

Essay planning activities



Devise detailed plans for the following essay titles. Where appropriate, you should indicate relevant critical material you might use. Some of these questions are typical of the types of examination questions you might face, others are similar to coursework tasks, and others are transformational or creative in nature. Whether you are doing *Wuthering Heights* as a text for examination or for coursework, all of these titles will help you focus in on relevant issues surrounding the novel.

Responding to critical perspectives

- 1 'For all its violence and the other unconventional behaviours it presents, *Wuthering Heights* is an extremely moral tale.' How useful and truthful do you find this as a view of the novel?
- 2 'Heathcliff stands astride every aspect of the novel like a colossus. The novel would be unimaginable without him.' How far do you find this a fair assessment of Heathcliff's role in the novel?
- 3 '*Wuthering Heights* was hewn in a wild workshop, with simple tools, out of homely materials. The statuary found a granite block on a solitary moor...With time and labour, the crag took human shape; and there it stands colossal.' (Charlotte Brontë). What do you find particularly interesting in this view, and how do you relate it to the novel and its impact upon the reader?
- 4 'One of the most chilling fears that informs these stories is the threat of ancestral repetition.' How far do you find Laura Kranzler's assessment of Elizabeth Gaskell's Gothic tales a useful critical comment in relation to *Wuthering Heights*?

Comparative questions

- 1 'Brontë often makes use of nature in *Wuthering Heights*. The beauty and harshness of the natural world provide her with a wealth of symbolic meaning.' Explore a variety of ways in which the natural world can be used to reflect events and concerns. You should focus on *Wuthering Heights* to establish your argument and you should refer to the second text you have read to support and develop your line of argument.
- 2 'Victims of violence often become perpetrators of violence.' Use *Wuthering Heights* to explore this statement and its implications, and compare and contrast this with the second text you have read.



- 3 “My love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rocks beneath...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” (p. 82). Passion and romance are often portrayed in fiction. Begin by considering this idea in relation to *Wuthering Heights*, and then broaden your discussion in comparison to your second text.
- 4 Using *David Copperfield* or another text you have studied and *Wuthering Heights*, explore the authors’ use of biographical information in these Victorian novels.

Transformational, recreative and creative writing tasks

In each of the following creative tasks aim for a word count of approximately 1,000 words. Also plan out a further 1,000 words offering a commentary on the particular effects you believe you have achieved and how these relate back to the original text.

- 1 Write Heathcliff’s account of why he left Yorkshire on the night after he hears Cathy vow she cannot marry him. As far as you can, try to capture Heathcliff’s tone and voice, building on Brontë’s characterisation of him.
- 2 Heathcliff first comes to Yorkshire after Mr Earnshaw visits Liverpool. Write an account of how he was found and ‘adopted’ by Mr Earnshaw. Use what you know of Brontë’s style and language to create an authentic tone.
- 3 Using Lockwood’s initial description of *Wuthering Heights* as a model of Brontë’s descriptive style and the form, structure and language she typically employs, provide a description of the interior of Gimmerton Kirk.
- 4 Refresh your memory of the meeting between Linton and Catherine on the moors between the Grange and the Heights. Imagine, as Linton fears, that the meeting is overlooked by Heathcliff. Rewrite the account of this scene from Heathcliff’s perspective. Try to reflect aspects of Brontë’s form, structure and language.