

## *Jane Eyre* Analysis Response

These questions will provide a deeper literary focus on *Jane Eyre*. Answer the questions critically with an analytical eye. Keep in mind your goal is to be a “professional reader.”

To assist you in the critical analysis, refer to Foster’s, *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*. Your goal is to analyze with referenced support the deeper meaning behind the text, and Brontë’s literary achievement. Note your goal is not to write a plot summary.

### Preface

1. Analyze the quote "*Conventionality is not morality. Self-righteousness is not religion.*" (vii) In light of what critics of the time had to say about *Jane Eyre*, what is the thrust of Brontë's response?

### Chapter 1

2. What purpose do the descriptive passages from Berwick's *History of British Birds* serve at this stage of the text?

### Chapter 2

3. *Jane Eyre* was a watershed novel at the time it was written because it blended two styles of novels: the *romantic* novel and the *gothic* novel. According to Webster's *Encyclopedic Dictionary of the English Language*, romanticism emphasized content rather than form; encouraged "freedom of treatment," "introspection," and celebrated "nature, the common man, and freedom of the spirit." The same source defines the gothic novel as a type of fiction "characterized by picturesque settings; an atmosphere of mystery, gloom, and terror; supernatural or fantastic occurrences; and violent and macabre events." Where do you see both elements in the novel so far? In addition, find at least one other example for each style in the rest of the novel.
4. In chapters 1 and 2 Jane Eyre’s character is established. What is it? How does this enhance the mood and reveal the narrator’s attitude?

### Chapter 3

5. Most readers of today are familiar with the signs of child abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect. While these terms were arguably unknown to Brontë in the mid 19th century, how does her treatment of Jane reflect what we know about them?

### Chapter 4

6. What biblical allusions on page 26 heighten the reader’s contempt for Brocklehurst?

Refer to other biblical allusions and their meanings (e.g. pages 172, 248, 345 etc.).

### Chapter 5

7. Charlotte Brontë incorporates different literary devices. Explain and demonstrate the narrative “change,” on page 40 when "Jane" first directly addresses the "reader." In addition such pages as: 85, 350, 381, 388, 405, etc. Jane addresses the reader. Explain what is the author’s purpose and effect?

## Chapter 6

8. In this chapter, Jane receives another lesson in endurance, this time from Helen Burns. Describe Burns' diction and speech, and discuss her philosophy.

## Chapter 7

9. Discuss Brontë's feelings on the "nature of man" (60). Note (tone) whether she is being serious or tongue-in-cheek? (irony)

## Chapter 8

10. Explain how in *Jane Eyre*, the novel breaks many rules about a mistreated heroine.

## Chapter 9

11. Outline the parallels between life at Lowood in the Spring, and Jane's new lifestyle. Then explain how this "pathetic fallacy" is a form of foreshadowing.

## Chapter 10

12. After reading the first paragraph of chapter 10, discuss whether Brontë means that she has only related events that are important, or that she means that only those events given are important, as they pertain to Jane's character development?

## Chapter 11

13. Analyze and discuss the first two paragraphs in chapter 11, with regard to literary technique and the nature of the narrator.

## Chapter 12

14. Read the passages on pages 100-101. What is the link between the paragraphs? How does this support the universal theme, "Women as an inferior sex"?
15. Provide examples to support Charlotte Brontë's social criticism of England's Victorian class attitudes (i.e.: strict social hierarchy, society's boundaries and its effects of social class).

## Chapter 13

16. Rochester studies Jane's paintings on pages 115-117. How does this incident contribute to the story? What literary elements and techniques does Brontë use to convey her message (e.g. sensory detail, imagery, diction, syntax, etc.)?

## Chapter 14

17. When Rochester says he is "paving hell with energy" and that he is "laying down good intentions," he is alluding to an old saying: "The road to Hell is paved with good intentions." This quote has been attributed to Karl Marx. Use this quote as a jumping-off point for a discussion and analysis of *Jane Eyre* from a Marxist perspective. (See Bedford *Literary criticism* for explanation.)
18. On page 122, how does the diction enhance the mood or reveal the narrator's attitude?

## Chapter 15

19. Discuss how, both literally and figuratively, Jane becomes more affectionate and tolerant of Adèle.

## Chapter 16

20. Explain the meaning behind the fact that Jane creates a harsh piece of artwork for herself and a lovely piece of artwork depicting Miss Ingram?

## Chapter 17

21. What is the narrative shift at the beginning of the serving of coffee on page 162? Why does Bronte do this, and what is the effect on the reader?

## Chapter 18

22. Sometimes Jane's naïveté offers Brontë a chance to satirize the attitudes and actions of aristocracy. In the first full paragraph on page 176, analyze how Brontë satirizes love as seen by the upper class?

## Chapter 19

23. Interpret and analyze the section beginning with "Here is to your health, ministrant spirit!" (192) until the end of the chapter.

## Chapter 20

24. What narrative technique changes on page 198, and why? Also, at this point in the novel, it is very clear that Rochester is deeply involved with some mystery surrounding Grace Poole. At the end of the chapter, who does he initially hint may help him find happiness?

## Chapter 21

25. Describe the resolution of the relationship between Jane and Mrs. Reed. Is it different from what you expected? Would it have been different from what Brontë's audience would have expected?

## Chapter 22

26. Explain how Chapter 22 deals ostensibly with Jane's return to Thornwood. And discuss what function this chapter might serve in terms of the entire text?

## Chapter 23

27. Pay attention to Brontë's description of Thornfield in summer at the beginning of the chapter. Notice how it contrasts the events of the rest of the chapter. Notice also the change of weather and the destruction of the chestnut tree. Now discuss and outline these incidents of "pathetic fallacy", and what they are obviously crafted to do, by Bronte. Include in your discussion, an explanation of the effect they are designed to achieve on the reader?

Chapter 24

28. This chapter is devoted to Jane Eyre. Explain how Jane is different than most brides of romance stories? Then discuss how Brontë's audience would have interpreted her behavior?

Chapter 25

29. When Jane regards her wedding gown on page 261, what mood does Brontë establish?

Chapter 26

30. What is the irony in Jane wearing "the plain square of blond" veil for her wedding (272)?

Chapter 27

31. Compare and contrast the symbolism of "(a) wind fresh from Europe" (293) and the "fiery West Indian night" (292). What do these symbols represent? Discuss their inherent irony.

Chapter 28

32. The suffering that Jane endures is compounded by her belief that she has "no claim to ask" for help (312). How is this philosophy in keeping with her character?

Chapter 29

33. Where do the names Mary, Diana, St. John, and Hannah come from, and what is the significance attached to those names?

Chapter 30

34. Compare the Rivers family to the Reed family. In what way are they similar? In what way are they foils? What is the significance of the names?

Chapter 31

35. Why does Jane begin this chapter in the present tense? Explain your answer in terms of this method used throughout the novel.

Chapter 32

36. A good minister is an example to his congregation; followers will learn "truth" by simply observing the daily actions of their pastor. Does St. James Rivers impart any "truths" to Jane?

Chapter 33

37. In this chapter, the final pieces of the puzzle fit together. Discuss whether this resolution is too coincidental, or if it is satisfactory? Explain your decision in terms of the elements of literature and/or plot structure.

Chapter 34

38. Characterize the similarities and differences between St. John's offer of marriage and Rochester's. Why does Jane refuse St. John when she is willing to accept a life with him in India? (Couldn't she grow to love him?) How does her response fit in with what we know about Jane as a character?

Chapter 35

39. Does Jane's near surrender to St. John Rivers, stopped only by "the voice of Edward Fairfax Rochester" speaks to her "in pain and woe" (401) diminish her strength of character?

Chapter 36

40. In this chapter we learn the fate of Rochester, Bertha Mason, and Thornfield Hall. Did Brontë do a good job of tying up loose ends? Explain.

Chapter 37

41. Notice that Brontë makes a direct jump from the inn at Millcote to Rochester's house at Ferndean. Why does she do this? What effect might she wish to achieve?

Chapter 38

42. The novel begins with the antics of John Reed and closes with the antics of St. John Rivers. Discuss this aspect in terms of any appropriate elements of literature.

In General:

43. Bronte includes different literary devices to develop the major themes. Discuss how they contribute to the overall themes:  
Motif – fire and ice. Compare to Robert Frost's poem, "Fire and Ice".  
Symbolism – Red Room, Chestnut tree  
Anaphora – such as: see/ saw