

ENRICHED CLASSICS

Curriculum Guide to:

Wuthering Heights

by
Emily Brontë

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***Wuthering Heights*, Emily Brontë**

Dear Colleague:

To most American students, life on the Yorkshire moors in the eighteenth century is about as alien as life on the planet Krypton. In fact, Yorkshire may be more alien, since many students do have a mental picture of Superman's home planet, while few could describe what a "moor" looks like. *Wuthering Heights* plunges students into a culture whose social and cultural norms clash with ours and the story is packed with the kind of dialect challenges that cause many readers to put the book down and never pick it up again. It is true: Emily Brontë immerses readers in a foreign, insular world. But within the confines of that world, Brontë spins a gripping supernatural tale filled with complex characters who wrestle with love, hate, passion, cruelty, salvation, damnation, and revenge. The subject matter of *Wuthering Heights* is universally engaging, but the barriers to basic understanding can be daunting.

These exercises give students the tools they need both to overcome the technical hurdles presented by *Wuthering Heights* and to relate it to their own lives. The activities we present ask students to tease out some of the logistical aspects of plot and character, and to find ways to relate Brontë's world to our own. Students will have the opportunity to contextualize the novel historically, to use creative writing to become more familiar with a character of their choosing, and to read contemporary reviews and essays to help them understand the world in which Brontë's characters lived.

Vimala Pasupathi and Ashley Shannon

Each of the eight lesson plans in this packet includes:

- Step-by-step instructions
- Materials needed
- Standards covered
- Questions students should be able to answer when the lesson is over

Curriculum Plan #1:

Who's Who? Who's Where? and Who's in Charge? (A Lesson in Interpretation)

The two opening chapters of *Wuthering Heights* are confusing for readers unaccustomed to the novel's prose style, and the characters can be as alienating to students as they are to the blundering narrator. As a result, students risk missing significant details about setting, relationships, and the action more generally. This in-class exercise will help students adjust to the difficulty of the novel's language. Students are asked to revisit passages for basic comprehension, and then for interpretation. In particular, they are asked to assess the characters and imagine the primary setting visually as well as verbally based upon the narrator's comments.

To complete this activity, students must have read Chapters 1 and 2. They will be able to see early on that the novel takes place in a relatively isolated region, but that characters move around geographically (and socially) quite a bit.

This exercise will take about 50 minutes.

NCTE Standards Covered:

1. Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.
2. Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience.
3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).
6. Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and non-print texts.
11. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.
12. Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

What To Do:

1. Tell students to take out their copies of the novel and give them a few minutes to review the first 2-3 three pages of the novel. Then ask the entire class these basic questions:
 - A. Who is speaking, and to whom does he speak?
 - B. What do we know about the relationship between the two men?
 - C. When the narrator says “I have just returned from a visit to my landlord,” to where has he returned? And from where?
2. Once you’ve established the two locations and their immediate significance for Lockwood and Heathcliff, draw two large boxes on either side of the chalkboard with an equally large space in between. Label one box *Thrushcross Grange* and the other one *Wuthering Heights*.
3. Ask students to call out the names of each major character they have met so far, and write them on the board in the middle as students identify them. The list should include Lockwood, Heathcliff, Joseph, “Mrs. Heathcliff,” Hareton Earnshaw, and can also include Zillah, the servant girl and housekeeper of Thrushcross Grange if students are really paying attention. Once you have a reasonably complete list, tell students their job for the remainder of the class will be answer the questions, “Who’s Who, Who’s Where? and Who’s in Charge?” Remind them the answers to these questions shift throughout the first two chapters, and explain that they will continue to shift as the novel transpires.
4. Divide the class into 6 groups. Assign Group 1 the task of examining the two main locations. Assign Groups 2-6 one of the following characters, Lockwood, Heathcliff, Hareton, “Mrs. Heathcliff” and Joseph. Provide each group with instructions, either verbally, or by distributing Handout #1.
5. After each group has discussed their character or location for roughly 10-15 minutes, ask students to direct their attention once again to the front of the room. Starting with Group 1, have one student report on their group’s discussion. As the reporter describes the locations, write their basic attributes on the board inside the appropriate boxes. Then “move” characters’ names from the middle of the board by erasing them and writing them in or just outside of the two large boxes indicating the two locations as the reporter directs.
6. Then have a student representative from Groups 2-6 to give a similar report, writing descriptive words next to character names as the reporters offer them. If the reporters note that their respective characters move from one place to another, draw arrows under the names indicating movement in the particular directions they take. If reporters say their character is “in charge,” prompt them to explain what he or she is in charge *of*, and why they think so. For each character described as “in charge” write a “+” over their name.
7. After each group has reported, your chalkboard should offer a vivid record of the people and places the novel has introduced in its opening chapters, and how they interact. Count and point out which characters received the “+,” and offer a concluding thought. If they thought one or only a few characters commanded the actions that took place and were in charge of the properties in question, you might applaud their recognition of the class and gender hierarchies at work thus far in the novel, since these hierarchies are important factors in how each character behaves; you can also point out, however, that they have defined “being in charge” narrowly, and that they should keep an eye out as they read the novel for moments where characters manage to take charge, or take control of the book’s action and change the course of events without being at the top of those hierarchies. If they suggest that all or most characters are in charge in some way, applaud their recognition of the multiple ways characters can have agency and power in social

situations; but remind them, as well, that there are gender and class constraints on behavior at all times, and they should be attentive to when such constraints are an issue.

What You Need:

A copy of the Enriched Classic edition of *Wuthering Heights* (ISBN 0743487648) for each student

Chalkboard and chalk

Copies of Handout #1

How Did It Go?

Were students able to reconstruct the action taking place in the novel's introduction? Could they discern the relationships between characters as they are presented thus far? How well were they able to determine the social dynamics of their interactions? How did they define "being in charge"? Were they able to identify the basic power-plays immediately at work in the novel?

If you liked this activity, try it again later on in the unit. **See the following activity, "Who's New? Who's Been Where? Who's In Charge Now?"**

Curriculum Plan #2:

What Time Is It? (A Lesson in Historical Context)

Students will, over the course of reading the novel, chart the chronology by keeping track of significant events on a timeline, and will contextualize the events of the novel in a world-historical frame.

This lesson can be extended for the entire unit; a single class period or homework assignment can be devoted to researching world-historical events.

NCTE Standards Covered:

3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).
7. Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and non-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.
8. Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.
9. Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles.
11. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.

What To Do:

1. Using a long roll of paper, sketch a timeline beginning in 1757 (the year of Hindley's birth) and ending in 1803 (the year of Heathcliff's death).
2. Each time students notice a date in the novel, have them chart it onto the timeline. Consider using a different marker to keep track of each character's dates.
3. Have students use Brontë's numerous chronological clues to construct the dates of other events in the novel. For example, since we learn from Nelly that on March 20, 1800, Cathy turns 16, we can assume that Catherine dies on March 20, 1784.

4. Discuss with students ways to conduct research on the same period in history in order to fill in the bottom of the timeline with world-historical events that might illuminate the world of the novel. Suggest that students should extend their research beyond the borders of America and Western Europe. What was happening in India during this time? In Russia? In South America?
5. When students have completed their inquiries, add the new information to the timeline. Then ask students to reflect on the relationship of the events of the novel to the events in the outside world. The novel is self-consciously insular; what does it mean that there is no mention of such cataclysmic events as the American Revolution?

What You Need:

A copy of the Enriched Classic edition of *Wuthering Heights* (ISBN 0743487648) for each student

A roll of paper, or multiple sheets of paper taped together

Markers

Access to research sources such as the Internet or an encyclopedia

How Did It Go?

Were students able to chart most of the significant dates in the novel? Were they able to compute the more difficult dates? Did they focus on worldwide events in the timeline, or limit themselves to English and American events? Were they able to conjecture about the absence of historical events from the novel?

Curriculum Plan #3:

What Did He Say? (An Lesson in Dialect)

Through careful and close reading, students will learn to understand words and dialects that may be unfamiliar or challenging to them.

This lesson should cover one homework assignment and one class period.

NCTE Standards Covered:

3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).

5. Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.

7. Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and non-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.

8. Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.

9. Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles.

11. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.

12. Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

What To Do:

1. For homework the night before you use this exercise, ask students to read carefully two passages: Lockwood's description of *Wuthering Heights* in Chapter 1 (pp 2-3, from "Wuthering Heights is the name of Mr. Heathcliff's dwelling" to "previous to inspecting the penetralium") and Joseph's description of Heathcliff in Chapter 10 (pp 126-127, from "'Nelly,' he said" to "while he flees afore tuh open t' pikes.") For Lockwood's passage, ask students to look up words whose meanings they don't know or are unsure of. They should make a list of these words and

their meanings. For Joseph's, ask students to underline (or write in their notebooks) words whose meanings they can't discern contextually.

2. In class, ask students to read Lockwood's passage out loud—each person taking one sentence—then discuss words that students found difficult. Ask students whether any of the words in the passage seem familiar, but might be used differently in contemporary English. Then break students into small groups and have each group paraphrase Lockwood's description. Have one member of each group read its paraphrase out loud for comparison.

3. Next, ask students to read Joseph's speech out loud. Ask students which words or turns of phrase elude them, and work as a class to puzzle out meanings via context (students may find that reading the words out loud helps them to penetrate the Yorkshire dialect). Again, ask small groups to paraphrase Joseph's description of Heathcliff and compare the results.

4. Ask students to think about the differences between Joseph's and Lockwood's speaking styles. Why does Brontë work so hard to characterize each person through speech patterns? What can they deduce about each character based on the way he speaks, the metaphors he uses, and his accent (or lack thereof)?

What You Need:

A copy of the Enriched Classic edition of *Wuthering Heights* (ISBN 0743487648) for each student

Notebooks or paper

Dictionaries

How Did It Go?

Were students able to paraphrase these two very different speakers competently? Did they show facility with using context clues to identify unfamiliar words? Can they now use these skills to decode other parts of the novel? Were they able to connect the speech patterns of these characters with their role in the novel, and in English society?

Curriculum Plan #4:

Ghost Chapters (A Lesson in Perspective and Imaginative Interpretation)

Wuthering Heights, with its multiple narrators, offers the perfect opportunity for students to think about perspective, and how the different points of view in the text affect how we feel about its characters. In this exercise, students will write a ghost chapter of a short section of the novel. A ghost chapter is the construction of a narrative related to an existing story that supplements or replaces the existing account with the events told from another perspective.

The activity will help students better understand the way the novel is laid out in different voices and viewpoints. Additionally, it will afford them the opportunity to think and write creatively about the information that different narrators present. Would we think differently of various people in the novel if we were able to hear them offer their version of events?

You may conduct this exercise after students have completed the first ten chapters of the novel, and it can occupy either one whole class period, or twenty minutes of a class period should you decide to assign the writing portion for out-of-class work.

NCTE Standards Covered:

1. Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.
2. Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience.
3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).
4. Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.
5. Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.
6. Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and non-print texts.
7. Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print

and non-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.

8. Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.

9. Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles.

11. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.

12. Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

What To Do:

1. Have students get out their books. Ask them to think about the people who have been telling the story up to this point in the novel (through the tenth chapter). Starting with the first chapter of the novel, have students go through the book quickly to ascertain who the narrators have been through Chapter 10. Write them on the board. The list should at least include Lockwood and Nelly/Ellen Dean, but it may also include Catherine Earnshaw/Linton, (since they're never actually married, although she writes the name on the windowsill) since we get a glimpse at her account of "An Awful Sunday" on p. 24, and Heathcliff, who briefly gets a voice through Nelly when he tells her what he and Catherine did at the Lintons' on p. 57.

2. Then ask students to consider how different things might look if they heard the story recounted by any other character who doesn't get to tell his or her version of the story. Ask who they would like to hear tell the story, and who would tell the best version of the story. Remind students of the secrets characters keep, and ask them to consider whose secrets they wish Brontë would divulge more directly. Then tell students to continue to pay attention to narrator shifts, and try to figure out what details we miss out on, and what details we get access to by virtue of who tells us what happens.

3. Have students choose what they think is a significant or interesting moment in the text through Chapter 10. Their selection may range from one paragraph to two pages, and should be a place where the text's narrator leaves out or doesn't know all the facts, or where they felt another character's perspective might be worth knowing. Basically, they should choose any part of the novel that made them wonder, "What *really* happened there?"

You may also wish to provide these moments for students to save time. Some possibilities are listed on the handout.

4. Distribute copies of Handout #2 for the ghost chapter assignment. Explain what a ghost chapter is, and assist them with the directions. Tell them how much you would like them to write, and whether they are to complete it in class or for homework.

5. If you have time, have students share their completed versions with the class, and ask them to explain why they made the choices they did in constructing them.

What You Need:

A copy of the Enriched Classic edition of *Wuthering Heights* (ISBN 0743487648) for each student

Copies of Handout #2

How Did It Go?

Did students understand the importance of point of view in the novel? Were they able to come up with alternative narratives? Did they experiment with voice and style to make clear who is telling the story? Did their ghost chapters try to retain the basic events of Brontë's novel, or did they experiment with the plot and characters?

Curriculum Plan #5:

“Papa Says Everything She Has Is Mine!” (A Lesson in Social Analysis)

Students will use primary sources to inform their understanding of the ramifications of marriage in *Wuthering Heights*. By reading about eighteenth-century marriage laws, students will learn about the legal status of a married woman, and hopefully engage in a discussion about women’s rights during this period.

This lesson should take one class period, although the issues addressed herein can inform discussions of many parts of the novel.

NCTE Standards Covered:

2. Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience.
3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).
5. Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.
7. Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and non-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.
9. Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles.
11. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.
12. Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

What To Do:

1. Distribute copies of Handout #3, which contains an excerpt from Sir William Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of England*. Ask your students to read the document and paraphrase each sentence. [Note: We have changed the spelling in the handout to standard U.S. English.]
2. Ask your students to read their paraphrases out loud in a round-robin to ensure that they have properly understood the material.
3. Ask students to compare these laws to today's laws, and to consider whether they would be willing to give up all their personal property to be married (if they are female) or whether they would want to marry someone for whom they must assume complete legal responsibility (if they are male).
4. Students will likely have questions about the particulars of marriage, inheritance, and property laws. If your classroom is equipped with computers, or if your students have access to encyclopedias and dictionaries, ask them to find out about "entailments," "trusts," and the Married Women's Property Act. Alternatively, prepare a handout on these terms to provide further information to students.
5. If you feel your students are ready for a more theoretical discussion, you might ask them to consider Catherine's description of Heathcliff as "more myself than I am" (Chapter 9), her pronouncement to Nelly that "I *am* Heathcliff" (Chapter 9), and Heathcliff's description of her as his "life" and his "soul" (Chapter 16) in light of the laws of coverture.
6. For homework, have students write an essay applying their new knowledge of coverture laws to *Wuthering Heights*. They should be able to refer to both the novel and Blackstone's *Commentaries*; more advanced students should be asked to include quotations from both texts. If you wish, you may instruct students to focus especially on Chapter 18, with its description of Edgar's last-minute attempt to change his will, and of Linton's petulant (but legally sound) claims to Cathy's personal property. They should consider how these laws affect the motivation of characters in the novel, especially Heathcliff.

What You Need:

A copy of the Enriched Classic edition of *Wuthering Heights* (ISBN 0743487648) for each student

Copies of Handout #3

Internet access, dictionaries, and/or reference books (or a handout listing terms related to marriage and inheritance)

How Did It Go?

Were students able to understand the eighteenth-century legal text? Were they proactive in seeking out definitions or explanations of unfamiliar words and phrases? Were they able to connect the legal commentary to the text of the novel? Did they show interest in learning more about issues of women's rights?

Curriculum Plan #6:

Who's New? Who's Been Where? Who's In Charge Now? (A Lesson in Interpretation, Part II)

When students have read up through Chapter 20, conduct a reprise of the early exercise “Who’s Who? Who’s Been Where? Who’s In Charge?”. Rather than splitting students up into smaller groups, this time have the entire class will work together to design a visual and verbal map of Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange, along with character information.

The activity will take 25-40 minutes, depending on how much individual students are able to contribute.

NCTE Standards Covered:

1. Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.
2. Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience.
3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).
11. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.
12. Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

What to Do:

1. Start by drawing the two large boxes representing Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange on the opposite ends of the board, again leaving the middle blank.
2. Have students come to the board one by one to add one element, whether it’s adding new place names (i.e., Penistone Crag, Gimmerton, etc.), character names, or character attributes and movements. Be sure that each student contributes something to the map.
3. Ask students to think about the ways in which the various locations are described: which adjectives does Brontë use to characterize the houses and the landscape? Students should then think about how the character attributes of those inhabiting the various places in the novel

correspond to the place descriptions. You might, for example, ask them to focus on the Catherine of *Wuthering Heights* as opposed to the Catherine who returns from Thrushcross Grange. How do the places they live shape the characters of the novel (and vice versa)?

4. Use the end result to discuss the ways in which power dynamics and social relationships have changed or are changing in the novel. Ask students to consider and explain how new lives and deaths contribute to those changes.

What You Need:

A copy of the Enriched Classic edition of *Wuthering Heights* (ISBN 0743487648) for each student

Chalkboard and chalk

How Did It Go?

Were students able to reconstruct the action taking place in the novel up to Chapter 20? Could they discern the relationships between characters and note how they have changed over time? How well were they able to determine the social dynamics of their interactions? How did they define "being in charge"? Were they able to identify the basic power-plays immediately at work in the novel?

Curriculum Plan #7:

“He’s More Myself Than I Am” (A Lesson in Theme)

Students will discuss the overarching theme of romantic love in *Wuthering Heights*. They will be asked to evaluate, compare and contrast various types of love relationships in the novel.

This lesson should take one class period.

NCTE Standards Covered:

3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).

5. Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.

7. Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and non-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.

11. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.

12. Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

What To Do:

1. Have students generate a list of the marriages and love relationships in *Wuthering Heights*. Ask your students what makes a good relationship, and have them generate a set of criteria for evaluating the marriages/relationships in the novel. Have them rank the relationships in order, from most to least passionate, then from most to least loving. Ask them to provide textual evidence for their rankings.

2. Divide students into groups and assign each group one of the couples in the novel. Ask each group to write a brief description of the couple’s relationship, referring to specific textual examples to make their claims.

3. Ask students to consider each character’s motivations for becoming involved in his or her relationship (beyond “s/he was in love!!”). Which characters fall in love and/or marry for “good” reasons? For “bad” reasons? Why do the characters who make “bad” choices feel compelled to make them?

4. Ask students to decide whether Brontë approves of or endorses each relationship, based on the way the relationship is described in the novel and the fate of the characters in the relationship.
5. Ask students to think about the future of Cathy and Hareton. Ostensibly, they have a chance for a happy relationship. Does the text provide any hints that these characters, too, are doomed?
6. For homework, ask students to write an essay about the relationship in *Wuthering Heights* that they find most interesting. Students should discuss character motivation and a definition of a “good” relationship (whether or not the relationship they’re discussing fits the bill!), and should use textual support to validate their claims about the novel. You may wish to guide students to particular scenes in the novel, such as Catherine’s explanation for her love for Heathcliff in Chapter 9; Nelly’s description of Edgar and Catherine’s married life in Chapter 10; Isabella’s description of her married life with Heathcliff in Chapter 13; or Nelly’s description of the beginning of Cathy and Hareton’s relationship in Chapter 32.

What You Need:

A copy of the Enriched Classic edition of *Wuthering Heights* (ISBN 0743487648) for each student

How Did It Go?

Were students able to generate useful working definition(s) of a “good” relationship? Were they able to successfully characterize each relationship in the novel, and to relate those characterizations to Brontë’s critique of romantic love? Did they provide good textual support for their claims? In the essay, were they able to synthesize their own opinions with evidence from the text?

Curriculum Plan #8:

Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down (A Lesson in Literary Criticism)

This activity should be conducted after students have finished the novel completely. It can be done as an in-class exercise, or modified to function as a writing assignment for homework. It is designed to get students to learn a little bit about the critical history of literary works and to allow them a chance to weigh in about their experience reading *Wuthering Heights* for various audiences.

The activity can occupy anywhere between one to two class periods, depending on how much you decide to require students to write, and upon whether you decide to go over examples of film reviews.

NCTE Standards Covered:

1. Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.
2. Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience.
3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).
4. Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.
5. Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.
6. Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and non-print texts.
11. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.
12. Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

What To Do:

1. Have students take out their books and direct them to “Early Reactions” to *Wuthering Heights* on p. 435. Explain that the book’s editor has provided an introduction to and excerpt from early book reviews, and that these excerpts give modern readers some idea about what people said about the novel shortly after it came out in print.
2. Read the three early reviews out loud, or ask for student volunteers to read them, pausing after each to ask students whether the reviewer gave the book a “thumbs up” or “thumbs down,” or something in between.
3. Then ask students to determine the basis for each reviewer’s assessment. What criteria were they judging the book upon, implicitly or explicitly? Put more simply, you might just ask them to identify what was “wrong” or “good” about the book according to each reviewer, and why. You may help them understand what kinds of assumptions and values early readers had, and ask whether they find themselves in agreement with any of the comments those reviewers make.
4. Set aside areas on the chalkboard for each of the more recent reviews, numbering them in order either to three or to five, depending on whether you determine the twentieth-century reviews by Joyce Carol Oates and Susan Gubar to be too difficult for their comprehension. Then have students number off, either to five or to three, and then have them read the one twentieth-century review that corresponds with their number.
5. After students have had a chance to read the excerpts, have students who read the first excerpt by Virginia Woolf say whether Woolf gave the novel a “thumbs up,” “thumbs down,” or in between. Then ask what Woolf praised or criticized, and take notes on the board. Do the same for each of the excerpts you had students read.
6. Optional: After comparing the reviewers’ assessments, you can hand out examples of modern reviews of twentieth- and twenty-first-century films and books. Allow students to make connections between what they have just read and the more recent examples you have provided. Ask students to identify the standards and values upon which the reviews are judging the films or books. If you have two reviews on the same film, use these reviews to introduce the concept of audience, and discuss how different reviewers might speak to their audiences in different ways.
7. If you choose not to give students modern reviews, you may use this simple and familiar example: Ask them to think about a recent film they saw with a friend, and have them think about what they would tell their parents about it versus what they might tell another friend or an older sibling. Would they offer the same assessment to different people? Would they recommend that both their parents and peers see it? Why or why not? What about their teachers? What qualities might they emphasize differently about the film for different audiences?
8. Now tell students they are ready to write their own reviews of *Wuthering Heights*, following the assignment prompt on Handout #4. The length of their review will depend on whether you would like them to complete the review in class or work on it at home to complete for a later class period.

What You Need:

A copy of the Enriched Classic edition of *Wuthering Heights* (ISBN 0743487648) for each student

Copies of Handout #4

Optional: Copies of one or two reviews of twentieth-century literature or films, located online, or in the current newspaper. Try finding two reviews of the same film or book that have very different assessments, and that appear in very different publications.

How Did It Go?

Did students enjoy reading early reactions to the novel? Did they find the early reviewers' standards for evaluation outdated, but worth considering nonetheless? Were students able to discern whether reviews were positive, negative, or mixed? How able were they to determine the values and standards upon which the reviews judged the novel? Were they able to construct their own reviews of the novel that demonstrate an understanding of their potential audience? Did they enjoy the opportunity to say what they thought about the book?

Who's Who? Who's Where? and Who's in Charge?

If you are in Group 1:

Working together, find and discuss any passages in the first 20 pages of *Wuthering Height* relating to the two households and landscape around and between them. Collaborate and compile a list of adjectives and phrases that Lockwood employs to describe them. Once you've got a solid list, look up any unfamiliar words in a dictionary, and discuss what each of the descriptive words suggest about the two locations. What kind of places do they seem to be? Who inhabits them? And who is in charge of their maintenance? Use the remaining white space on the front and back of this sheet for notes and ideas.

If you are in Groups 2-6:

Work together to find every passage in the first twenty pages of *Wuthering Heights* that involves your assigned character. Take notes as a group on the character's location and movement, if any, and then compile a list of adjectives and phrases that the narrator uses to describe that character (or himself, if you have been assigned Lockwood). Once you have a solid list, look up any unfamiliar words in a dictionary. Together, discuss what you think he or she is like, based upon what the narrator says, and where he or she should be located on the basic "map" on the board. What space or spaces does he or she inhabit? Then discuss whether he or she seems to be "in charge" at any given moment in the first two chapters. When? And how so? Use the remaining white space on the front and back of this sheet for notes and ideas.

Handout #2

Ghost Chapter

A ghost chapter is not always a chapter, and it's not necessarily written by or about ghosts. In fact, any piece of writing that shows another side of a given story is a ghost chapter!

Your assignment is to write one—an alternate version of a specific part of *Wuthering Heights* from a perspective other than what Emily Brontë's novel provides.

For instance, your "chapter" might explain what happened to Catherine Earnshaw during her five week stay at the Linton's while she is injured (chapter 7), or cover what Heathcliff did when he left the region (between Chapter 9 and 10). Or, perhaps your version will be told by Isabella, Joseph, or Hindley Earnshaw. You might even narrate the events in a *real* ghost chapter, that is, from the perspective of the ghostly woman Lockwood thinks he sees knocking on the window in Chapter 3. How might *she* tell readers about the events?

Three Guidelines:

A. Whatever events your ghost chapter will cover, you should think deeply about who will tell the story. Put yourself in his/her place, and consider how that character's particular attitude and personality will affect how his/her experiences are presented.

B. Consider what your narrator might "sound" like in writing. Refer to the novel to get an idea of how your narrator might talk, and try to capture his or her voice in your writing.

C. Be creative! This activity gives you an opportunity to change the story and its characters, so feel free to narrate events in any way you'd like in the language that best fits your narrator.

“Papa Says Everything She Has is Mine”

Book the First : Chapter the Fifteenth : Of Husband and Wife pp 431-432

By marriage, the husband and wife are one person in law: that is, the very being or legal existence of the woman is suspended during the marriage, or at least is incorporated and consolidated into that of the husband: under whose wing, protection, and cover, she performs everything; and is therefore called in our law-french a *feme-covert*; is said to be *covert-baron*, or under the protection and influence of her husband, her *baron*, or lord; and her condition during her marriage is called her coverture. Upon this principle, of a union of person in husband and wife, depend almost all the legal rights, duties, and disabilities that either of them acquire by the marriage. I speak not at present of the rights of property, but of such as are merely personal. For this reason, a man cannot grant anything to his wife, or enter into covenant with her: for the grant would be to suppose her separate existence; and to covenant with her, would be only to covenant with himself: and therefore it is also generally true, that all compacts made between husband and wife, when single, are voided by the intermarriage. A woman indeed may be attorney for her husband; for that implies no separation from, but is rather a representation of, her lord. And a husband may also bequeath anything to his wife by will; for that cannot take effect till the coverture is determined by his death. The husband is bound to provide his wife with necessaries by law, as much as himself; and if she contracts debts for them, he is obliged to pay them: but for any thing besides necessaries, he is not chargeable. Also if a wife elopes, and lives with another man, the husband is not chargeable even for necessaries; at last if the person, who furnishes them, is sufficiently apprized of her elopement. If the wife be indebted before marriage, the husband is bound afterwards to pay the debt; for he has adopted her and her circumstances together.

Blackstone, Sir William. *Commentaries on the Laws of England* (1st Ed.). Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1765-1769.

The document is located at this URL:

<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/blackstone/bk1ch15.htm>.

Thumbs Up? Thumbs Down?

Congratulations! You've recently finished reading *Wuthering Heights*, and you are now equipped to write a basic review of the novel so that others who will be reading it have an informed opinion to consider. Choose the from the options below:

Option 1: Imagine running into a friend who will be in your grade and class in the following year. He or she asks you whether or not you've enjoyed your assigned novel, and you must say what you think so he or she can gear up for next year.

Option 2: You come home from school one day to find members of your family flipping through your copy of *Wuthering Heights*. One of them asks if the book is any good, since the family will now be listening to the book on tape for the next family vacation. What kind of experience might they have?

Option 3: While shopping at the mall, a person at least ten years older than you overhears you telling your companions that you've finally finished the book. He or she says, "Hey, that's a classic I've been meaning to read! What did you think of it?" Your companions are busy trying on clothes, so you have time to give this nice person a thoughtful answer.

Option 4: Your school newspaper has chosen you as its book reviewer because you seem to be well read. You are assigned the task of writing a review of *Wuthering Heights* for the entire student body, as well as teachers and administrators.

Three Guidelines:

A. Your readers won't have read the novel themselves but **don't spend too much time telling them all the plot details**. Instead of summarizing the action that takes place in the entire book, **inform readers about basic themes in the novel**, such as love, death, and revenge. Then say whether you liked the way the novel presents these themes to readers.

B. Whichever option you choose, be sure to be specific in your review; **use concrete examples** to explain your point of view.

C. Finally, you may offer any assessment of the novel you would like, but **you may not recommend that your audience read or avoid reading the novel**. Most of the people involved in each option will be reading the novel whether you say so or not, and the point is not to endorse it, but to *evaluate* it. In other words, do not say whether they should or shouldn't read it, tell them what their experience might be like *when* they read it.

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