

Control-click here to go to the resource

A comprehensive study pack

KS5 > Prose > *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Bronte

How it works

This is a fantastic resource with loads of great ideas for classroom activity. I'm not so keen on the lists of questions and the notes, though these would no doubt be extremely useful to a teacher who has either not studied the novel before or not taught it. I'm much more interested in the dynamic activities.

Try this!

1. The card sort activity is really nice, in which students have to identify which statement goes with each character. There is a sufficient number and variety of statements for this to be quite challenging, and enough 'grey areas' to provoke some really interesting debate amongst students. With stronger students, I'd challenge them to consider if any of the statements could be applied to more than one character, particularly if they have tended to view characters as diametrical opposites.
2. The 'love is' activity is really nice, and I've used much the same idea in teaching John Donne's love poems, and it works really well. I also like activities that involve students reviewing their thinking at the start and end of the study of a text, as this can be very interesting. The list of suggested love poems to use is excellent – a really intriguing and challenging selection. Students could of course add their own selections. When I did this with John Donne, I extended it by using A.C. Grayling's philosophical explanation of how different times and cultures have defined love, as published as a column in the *Guardian* and in his book, *The Meaning of Things*.
3. Who said it to whom? A nice activity for getting students to focus on precise detail, and good for getting them to focus on memorable quotations if they are faced with a closed book exam. I like to use this technique at the end of each block of chapters we've focused on in class. It would also work well as a test. And "I am Heathcliff," declaimed loudly and passionately on top of a desk is my favourite classroom activity when teaching this novel – they need to FEEL the passion and only standing on top of a desk will do ...

AS Module 1

Introduction to the Study of Literature – *Wuthering Heights*

Assessment Objectives:

AO		Worth?
1	Communicate clearly the knowledge, understanding and insight appropriate to literary study, using appropriate terminology and accurate and coherent written expression	10%
2i	Respond with knowledge and understanding to a literary text	5%
3	Show detailed understanding of the ways in which writers' choices of form, structure and language shape meaning	10%
4	Articulate independent opinions and judgements, informed by different interpretations of literary texts by other readers	5%
5i	Show understanding of the contexts in which literary texts are written and understood	5%

This is an OPEN BOOK examination

Cathy's chapter 9 speech, explaining her feelings to Nelly

My great miseries in this world have been Heathcliff's miseries, and I watched and felt each from the beginning: my great thought in living is himself. If all else perished and, and *he* remained, I should still continue to be; and if all else remained, and he were annihilated, the universe would turn to a mighty stranger: I should not seem a part of it. My love for Linton is like the foliage in the woods: time will change it, I'm well aware, as winter changes the trees. My love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rocks beneath: a source of little visible delight, but necessary. Nelly, I *am* Heathcliff! He's always, always in my mind: not as a pleasure, any more than I am always a pleasure to myself, but as my own being.

Wuthering Heights; chapter 9

Chapter 2

1. Identify the light-relief that Lockwood as narrator brings to this chapter. What else is revealed about his personality?
2. What contrasts are made between Lockwood and the inhabitants of Wuthering Heights?
3. What contradictory elements are revealed in the character of Hareton Earnshaw?
4. How is suspense built up in this chapter?

Chapter 3

1. Identify the Gothic elements in this chapter.
2. What does Catherine Earnshaw's diary add to the narrative?
3. How does the portrayal of Hindley and Frances' relationship contrast with the love between Heathcliff and Cathy?
4. How is the extent of Heathcliff's anguish revealed when he hears of Lockwood's "dream"?
5. How is suspense built up in this chapter?

Chapter 4

1. Why does Emily Brontë choose to change narrators in this chapter? Contrast Nellie and Lockwood's narrative styles.
2. What picture is built up of the young Heathcliff in this chapter? Why does Nellie liken his history to that of a cuckoo? (General knowledge needed here...)
3. Do you have more sympathy for Hindley or Heathcliff in this chapter? Why?

Chapter 5

1. What do we learn of the young Cathy in this chapter?
2. What is Nellie's opinion of Joseph?
3. How does Emily Brontë portray the idea of good and evil in this chapter?

Chapter 6

1. "We don't in general take to foreigners here". From what you know so far of Wuthering Heights, coupled with Nellie's hints, what leads us to believe that Frances Earnshaw won't "last long" at the Heights?
2. Explain the circumstances that encourage Heathcliff and Cathy to grow even closer in this chapter. Describe their relationship.
3. How are the Linton children contrasted with Cathy and Heathcliff in this chapter?
4. Nellie is Heathcliff's confidante in this chapter. Why is this an important narrative device in the novel?

Chapter 7

1. How has Cathy's stay at Thrushcross Grange affected her relationship with Heathcliff?
2. Do the reader and Nellie differ in their sympathy for Heathcliff?
3. What impression of Edgar Linton is conveyed in this chapter?
4. Is Nellie right in her description of Cathy as "an unfeeling child...so selfish"? Consider the novel as a whole.
5. What is the effect at the end of the chapter of reverting back to Lockwood's narrative?

Chapter 8

1. How does Dr Kenneth "the old croaker" fit in with what we've come to expect from people in this locality?
2. Hindley's treatment of Heathcliff "was enough to make a fiend of a saint." With regard to the nature vs nurture debate, is it any wonder that he turns out as he does?
3. Does the reader have any sympathy for Hindley?
4. In this chapter, Cathy is fifteen. How does Nellie feel about her? Is she justified?
5. Edgar and Heathcliff couldn't be more different to one another. Nellie compares Heathcliff to a "bleak, hilly coal country" whilst Edgar is a "beautiful, fertile valley". Explain in your own words how they are different.

Wuthering Heights

By Emily Bronte

Card sort - which description belongs to which character

Suffers after rejection by Catherine, after her death and prior to his own	Bullied and degraded by Hindley	Brutal, cruel and sadistic in his treatment of Isabella / the younger generation	Will go to any lengths to gain revenge; denies natural feelings for Hareton as a result.
Rejects conventional Christian morality; often described in diabolical terms.	Passionate, strong willed	Ringleader	Stands up to Hindley and Joseph
At home on the moors	Believes in union with Heathcliff after death	Rebellious, wild	Self-centred
Betrays her love for Heathcliff by marrying Edgar	Status-conscious	Cruel in her treatment of Isabella when she discovers her attachment to Heathcliff and towards Edgar on Heathcliff's return.	Extreme, hysterical
Loyal to her employers and acts in their best interests	Warm and approachable	Confidante of Catherine, Heathcliff, Isabella and Cathy.	Lively storyteller with a remarkable memory for names, dates and events.
Self-educated	Represents the common sense viewpoint and normal standards of behaviour	Believes in conventional morality and religion	Interfering; a natural busybody.
Civilised	Conventionally religious	Important member of the community – a magistrate etc	Loyal to Catherine's memory; observes annual ritual of visiting her grave
Weak for tolerating his wife's relationship with Heathcliff and for not fully protecting Cathy from him	Stubborn in his refusal to rescue Isabella when she has married Heathcliff	Ousted from rightful place by Heathcliff	Capable of affection in relationship with Frances
Mystery surrounds his origins, an orphan	Kindred spirit to Catherine	Passionate	Clever

Wuthering Heights
By Emily Bronte

Jealous of Heathcliff and determined to gain vengeance	Violent and cruel in treatment of Heathcliff	Lacks self discipline; degenerates after wife's death into drunk and gambler, making it easy for Heathcliff to overcome him	Has the best qualities of her parents; strong-willed like her mother but affectionate, loving and loyal like her father
Spirited – stands up to Heathcliff	Equally at home at Thrushcross Grange and Wuthering Heights	Determined, with a strong survival instinct	Sensitive to those she cares for
Tames and re-educates the boorish Hareton	Can be devious in getting her own way	Precocious as a child	Embodies the best qualities of his parents
Displays ancient Earnshaw character – strong, tough, resilient, spirited, proud	Sensitive, feels deeply, capable of strong attachments	Displays generosity of spirit	Loyal to Heathcliff
Boorish, uncivilised, violent	In need of affection	Combines worst qualities of parents – Isabella's weakness and Heathcliff's cruelty	Timid – afraid of Heathcliff
Unable to sympathise with anyone else; self-pitying	Manipulative, dishonest, deceptive	Feels stifled/overcome on the moors	Educated, civilised
Representative of the outside world	Keen observer	Sensitive to mood of people and place	Vain, self-conscious
Finds it hard to commit himself emotionally and therefore makes a good contrast to Heathcliff and Catherine	Out of place in his surroundings	Tends to jump to conclusions and impose his own interpretations on situations which he doesn't fully understand.	
Self-righteous, lecturing others on their responsibilities	Critical of others	Decided in her views but can be swayed; sometimes ambivalent, appearing to disapprove of relationships and then aiding their development.	Gentle and loving husband and father

Sample Essay

Remind yourself of the section from Chapter 16 of *Wuthering Heights*, reading from the beginning of the chapter up to ‘He was beyond my skills to quiet or console.’

Then answer **all three** parts of the question:

1. What does this extract reveal about the characters of Edgar and Heathcliff?
2. What methods does Emily Brontë use in this extract to reveal the anguish of Heathcliff?

In the light of the events within the novel, do you think that Heathcliff is a fiend from hell or a victim of social prejudice?

What does this extract reveal about the characters of Edgar and Heathcliff?

Following the death, in childbirth, of Catherine Earnshaw, the characters of Edgar and Heathcliff are positioned as opposites which provides the reader with a clear insight into their respective characters. Their reactions to the death of the woman that both were in love with are entirely different; whilst ‘[Edgar’s] distraction at his bereavement is a subject too painful to be dwelt on’, Heathcliff reacts in a manner which we have come to expect, dashing ‘his head against the knotted trunk’ and howling his violent despair for all the world to hear. This sums up the respective characters for the reader. Whilst both characters are profoundly affected by the death of Catherine, they deal with it in very different ways. Edgar’s grief is more rational than that of Heathcliff, although it is in no way entirely rational. This, I am sure, is a product of his upbringing and the social class from which he comes. As Heathcliff’s background is unknown, he is not forced to behave in what might be considered a conventionally “appropriate” manner. He is able, therefore, to express his desire that she ‘wake in torment’ without concern for the reaction of others.

Although Edgar is affected by the death of his wife, his is a quiet and restrained sadness, kept within the bounds of Thrushcross Grange. Heathcliff, on the other hand, does his initial mourning in the grounds of the house. Whilst Edgar spends the days and nights before the burial watching over the coffin, ‘a silent guardian’ in the drawing room, Heathcliff ‘spent his nights, at least, outside’. This, I believe, is a significant difference – Edgar’s despair reflects the culture in which he was brought up, whereas Heathcliff is restrained by no such conventions and is thus able to grieve for Catherine near the moors where they were at their happiest together.

Another factor which demonstrates the differences between the two characters is that Edgar is capable of containing his emotion but Heathcliff is not and so ‘he held a silent combat with his inward agony’. He tries and fails, being seized with ‘a sudden paroxysm of ungovernable passion.’ The death of Catherine is, for both characters, the end of their lives as they know them but they react differently to this fact. ‘Like a savage beast’ Heathcliff claims that he ‘*cannot* live without [his] life! [He] *cannot* live without [his] soul!’ whereas Edgar reflects the pallor of his dead wife, looking ‘almost as deathlike as ... the form beside him.’

What methods does Emily Brontë use in this extract to reveal the anguish of Heathcliff?

As well as positioning Heathcliff and Edgar as opposites, which highlights Heathcliff's anguish, Emily Brontë uses a variety of other techniques to show his torment at the death of Catherine. One of the most noticeable is the way in which his speech is presented within the text. In order to demonstrate the fact that he is confused and lacking in concentration, Brontë has him speaking in an extremely fractured manner, using short sentences with many pauses, for example: "Be with me always – take any form – drive me mad!" This suggests to the reader a deep sense of loss – he cannot even formulate complete sentences, such is his despair. He also refers to Catherine as 'Catherine Earnshaw' rather than Catherine Linton. Maybe this is because he refuses to recognise her marriage to Edgar or maybe it is because he is so distraught about her death that he is unable to recall simple details such as the name of the woman that he is now in mourning for.

Heathcliff's reaction to the news about Catherine's death is extremely dramatic. He calls upon her to haunt him for the rest of his days and exclaims that she has not gone to heaven. This reaction demonstrates clear links to the supernatural which remind the reader of Lockwood's encounter in Wuthering Heights with the child looking through the window. It seems, therefore, that Heathcliff may have achieved his desire to be haunted. He also declares that Catherine is a 'liar to the end' and declares that he "cannot live without [his] life! [He] cannot live without [his] soul!" This reaction is particularly striking as it links to Catherine's earlier declaration that "Nelly, I *am* Heathcliff!" and suggests that, even in death, there is a strong connection between them that cannot be broken.

In this section, Heathcliff's grief is also compared with that of Nelly Dean who has known Catherine even longer than he has. Whilst Nelly is able to cry openly for the death of the woman that she cared deeply for, Heathcliff suppresses his sorrow and instead expresses his feelings in an angry manner for, I believe, he does not want to show people that he is distressed. When he cannot suppress his sorrow any more, he reacts angrily for he feels that she has betrayed him by dying. Nelly finds this difficult to understand, noticing that he has 'a heart and nerves the same as [his] brother man!' and failing to comprehend 'Why [he] should be so anxious to conceal them.'

The use of animal metaphor recurs in this section of the novel with Heathcliff being described as 'not like a man, but like a savage beast'. The animalistic nature of his grief suggests a deep and abiding sorrow but one that is also violent in its intensity. He 'dashed his head against the knotted trunk' of a tree so that there was 'blood about the bark'. This violence that he inflicts on himself is very Gothic and indicates darkness about his personality. This may also be suggestive that his grief will be enduring, perhaps because he desires to keep the wound caused by Catherine's death open. He seems to take a certain amount of pleasure in feeling despair as the novel progresses, possibly because he then feels that he is showing the rest of the world just how deeply he felt about Catherine. When this is contrasted with Edgar's silent grief, it suggests that perhaps Heathcliff feels more intensely than Edgar, although I do not necessarily think that this is the case. There is also a possibility that this event shows the start of a descent into madness that causes Heathcliff to try to destroy the lives of his own son and Catherine and Edgar's daughter. The intensity of his grief stays with him throughout his life and causes him to act in a particularly unpleasant manner to all those around him.

In the light of the events within the novel, do you think that Heathcliff is a fiend from hell or a victim of social prejudice?

I believe that when Heathcliff first joins the Earnshaw family, he is immediately positioned as an outsider through the fact that he does not look like the others. The fact that he is described a 'gypsy brat' from the outset suggests that he is a victim of a certain amount of prejudice as soon as he arrives at Wuthering Heights. Found in the 'streets of Liverpool', he is given the name of a dead child and does not have a clear identity within the Earnshaw household. Despite Mr Earnshaw's desire to have him become a proper member of the family, he never really fits in. Both Hindley and the Lintons treat him as an unwanted interloper and this obviously affects Heathcliff's behaviour and attitudes within the novel.

Subsequent to the death of Mr Earnshaw, Hindley is able to treat Heathcliff in any way he desires and therefore relegates him to the status of servant and seems to encourage others to do the same. Whilst Heathcliff wishes (if only temporarily) that he "was dressed and behaved as well" as Edgar, he cannot avoid acting out his violent nature when Edgar is rude to him. Heathcliff seems to have learned some of his bad behaviour from Hindley whose 'bad ways and bad companions formed a pretty example for Catherine and Heathcliff' after the death of Frances.

I believe that, whilst the treatment meted out to Heathcliff by these characters is obvious prejudice, it does not particularly affect him. It is only when Catherine declares that "It would degrade me to marry [Heathcliff] now" that he fully appreciates the fact that his social position is a hindrance to his progression in life. Leaving the area, he goes away for three years and returns, having tried to better himself. This does not, however, alter the fact that certain people still refer to him as 'the plough boy'. It seems, therefore, that he cannot escape from his origins, or rather the lack of them.

That said, from the outset, Heathcliff demonstrates behaviour that could be described as fiendish. He is a sullen boy, yet he knows that he has a special place in Mr Earnshaw's affections and uses this to his advantage. When his horse went lame, he insisted that Hindley exchange horses with him, saying "I don't like mine, and if you won't I shall tell your father of the three thrashings you've given me this week." He deals with the violence that is meted out to him without a great deal of emotion, perhaps because he is accustomed to this kind of behaviour from his early life in Liverpool.

Fiendishness is demonstrated in the fact that he takes out his violence and cruelty on characters who are innocent of any wrongdoing towards him. The most notable of these is probably Isabella, whose only crime is to fall in love with him. Heathcliff describes how:

The first things she saw me do, in coming out of the Grange, was to hang up her little dog; and when she pleaded for it, the first words I uttered were a wish that I had the hanging of every being belonging to her ... She even disgraces the name of Linton.

He also manipulates his own son and Cathy Linton in order to try to take over Thrushcross Grange.

Kermode describes how he believes that Heathcliff is "between" as a character and I believe that this is indeed the case; he is neither entirely a fiend nor a victim of prejudice. In my opinion, the prejudice that he endures helps to make his behaviour **more** fiendish but there was a capacity for this type of behaviour from the outset. Perhaps if he had not been treated in such an unpleasant manner during his childhood and early adulthood, then his behaviour in later life would have been much more acceptable. I do not think that the treatment that he received at the hands of the Lintons and Hindley can be entirely blamed for how he turned out as a character, although there is certainly a measure of responsibility to be placed here.

Wuthering Heights

By Emily Bronte

Use this table to categorise the actions of this character

Name of character:.....

What do you like about them?	What do you dislike about them?	What do you pity them for?

Heathcliff's speech after Cathy's death.

Why, she's a liar to the end! Where is she? Not *there* – not in heaven – not perished – where? Oh! you said you cared nothing for my sufferings! And I pray one prayer – I repeat it till my tongue stiffens – Catherine Earnshaw, may you not rest as long as I am living! You said I killed you – haunt me, then! The murdered *do* haunt their murderers. I believe – I know that ghosts *have* wandered the earth. Be with me always – take any form – drive me mad! only *do* not leave me in this abyss, where I cannot find you! Oh, God! it is unutterable! I *cannot* live without my life! I *cannot* live without my soul!

Wuthering Heights, chapter 16

Heathcliff

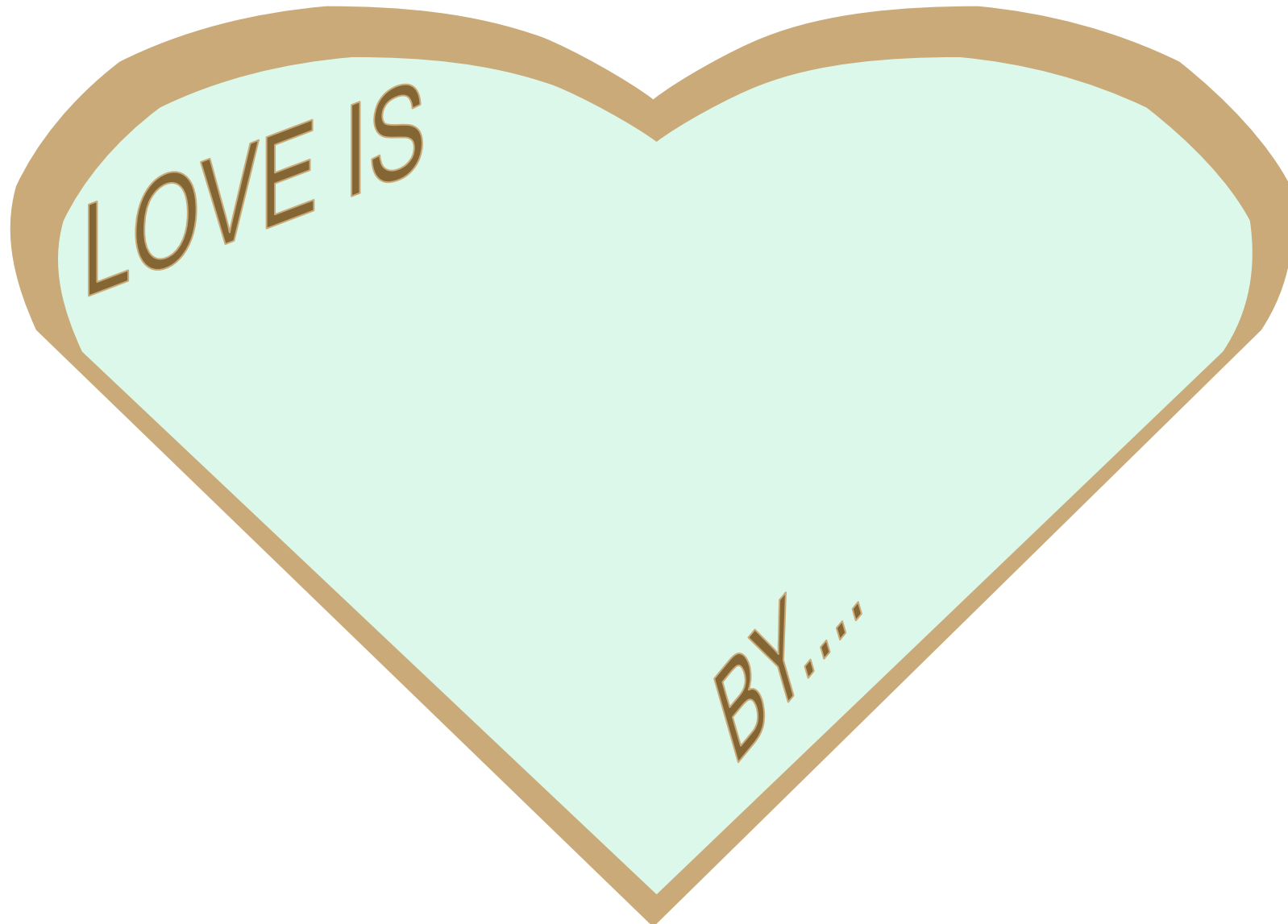
- ❑ An orphan
- ❑ Close to Mr Earnshaw
- ❑ Falls into a tense, unbreakable love with Catherine
- ❑ Hindley abuses Heathcliff and treats him like a servant
- ❑ Heathcliff showed pure hatred towards the Lintons and Hindley because they degraded him for being in a lower class system to them. For example when Catherine is attacked by the dogs, they blame Heathcliff and call him “*a wicked boy ... quite unfit for a decent house.*” (chapter 6)
- ❑ Chapter 8 - Heathcliff and Catherine quarrel because she is spending more time with the Lintons.
- ❑ Chapter 9 - Heathcliff catches Hareton when he falls, which is an heroic act, but which could have been his means of revenge against Hindley. He overhears a conversation between Nelly and Catherine which suggests to him that she does not love him because she has chosen Linton. As a result, he leaves WH and disappears. Catherine is distraught.
- ❑ Chapter 10 - he returns a transformed man. His return to WH restores some sinister energy to the novel.
- ❑ Chapter 11 – Heathcliff sets son against father, seeking revenge against Hindley. Heathcliff is breeding insurrection into the household. He realises that he can use Isabella’s infatuation with him to his advantage and this becomes his vehicle for revenge, as he can hurt Edgar and also make Catherine jealous. It would degrade the family for Heathcliff to marry Isabella – this link to social status is a reminder of how badly Heathcliff was treated in the past.
- ❑ Chapter 12 – Heathcliff and Isabella run off together and marry.
- ❑ Chapter 14 – Heathcliff enquires about Catherine. He wants to go and visit her next time Edgar is away.
- ❑ Chapter 15 – Heathcliff visits the Grange and the conversation that he has with Catherine ricochets between the subjects of love and death. When Edgar returns and throws him out of the house, Heathcliff stays in the garden and refuses to leave.
- ❑ Chapter 16 – Heathcliff knows that Catherine is dead even before Nelly tells him. He cries that he “*cannot live without [his] life! [He] cannot live without [his] soul*” (p122) This echoes her declaration of love for him in chapter 9.
- ❑ Chapter 17 – Heathcliff lives alone at WH with Hareton.
- ❑ Chapter 19 – Heathcliff demands this his son, Linton, be taken to WH to live with him.
- ❑ Chapter 20 – Heathcliff professes his profound disappointment in his son and describes his ambitions for him. He intends that he should take over all the property of both the Lintons and the Earnshaws. This is because he still wants to hurt Edgar.
- ❑ Chapter 21 – Heathcliff forces Cathy and Nelly to return to WH.
- ❑ Chapter 22 – Heathcliff is conspiring to get Cathy and Linton to fall in love, which would further antagonise Edgar.
- ❑ Chapter 27 – Heathcliff holds Cathy and Nelly prisoner at WH. He reveals that he only cares that Linton outlives Edgar.
- ❑ Chapter 29 – Heathcliff demands that Cathy returns to WH after the death of her father. He tells Nelly that he has been haunted by Catherine and that he wants to be buried next to her in the same coffin space so that they will merge together in death.
- ❑ Chapter 32 – There has been a time change. Lockwood is back in the area and decides to visit the Grange and WH. Nelly resumes her story and tells him that Heathcliff is dead.
- ❑ Chapter 33 – The desire for revenge has diminished now that it is within his power. All through his life, it was a way to keep his mind off the loss of Catherine when she was alive when the pain got too strong. Now, however, his only desire is to die so that they can be together.
- ❑ Chapter 34 – Heathcliff is obsessed with dying. He threatens to haunt Nelly if she does not ensure that he is buried according to his wishes. Two days later, she finds him dead.

Heathcliff quotes:

- A dirty, ragged, black-haired child ... a gipsy brat. Nelly on first seeing Heathcliff, page 25.
- She is so immeasurably superior to them – to everybody on earth. Heathcliff of Catherine, page 35.
- He seized a tureen of hot apple sauce ... and dashed it full against the speaker's face and neck. The first sign of violence and aggression between Heathcliff and Edgar, page 41.
- I'm trying to settle how I shall pay Hindley back. Page 42.
- Page 46 – deterioration of his character and behaviour
- Page 48 – description
- Page 49 – weather
- Page 53 – catching Hareton
- Page 57 – Catherine's love for him
- Page 67 – transformation
- Page 75 – Hindley's house
- Page 77 – revenge
- Page 81 – argument
- Page 94 – dog
- Page 108 – his love for Catherine
- Page 109 – Isabella
- Page 111 – violence
- Page 116 – ghost
- Page 122 – love
- Page 136 –
- Page 150 – disappointment

Good points	Bad points
Chapter 9, pg 53 - He caught Hareton when he fell from the banister. If he had dropped him, he would have had revenge on Hindley. The fact that he didn't shows that he has a conscience.	He destroys Hindley. He doesn't care that his wife has died and does not feel any guilt about having a part to play in Hindley's premature death.
Heathcliff was never shown any affection except by Catherine. He didn't mean to hurt her intentionally, but because he was never shown affection, he is incapable of giving it back.	He uses Isabella as a vehicle for his revenge. He does not treat her as a human being.
Throughout his life, all he has seen is violence, so he sees it as the only way to solve his own problems.	He is a very Gothic character – he bashes " <i>his head against the knotted trunk</i> " of a tree and is described as being a " <i>savage beast</i> "
	He hangs Isabella's dog – chapter 12, pg 94. This is a warning of the violence that exists between the two families and clearly shows the Gothic side to his character.
	He treats his own son badly.
	He is glad when Edgar dies.

An intro activity. Print out on red paper and get students to write in the heart what they think love is. Put them up somewhere and see if their perceptions change. A very enlightening activity!



How well drawn are the minor characters in the novel? What does each character contribute to the novel?

You are

- What biographical information are we given about the character?
- How does the character speak? Does Brontë use mainly direct or reported speech to convey the character? What does the character's use of language contribute to the atmosphere or tone or pace of the novel?
- Is the character significant in moving the plot forward at any point? If so, when and why?
- Does the character provide an opportunity for a more major character to be shown in a new light?
- Does the character seem to you to contribute to any particular theme in the novel?

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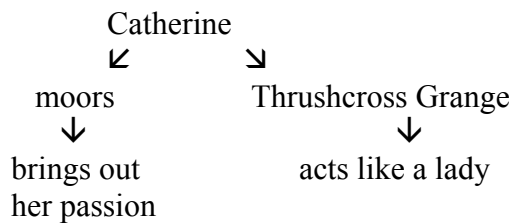
Nature and natural imagery and the two houses

- ❑ Emily Bronte has positioned the houses in opposition to each other. She achieves this by using dissimilar settings.
- ❑ WH is the epitome of the storm as can be seen in the description given by Lockwood in Chapter 1. He says that the name comes from a local word which is “descriptive of the atmospheric tumult to which its station is exposed in stormy weather”. So WH is representative of that which is wild and uncivilised.
- ❑ Lockwood also describes the surrounding vegetation of this house – “by the excessive slant of a few stunted firs at the end of the house and by a range of gaunt thorns all stretching their limbs one way as if carving alms of the sun.” The stunted plants reflect the inability of anything to grow or flourish at WH, just as characters find it difficult to fulfil their own strong passions and seek aid from outside sources to realise their needs.
- ❑ When Lockwood sees the interior of the house for the first time, he notes that the “corners [were] defended with large jutting stones”, that the “kitchen [was] forced to retreat altogether into another quarter” and that “the chairs [were], high-backed, primitive structures ... one or two heavy black ones lurking in the shade”
- ❑ Bronte gives the house human characteristics (personification) using detailed descriptions to give the impression of a defensive and unwelcoming environment. Therefore, the protagonists themselves can be seen in this way.
- ❑ Bronte’s language gives WH the powerful impression of a passionate human pulsating with the same energies as its inhabitants.
- ❑ Thrushcross Grange on the other hand is more enclosed and surrounded by hills. In a deeper sense, the walls of the Grange protect the Lintons and Catherine from the dangerous influences of Heathcliff and the Heights itself.
- ❑ It is also described as being “buried in trees” - the plants flourishing in a more welcoming environment, just as the characters are more able to grow beyond their initial differences which impeded their neighbours.
- ❑ Really this is pointing at Heathcliff as he hasn’t been able to grow due to the tragedies in his life, so he prevents the other characters in his household from growing themselves.
- ❑ The natural setting of garden and flowers which brings forth the sense of cheerfulness, beauty and hope that is lacking in WH.
- ❑ The Grange was first seen by Heathcliff and Catherine exudes a more luxurious and pleasant atmosphere – “... a splendid place carpeted with crimson, ... a shower of glass drops hanging in silver from the centre, and shimmering with little soft tapers.” (chapter 6) This description shows a warm, wealthy household which is a complete contrast to WH, just as the characters are more sedate and cultured.
- ❑ Further on in the book, it is clear that this cultured background is all a façade and the reader is able to see the shallowness and even brutal violence that emerges.
- ❑ The Grange lures Catherine and Heathcliff in but once inside, they cannot escape from its influences.
- ❑ The characters in the Grange are in complete contrast to those at WH.

Jenny Smith writes about the superficiality of the characters at Thrushcross Grange. This is seen by Isabella and reflected in her love of Heathcliff. She believes that Heathcliff is a “gentleman with an honourable soul” which indicates her complete innocence and shallowness. This is in contrast to the all consuming passion between Heathcliff and Catherine → “I am Heathcliff” and “you know that I could as soon forget you as my existence.” This juxtaposition shows the triviality of Isabella’s feelings and the tawdriness of the Grange.

Bronte manages to make the microcosm of the two estates into the universe of the novel. She achieves this by atmosphere and the sense of isolation. The passion of WH is shown by the fire, in front of which all the action takes place.

The natural setting of the moors is also vital as they represent the central image of the passions and thwarted longings of the characters. They are associated with the love of Heathcliff and Catherine. When the moors are mentioned in the text, the reader thinks of the them being happy. The natural setting helps the reader to realise when the characters are being themselves or putting on an act. For example:



The critic Cecil says that the natural settings help us to understand why the marriage of Catherine and Edgar is unnatural. Both Catherine and Heathcliff are “*untamed children of the storm*” (a fact which is shown by their links with the moors) whereas Edgar is a child of calm, linked with the civilised nature of Thrushcross Grange.

One critic stated that *Wuthering Heights* is “truly a novel without a hero or heroine.” What do you think of this statement? Is Heathcliff a hero or a villain?

Hero or heroine

- ❑ in the sense of saving the day?
 - ❑ the main character?
-
- ❑ The statement is true to a certain extent. Both Catherine and Heathcliff are the hero/ine of the novel because it revolves around them but their characters are not typical of a hero/ine.
 - ❑ Heathcliff is not a hero. Although he is the main character, he does not save the day.
 - ❑ He is a villain – he seeks revenge on all those who have slightly wronged him. He only cares for Catherine and Mr Earnshaw.
 - ❑ When he first arrives, he attacks Hindley – “*You must exchange horses with me: I don’t like mine*” (p27)
 - ❑ Also he has a grudge against the Lintons. He calls them “*pitiful, silly friends*” (p49)
 - ❑ He attacks Edgar when “*he seized a tureen of hot apple sauce, the first thing that came under his gripe and dashed it full against the speaker’s neck.*” (p41)
-

Suggestions for introductory activities for *Wuthering Heights*

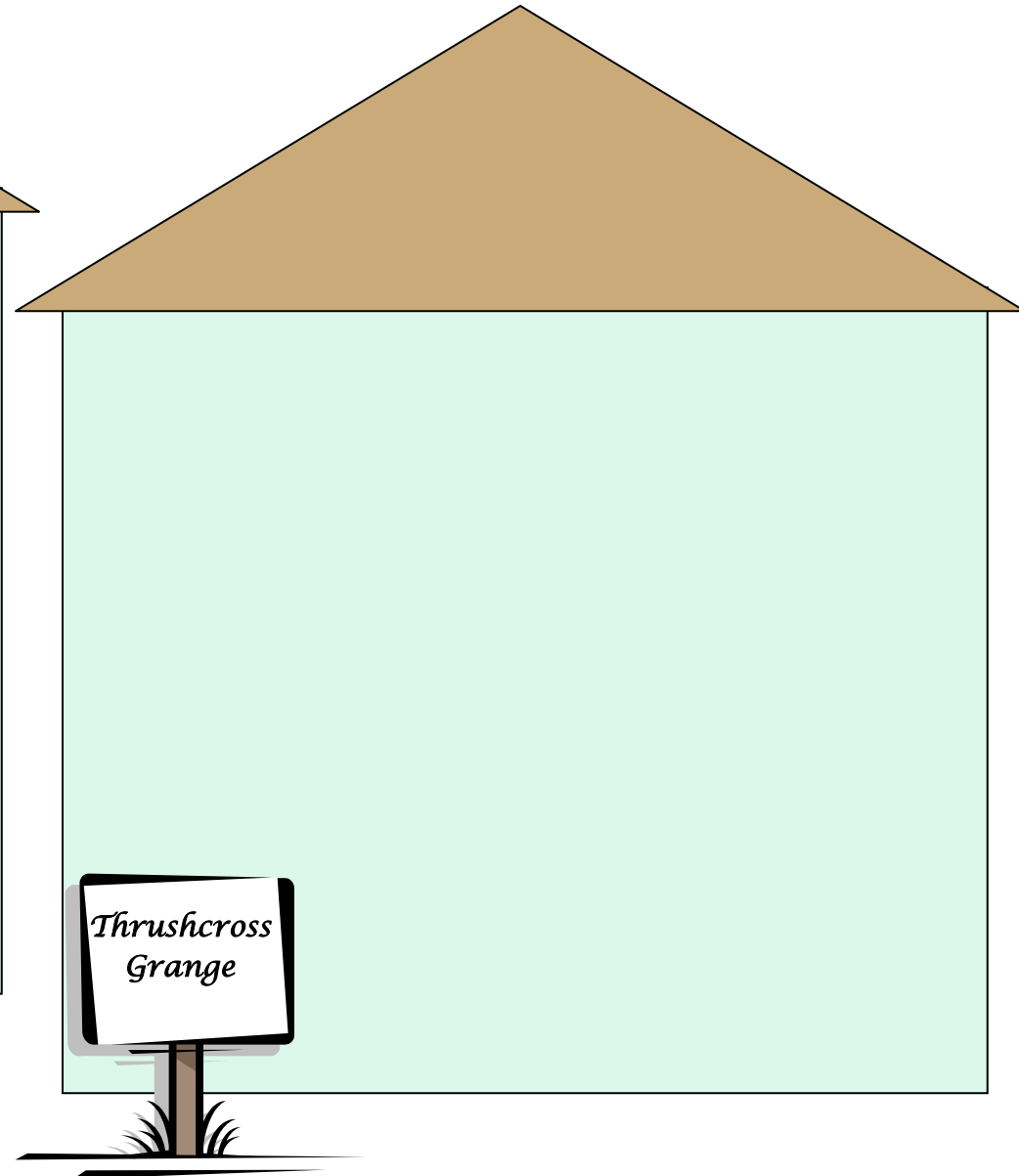
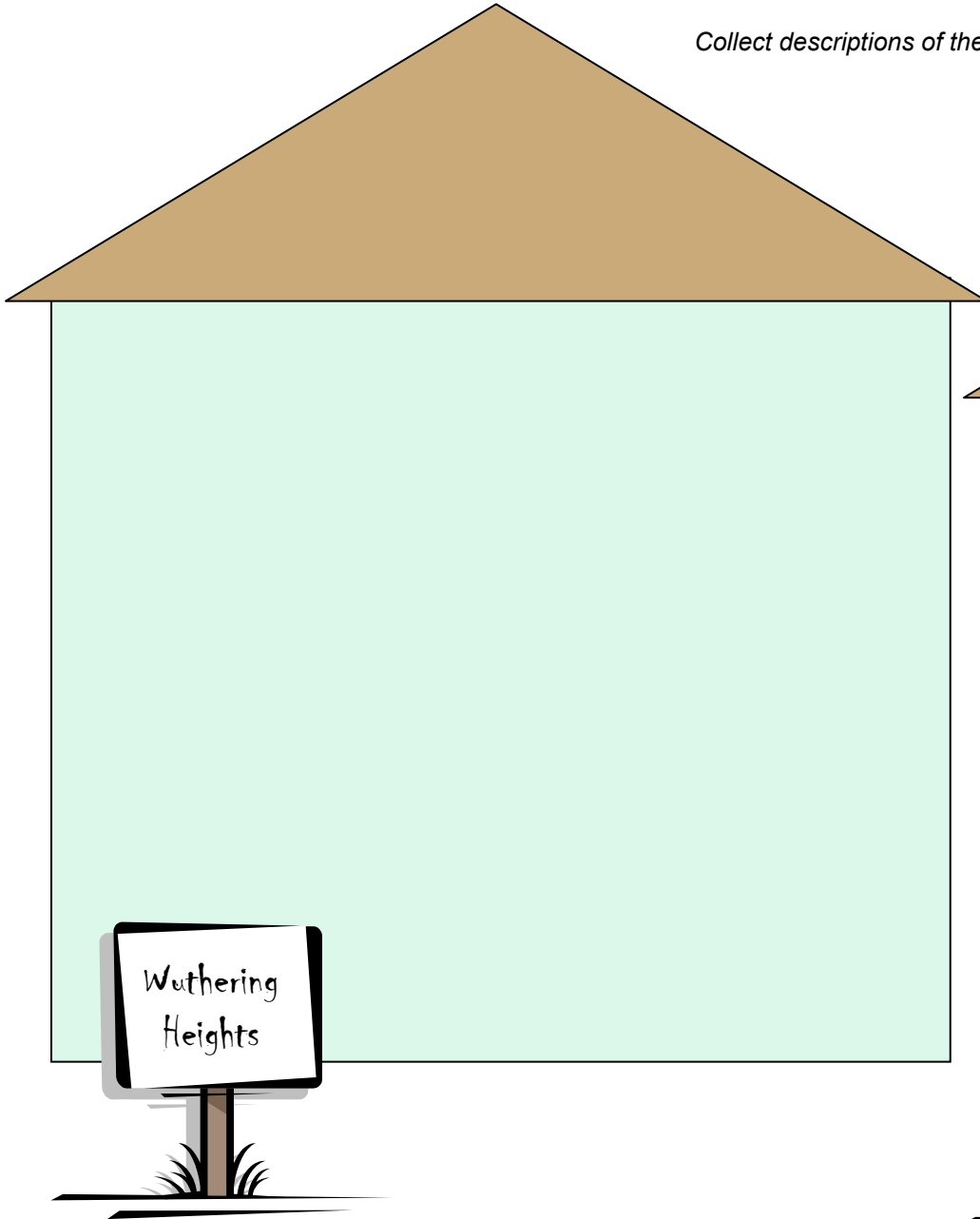
- There is a “love is...” website at www.comicspage.com I collected a whole range of cartoons and asked the students to sort them according to what they think love is. It produced some fascinating responses.
- Love is... heart (included in study pack page 14)
- Collect a range of poems about love. In groups, get students to sort them into whatever categories they choose and make huge posters. They should be able to justify their choices. I used:
 - ‘Siren Song’ by Margaret Atwood
 - ‘May I feel’ by e.e. cummings
 - ‘1 Corinthians 13’
 - ‘Coat’ by Vicki Feaver
 - ‘Flowers’ by Wendy Cope
 - ‘Two Cures for Love’ by Wendy Cope
 - ‘The Orange’ by Wendy Cope
 - ‘Comment’ by Dorothy Parker
 - ‘Unfortunate Coincidence’ by Dorothy Parker
 - ‘One Perfect Rose’ by Dorothy Parker
 - ‘Home’ by Dennis O’Driscoll
 - ‘The Minute I Heard My First Love Story’ by Jelaluddin Rumi
 - ‘Strawberries’ by Edwin Morgan
 - ‘How Do I Love Thee’ by Elizabeth Barrett Browning
 - ‘Sonnets From the Portuguese XIV’ by Elizabeth Barrett Browning
 - ‘Anne Hathaway’ by Carol Ann Duffy
 - ‘Valentine’ by Carol Ann Duffy
 - ‘Remember’ by Christina Rossetti
 - ‘Celia, Celia’ by Adrian Mitchell

It provoked some very interesting debate about what means to different people (and gave us lots of display material for the Sixth Form classroom)

Wuthering Heights

By Emily Bronte

Collect descriptions of the houses from the early chapters. Use to think about Binary Oppositions



Who said it? When? To whom? What relevance does it have?

- ‘A perfect misanthropist’s Heaven – and Mr. Heathcliff and I are such a suitable pair to divide the desolation between us.’
- ‘He’ll love and hate, equally under cover.’
- ‘On that black hill top the earth was hard with a black frost, and the air made me shiver through every limb. Being unable to remove the chain, I jumped over, and, running up the flagged causeway bordered with straggling gooseberry bushes, knocked vainly for admittance, till my knuckles tingled and the dogs howled.’
- ‘What vain weather-cocks we are.’ ‘T’ maister’s dahn in t’fowld.’
- ‘We don’t in general take to foreigners here, Mr Lockwood, unless they take to us first.’
- ‘I’d not exchange, for a thousand lives, my condition here, for Edgar Linton’s at Thrushcross Grange.’
- ‘Your eyes ... that couple of black fiends, so deeply buried, who never open their windows boldly, but lurk glinting under them, like devil’s spies?’
- ‘... how lightly she dismisses her old playmate’s troubles.’
- ‘His treatment of the latter was enough to make a fiend of a saint.’
- ‘I own I did not like her.’
- ‘The contrast resembled what you see in exchanging a bleak, hilly, coal country for a beautiful fertile valley.’
- ‘It expressed ... the intensest anguish at having made himself the instrument of thwarting his own revenge.’
- ‘I am Heathcliff.’
- ‘... the gunpowder lay as harmless as sand, because no fire came near to explode it.’
- ‘a hero of romance.’

Who said it? When? To whom? What relevance does it have?

- ‘You deserved this. You have killed yourself.’
- ‘Be with me always – take any form –drive me mad! only do not leave me in this abyss, where I cannot find you! Oh, God! it is unutterable! I cannot live without my life! I cannot love without my soul!’
- ‘He’s not a human being, ..., and he has no claim on my charity. I gave him my heart, and he took it and pinched it to death; and flung it back to me.’
- “He was too good to be thoroughly unhappy long. He didn’t pray for Catherine’s soul to haunt him.”
- “A pale, delicate, effeminate boy, who might have been taken for my master’s younger brother, so strong was the resemblance, but there was a sickly peevishness in his aspect that Edgar Linton never had.”
- ‘He wanted to lie all in an ecstasy of peace; I wanted all to sparkle and dance in a glorious jubilee. I said his heaven would be only half alive; and he said mine would be drunk: I said I should fall asleep in his; and he said he could not breathe in mine...’
- ‘Mr Heathcliff, you have nobody to love you; and, however miserable you make us, we will still have the revenge of thinking that your cruelty arises from your greater misery! You are miserable, are you not? Lonely, like the Devil, and envious like him? Nobody loves you – nobody will cry for you when you die! I wouldn’t be you!’
- ‘I never relent in exacting my due from anyone.’
- ‘I shall envy no one on their wedding day: there won’t be a happier woman than myself in England!’
- “I wondered how any one could ever imagine unquiet slumbers for the sleepers in that quiet earth.”