's great age of industrial expansion, economic progress and, especially, empire. At her death, it was said, Britain had a worldwide empire on which the sun never set.

The Victorians were known for having a very extensive and detailed set of etiquette rules, which today might sound excessive and even quite silly. However, during Victorian times, these rules, which were highly gender oriented, were the core of society's structure and smooth functioning. Knowing and following these regulations was a sign of respect for everyone else, including servants, acquaintances, nobility and clergy. If you wanted to be a proper Victorian, you had better follow each of these extravagant rules.

Here are some of our favorites:

- A lady should wear white gloves, not yellow. Lemon-colored gloves were too ostentatious (Robinson).
- A gentleman was not supposed to bow from a window to a lady on the street, However, he may bow slightly from the street if he was recognized by a lady in a window (Bailey).
- It was illegal to celebrate a marriage after mid-day (Robinson).
- A lady was not supposed to have more than one glass of champagne (Robinson).
- On the street, it was forbidden for young ladies to look around for acquaintances or stop to chat in a crowded thoroughfare (McGrath).
- Men were not supposed to attract attention with their perfume, but rather with their manners, clothing, and behavior. Strong perfumes were forbidden during the Victorian era. It was considered bad taste if a gentlemen used too much perfume (Mishkov).
- Visitors could arrive at a home between 3 and 5 p.m. If a lady happened to be there, she was expected to be properly dressed and ready for her visitors. The closer the visitors, the later they could arrive (McGrath).
- If guests were invited at one o'clock they were supposed to arrive at two o'clock (Robinson).
- A gentleman never smoked in the presence of a lady (McGrath).



Queen Victoria, seen here in a portrait photo, was idolized as the ideal Victorian woman. Portrait by John Jabez Edwin Mayal.

- It was considered improper to address someone to whom you had not been formally presented. Social inferiors were presented to social superiors in an introduction. Ladies were always introduced to gentlemen regardless of rank (McGrath).
- When crossing a muddy street, a lady was supposed to lift her dress with the right hand just a little above the ankle (Bailey).
- During dinner, a gentleman conversed with the lady to his right (Bailey).
- A lady could dance with a man twice in a row, but not three times (Bailey).
- In a carriage ride, a gentleman never sat next to a lady who was not a relative. Instead he sat with his back to the horses, facing the lady on the opposite seat (Bailey).
- When people arrived in town for an extended visit, it was expected of them to go around leaving calling cards. This was a way to announce their presence and arrange visits to keep up with old acquaintances (McGrath).

WHAT TO DO WITH A MADWOMAN: A MORAL DILEMMA FOR THE VICTORIAN ERA

By Carly Oliver

WARNING: This article contains spoilers!

In Charlotte Brontë's 1847 novel *Jane Eyre*, the title character's time as a governess at Thornfield Hall is haunted by the presence of an enigmatic "madwoman" confined to a shadowy third-story chamber of the manor. Her presence similarly looms over Jane's employer and the estate's proprietor, Mr. Rochester, who harbors a dark secret concerning this woman's true identity. However, it is not only the characters in the novel who are haunted by the figure of the madwoman; the whole of Victorian society was overshadowed by the egregious failings of its mental health care system and confronted with the need to seek better solutions. At this critical time of self-reflection and change, Mr. Rochester, Brontë herself, and society at large all faced the moral dilemma of what to do with society's "madmen" and "madwomen."

In Europe, the concept of public mental health institutions began in the Middle Ages, when some small Christian establishments began offering shelter to those afflicted with mental illness. London's famous Bedlam asylum, originally founded in 1247 as a homeless shelter, was among these ("Bethlem Royal Hospital"). Before this time, such individuals were cared for by loved ones or, if they did not have anyone willing to take them in, left to wander the streets and beg. By the 19th century, extensive funding was going into the construction of "lunatic asylums," as they were then known, and the number of patients in England alone went from about 10,000 to about 100,000 ("Mental Institutions").

Documentation of the atrocities committed in these asylums abounds. The 1844 Report of the Metropolitan Commissioners in Lunacy, a body created to oversee asylums in England and Wales, describes eleven institutions deemed worthy of "almost unqualified censure." It goes on to elaborate on the conditions in some of these establishments: filthy bedding and clothes, an odor of human excrement, patients crowded together in tiny spaces and often chained to their beds at night. The report also condemns the practice of exploiting those with mental illnesses for personal financial gain, denouncing asylum proprietors who accepted payment for patient care, but instead used the funds to live in luxury while neglecting their patients (Report of the Metropolitan Commissioners). Moreover, the patients' misfortune was made a source of entertainment. At Bedlam, Londoners could pay a penny to gaze upon the asylum's inmates.

Class and gender inequity were also of serious concern in the Victorian mental health care system. Before the widespread advent of asylums, the "pauper lunatics" were handled under poor law, vagrancy law, or criminal law, and were likely to end up in workhouses or prisons rather than receive the medical attention they needed ("Lunatic Asylums, Psychiatric Hospitals and Mental Health"). Conversely, not all those sent to insane asylums truly suffered from mental illness. According to "Restoring Perspective: Life and Treatment at London's Asylum," a digital exhibit based on artifacts from the London Psychiatric Hospital, "Insanity was classified as any behavior that was outside of the accepted social norms of middle class society." Individuals who did not conform to prescribed behavioral standards or who were seen as otherwise undesirable could easily be locked away. And, in a patriarchal society, it was often women who found themselves the victims of this. Once declared insane by a male relative, women were left with little recourse, generally having no right to appeal the decision ("Women and Psychiatry").

The British government made various attempts at reform, beginning with the Madhouses Act of 1774, which fined institutions who took in patients without physician's orders and required that asylums be inspected and licensed by the Royal College of Physicians. Abuses continued in spite of this and other reform acts. Nonetheless, changing philosophy regarding patient treatment eventually began to take hold. William Tuke, who was key in this movement, became the first asylum director to reject the use of force and physical restraint when he founded the York Retreat in the 1790s ("Mental Institutions"). His approach, which became known as moral treatment, relied on the idea that patients should be treated as children rather than animals. He ran his asylum as a strict household where patients were expected to complete chores and follow certain rules but were also given opportunities for recreation and social interaction. Although later criticized for being paternalistic, Tuke's approach was progressive for the time and decidedly more humane ("Moral Treatment").

It was during this period of evolution and conflicting attitudes in mental health care that Brontë wrote *Jane Eyre*; therefore, both the author and her characters were faced with the dilemma of how to handle the character of Bertha, the "madwoman" in the novel. Rochester claims to have taken a conscientious approach towards Bertha's care by locking her away in the third-story chamber of his manor. He points out that he could have instead chosen to lodge her at his other estate in the woods where "those damp walls would soon have eased [him] of her charge," but counters that he is not one to commit "indirect assassination, even of what [he] most hate[s]" (Brontë). However, as Christopher Gabbard points out in his article "From Custodial Care to Caring Labor: The Discourse of Who Cares in *Jane Eyre*," Rochester does not choose to send Bertha to one of the more progressive asylums of the time, where she could have received treatment for her condition. Instead, he adheres to the soon to be outdated principles of confinement and physical restraint. He also confesses little love for Bertha, calling her a "monster" and admitting that his decision for her care was based in a desire for secrecy so as to escape the shame of being wed to a "madwoman" (Brontë).

Brontë's inhuman characterization of Bertha aligns with Rochester's and reflects the pre-moral treatment of the insane as if they were animals. When Jane, our narrator, first meets Bertha, she describes her as a "clothed hyena" with "shaggy locks" who "snatched and growled like some strange wild animal" (Brontë). However, Brontë also has Jane counter this description with a more sympathetic opinion when she challenges Rochester: "Sir,... you are inexorable for that unfortunate lady: you speak of her with hate—with vindictive antipathy. It is cruel—she cannot help being mad" (Brontë). This criticism is progressive in light of society's and Rochester's belief that mental illness could be at least partially the fault of an individual's "weak moral nature" ("Class, Gender, and the Asylum"). It seems to be this latter attitude that Brontë ultimately endorsed. Some time after the novel's publication, the author apologized for her insensitive portrayal of Bertha by writing, "It is true that profound pity ought to be the only sentiment elicited by the view of such degradation, and equally true is it that I have not sufficiently dwelt on that feeling; I have erred in making horror too predominant" (qtd. in Gabbard). Compassion prevailed in Brontë's view of mental illness, just as it was beginning to do historically.

For Brontë and her Victorian contemporaries, the question of what to do with a "madwoman" was far from clear. Changing attitudes influenced Brontë's writing, as well as laws and medical practices of the time. Viewed through this lens, the character of Bertha becomes much more than the "madwoman" locked away in the attic. Rather, she is the haunting embodiment of Victorian society's dilemma of how to address mental illness.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How has mental health care changed since the Victorian era?
2. If you had a loved one with a mental illness during the Victorian era, what care option would you choose for them? Why?
3. If you were Rochester, what plan of action would you take concerning Bertha? Why?
4. When reinterpreting classic works like *Jane Eyre*, do you think it is better to include a problematic character portrayal, like that of Bertha, or to cut such characters from the story entirely?

VICTORIAN CLASS DIFFERENCES

By Krista DeVellis

In her novel *Jane Eyre*, Charlotte Brontë wrote about the lifestyle that she was accustomed to: that of a middle-class, working woman. The Victorian era in England was one of great disparity, and depending upon what social and financial status a person was born into, that is where they likely stayed. Across the classes, however, 19th century women shared a lack of control over their own lives. Here we will look into the lives of two hypothetical women, one of the lower working class, and one of the upper class.



A Photograph of a Glasgow slum, depicting a working class woman and her two children. Photo taken by Thomas Annan, 1868.

	Lower Class	Upper Class
0-5 years old	In Victorian England, more children meant more people to earn income. Add that to the high child mortality rate due to cramped and unhygienic city living, and one can see why a lower class girl would grow up with 10-12 siblings. Her parents cannot afford any help, so childcare falls to family. Her large family lives together in two rooms.	In Middle and Upper Class families, parents might have 3-8 children to ensure that there is a male heir to inherit their property and carry on the family name. A young girl and her siblings are raised by a nanny. She shares a room with her sisters in a large home.
5-10 years old	She has simple second-hand clothing, and perhaps a rag doll to play with. Around eight years old she is hired to work in a textile factory, cleaning up debris under the machines as they run.	She has her own dresses made for her, and has several toys like wooden dolls and skipping ropes. She starts lessons with a governess to read and write, and to follow strict rules of etiquette.
10-20 years old	As she builds her trade skills, she continues to work for several hours a day as a seamstress. When she returns home she completes household chores such as laundry, cooking, and taking care of her younger siblings.	She is sent away for several months at a time to an all-girls boarding school. Here she learns "accomplishments" like embroidery, speaking French, and piano. Discipline at the school might include humiliation, isolation, or a cane.
20-30 years old	She meets a young man at Sunday church service, and they both save up for a year to marry and move in together. He doesn't allow her to work outside of the home, so she mends and hems clothing to supplement his factory job. He works for 14 hours a day, so she is left to raise their children, tend to her handiwork, and domestic duties.	Always chaperoned by her mother or an aunt, she goes to social events such as balls and the opera. At one such event she meets a suitor of the same financial rank. He courts her for several months before proposing. After a lavish wedding and honeymoon, her duties turn to bearing children and making sure everything in their home (including herself) looks its finest.
30-40 years old	She loses two children to cholera. A few years later, her mother-in-law's husband dies, so she comes to live with them. Her mother-in-law is another mouth to feed, but she helps with the mending and cooking.	She hosts tea and dinner parties, and oversees the servants' work to keep their large house running. She keeps up with the latest fashions. She travels often with her husband on holiday. She sees her children at various times throughout the day.
40-50 years old	At 47, she contracts typhus and after battling the illness for two weeks, she dies. Her oldest daughter takes responsibility for her younger siblings and her mother's mending work.	With her younger children away at school and her husband often out on business, she focuses much of her attention on finding suitable husbands for her oldest daughters. She chaperones them to events, and talks with her neighbors at dinner parties, praising their pleasant qualities.
50+ years old		Her days of keeping house and socializing blend together as the years go on. Her children marry off. Her husband dies at 65, and her oldest son takes over his place in business. Her daughter-in-law now runs the household. She reads her women's magazines and has a weekly tea with her neighbors. She lives until age 82.

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