

HIGH SCHOOL | BLUE VALLEY DISTRICT NOVEL RATIONALE

***Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë**

English Language Arts, 12th Grade

WHAT'S THE STORY?

Jane Eyre was published in 1847 and is often considered a fictional autobiography of its author. It follows the fortunes or lack thereof of the lonely and miserable life of the sad, unattractive heroine who begins her life as a girl orphaned without a penny to her name. She is left in the care of her aunt, Mrs. Reed, who treats her in an unfriendly and often cruel manner. This leads to a spirited escape - taking Jane to the charitable Lowood Institution (Charlotte Brontë herself attended the similar Cowan Bridge Institute). This alone was enough for the book to be considered unsuitable for young ladies - even though it never veers from the accepted moral codes of the nineteenth century. After a time with the kind Miss Temple, Jane's beloved teacher, and a fellow orphan, Jane moves to a post teaching the illegitimate child of a Mr. Rochester, a darkly handsome and troubled aristocrat. This unconventional hero-figure finds himself drawn to Jane not for her (plain) face but for her intellect and spark. The story follows the difficulties they face as the truth of Rochester's earlier marriage to a mad Creole woman emerges and Jane attempts to make a new life under the false impression that Rochester is an evil and heartless bigamist. Jane is ultimately found to be the lost heir of a wealthy uncle. While she makes a new life for herself, she wisely and selflessly shares herself and her new fortune with her long lost family and refuses a loveless but suitable marriage. She refuses to give up on the tortured Mr. Rochester who has redeemed himself by heroically attempting to save his mad wife, in turn, losing his sight and much of his glorious mansion and accompanying wealth. Jane's indomitable spirit and boundless love help restore Mr. Rochester, Jane's new husband, to his former, strong, but less arrogant, self.

CONNECTIONS TO CURRICULUM*

The following are some, but not all, of the connections to curriculum for this novel.

- **Unit 1: Language and Perspective**
 - Essential Question: "How does language influence perspective?"
- **Unit 4: Universal Human Experience**
 - Essential Question: "How can reading reveal universal truths about the human experience?"

KEY STANDARDS ADDRESSED

- Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain. RL.12.1

- Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 11–12 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies. RL.12.11
- Analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama. RL.12.3
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. RL.12.4
- Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant. RL.12.6
- Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem, evaluating how each version interprets the source text. RL.12.7
- Demonstrate knowledge of foundational works of American and world literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics. RL.12.9
- Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading. RL.12.10
- Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. RL.12.12