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Reflections: A Student Response Journal



Wuthering Heights
Emily Brontë



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Prestwick House

P.O. Box 658, Clayton, DE 19938

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Wuthering Heights

To The Student

Although we may read a novel, play, or work of non-fiction for enjoyment, each time we read one, we are building and practicing important basic reading skills. In our ever-more complex society, in which reading has become more and more crucial for success, this, in itself, is an important reason to spend time reading for enjoyment.

Some readers, however, are able to go beyond basic reading techniques and are able to practice higher thinking skills by reflecting on what they have read and how what they read affects them. It is this act of reflection—that is, stopping to think about what you are reading—that this journal is attempting to encourage.

To aid you, we have included writing prompts for each section; however, if you find something that you wish to respond to in the book more compelling than our prompts, you should write about that. We hope you enjoy reading this book and that the act of responding to what you have read increases this enjoyment.

After you read the indicated sections, choose the questions to which you will respond. Keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers to these prompts, and there is no one direction in which you must go.

Wuthering Heights

Chapter I

1. Mr. Lockwood describes Wuthering Heights as perfectly suited to his personality and solitary lifestyle. If you could live anywhere in the world, where would you choose? What location and type of home would suit your personality and lifestyle? Write a real estate advertisement for this home. Include descriptions of the location, the house and property, and the type of person to whom it would most appeal. Give your ad a creative name that expresses its character and location.
2. Make a list of the characters you meet in the first chapter and write a sentence or two for each one describing your initial impressions of him or her. Based on this first chapter and the characters you have met, write a prediction of what you think the novel is going to be about.

Wuthering Heights

Chapter III

4. Catherine's father has died and she is now being raised by her brother and sister-in-law, the Hindleys, who are much more strict and harsher than her father. She is miserable and wishes her father could return. Reflect on a time when something in your life changed drastically and permanently. Make a list of things in your life that were different before and after the change. Then, write a paragraph in which you explain which time you preferred and why.
5. As he leafs through Catherine's books, Mr. Lockwood reads some of the diary-like entries in the margins. Write a letter to Catherine empathizing with her "awful Sunday." Express sympathy for the difficult things she mentions, and share with her a story of your own about a day when you felt as if you could do nothing right or on which you endured excessive punishment for your mistakes.
6. Mr. Lockwood falls asleep reading the notes in Catherine's books and dreams vividly all night long, bizarre dreams inspired by what he has been reading. Imagine that you have been asked to participate in a research project on dreaming by a national sleep study institute. Write a report summarizing your experience with dreams. Be sure to answer the following questions:
 - How often do you dream?
 - How often do you remember your dreams in detail?
 - To what extent are your dreams inspired by events in your life (people you know, real situations or relationships, things you've read or seen, etc.)?
 - To what extent are your dreams related to your emotions (fear, sadness, anticipation, anxiety, etc.)?
 - Have you ever had a dream predict something that eventually happened?
 - Do you have a recurring dream?
 - What is your opinion about the source(s) of dreams?

Chapter X

16. Nelly says she believes that Edgar and Catherine really were happy together for a time but that it ended when each began to feel that one was not primarily concerned with the other. “Well, we *must* be for ourselves in the long run;” Nelly says, “the mild and generous are only more justly selfish than the domineering...” Do you agree with Nelly? Write a position statement explaining your perspective on selfishness.
17. Heathcliff returns to Wuthering Heights self-assured and purposeful; by all appearances, he is a “reformed” man. We are never told what experiences he had in his years away from the family, nor how they molded him. What do you think happened in the intervening years?

Imagine you are part of a team making a documentary film about Heathcliff’s life. You are personally responsible for the section covering his years away from Wuthering Heights. Use your imagination, and write a script for the “missing years” portion of the documentary. Include narration about what he did and learned as well as first-hand accounts from people who were with him.

18. At the end of the chapter, Mrs. Dean expresses her desire that something should take Heathcliff away from Wuthering Heights permanently and free them all from what she believes to be his evil influence. She uses the metaphor of a stray sheep, alluding to the biblical story from Matthew 18:10-14, of the ninety-nine sheep who remain in the fold and the one who wanders off and must be sought and rescued.

Re-read Mrs. Dean’s metaphor. Imagine that you have been asked to write the explanatory entry about it for an encyclopedia of literary metaphor and allusion. Write an encyclopedia entry explaining your understanding of the reference and how Mrs. Dean uses it here. Be sure to explain who or what in the novel you think Mrs. Dean means by “the stray sheep,” “the beast,” and “the fold.”

Wuthering Heights

Chapter XVII

30. Hindley Earnshaw, who hasn't had a kind or even civil impulse toward anyone since his beloved Frances died, approaches Isabella with the suggestion that they join forces to take revenge on Heathcliff for ruining their lives. Isabella refuses to help him, though she claims that no punishment would be enough unless she could inflict it herself. "Treachery and violence," she says, "are spears pointed at both ends; they wound those who resort to them worse than their enemies."

Write two or three original metaphors that express the same sentiment. For each one, finish the following sentence, or write explanations of your own:

Treachery and violence are _____; they _____.

31. Mrs. Dean uses a very detailed metaphor of a captain and his ship to describe how Hindley reacts to the loss of his wife. Using the same images of a captain and a ship, write a detailed metaphor to describe how Edgar copes with his loss.
32. At Hindley's funeral, Heathcliff shows some interest in Hareton, saying, "We'll see if one tree won't grow as crooked as another with the same wind to twist it." Imagine you are reading this section of the novel in preparation for a quiz in class the next day, and you get an email from a friend asking you to explain this section. "I don't understand why Heathcliff is being nice to Hareton all of a sudden," the friend writes. Write an email response to your friend explaining what Heathcliff is really saying in this section. Use the following beginning, or write one of your own:

He's *not* being nice at all! What he's really saying is...