


Investigate!

Jane Eyre: Structure

 refers to links on www.crossref-it.info

Investigate! *Jane Eyre*

Structure

Structure by setting

❖ **Gateshead (chapters 1- 4; Volume 1, chapters 1-4)**

- Re-read the passage in chapter 1 from 'A small breakfast-room' to 'Henry Earl of Moreland'. Makes notes on:
 - What we learn about Jane's taste in reading
 - What this tells you about her feelings about life at Gateshead
- Re-read chapter 2. Makes notes on:
 - The appearance of the Red Room
 - The associations it arouses in Jane's mind
 - The effect it has on her.

❖ **Lowood School (chapters 5-10; Volume 1, chapters 5-10)**

- Closely read chapters 5, 6 and 7
 - Make notes on the atmosphere and physical privations of Lowood School
- How do Brocklehurst's religious beliefs affect life at the school?
 - How does the narrative suggest that his influence on the school may be harmful?
- What is the cause of Jane's restlessness in chapter 10?
 - What does it tell us about her character?

❖ **Thornfield Hall (chapters 11-27; Volume 1, chapter 11- Volume 3, chapter 1)**

- When she first arrives at Thornfield, Jane is as restless as she was when she left Lowood
 - What are the causes of her restlessness?

- Make a list of the supernatural aspects of Thornfield Hall
 - How do they affect the ways in which you read the story?
- Search the text for details of the appearance of Thornfield Hall
 - What picture of the house, both outside and inside, does this enable you to create?
- Jane is often very happy at Thornfield, but sometimes she is less happy
 - Why should that be the case?

❖ **Moor House (chapters 28-35; Volume 3, chapters 2-10)**

- List the arguments that St John uses to persuade Jane to agree to his suggestions
- What are the arguments that Jane uses against him?
 - What causes Jane to make her final decision?

❖ **Thornfield and Ferndean (chapters 36-38; Volume 3, chapters 10-12)**

- Do you think it is necessary to the plot of the novel that Thornfield should be destroyed?
 - Give your reasons
- Note the details of the appearance of Ferndean
 - In what ways is it an appropriate home for Jane and Rochester?


Time structure in *Jane Eyre*

❖ **The chronology of the action**

- Make a list of events and when they happened to create a broad outline of the novel's chronology

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- Make a note of any other intervals of time that are mentioned in the text
 - As you read the novel, how conscious were you of time passing?
- How does a knowledge of Jane's age in each episode help us to understand the structure and themes of the novel?

- ❖ **The gap in the narrative**
 - What is the effect on the narrative of the interval in time between chapters 9 and 10?
 - Why do you think Charlotte Brontë chose not to relate Jane's later career at Lowood School in any detail?
- ❖ **Time and the narrative voice**
 - Why is it important that we should find out at the end of the book the time at which Jane is writing her narrative?
See also  Texts in detail > *Jane Eyre* > Narrative

Family structure in *Jane Eyre*: Eyre, Reed and Rivers

- How do you respond to the fact that when Jane is destitute and near to death after leaving Thornfield, she should find shelter with people to whom she proves to be related?
 - What might this apparent coincidence tell us about the kind of novel this is?
- What other parallels and similarities in the families are revealed by the family tree?

See  Texts in detail > *Jane Eyre* > Structure > Family structure in *Jane Eyre*: Eyre, Reed and Rivers

- Do you think there is any significance in the choice of names given to the children in the younger generation?

Structure: Theme and imagery

- Look for examples of recurrent themes that can be linked with the novel's structure by
 - Time
 - Family