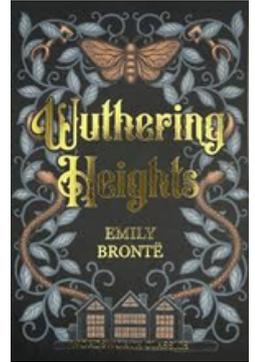




Exploring Senior Cycle Texts *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë

Please note: *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë is a novel included as part of the Prescribed Material, as a comparative study option, for the Leaving Certificate English Examination in 2027 and 2028.



About this extract

This extract is taken from the Oxford University Press 2013 edition of the text. In this extract Mr. Lockwood, who is renting Thrushcross Grange, visits his landlord, Heathcliff which serves to introduce the reader to *Wuthering Heights*.

'Wuthering Heights is the name of Mr. Heathcliff's dwelling, 'Wuthering' being a significant provincial adjective, descriptive of the atmospheric tumult to which its station is exposed in stormy weather. Pure, bracing ventilation they must have up there, at all times, indeed: one may guess the power of the north wind, blowing over the edge, by the excessive slant of a few, stunted firs at the end of the house; and by a range of gaunt thorns all stretching their limbs one way, as if craving alms of the sun. Happily, the architect had foresight to build it strong: the narrow windows are deeply set in the wall, and the corners defended with large jutting stones.

*Before passing the threshold, I paused to admire a quantity of grotesque carving lavished over the front, and especially about the principal door, above which, among a wilderness of crumbling griffins and shameless little boys, I detected the date '1500' and the name 'Hareton Earnshaw'. I would have made a few comments, and requested a short history of the place from the surly owner, but his attitude at the door appeared to demand my speedy entrance, or complete departure, and I had no desire to aggravate his impatience, previous to inspecting the penetralium. One step brought us into the family sitting-room, without any introductory lobby or passage: they call it here 'the house' pre-eminently. It includes kitchen and parlour, generally, but I believe at *Wuthering Heights* the kitchen is forced to retreat altogether into another quarter: at least I distinguished a chatter of tongues, and a clatter of culinary utensils, deep within; and I observed no signs of roasting, boiling, or baking, about the huge fire-place; nor any glitter of copper saucepans and tin cullenders on the walls. One end, indeed, reflected splendidly both light and heat from ranks of immense pewter dishes, interspersed with silver jugs and tankards, towering row after row, in a vast oak dresser, to the very roof. The latter had never been underdrawn: its entire anatomy lay bare to an enquiring eye, except where a frame of wood laden with oatcakes, and clusters of legs of beef, mutton and ham, concealed it. Above the chimney were sundry villanous old guns, and a couple of horse-pistols, and, by way of ornament, three gaudily painted canisters disposed along its ledge. The floor was of smooth, white stone: the chairs, high-backed, primitive structures, painted green: one or two heavy black ones lurking in the shade. In an arch under the dresser, reposed a huge, liver-coloured bitch pointer, surrounded by a swarm of squealing puppies, and other dogs haunted other recesses.*



Please note:

- The following tasks might be completed over a series of lessons or as part of a unit of learning
- Students may wish to complete some tasks individually or in pairs/groups
- Tasks might be completed orally and/or in written format
- Students may also wish to engage in a think, pair, share activity for some tasks.



Support your answers with reference to the text.

1. How does Mr. Lockwood describe the location of Wuthering Heights?
2. What kind of weather does the narrator mention as he approaches the house?
3. How does the narrator describe the architecture and surroundings of Wuthering Heights?
4. What specific detail does the narrator mention about the gate?

Understanding Time and Setting:

- What clues in the opening suggest that Wuthering Heights is set in a rural, isolated part of England?
- How does the description of the house reflect the harshness or resilience of life in this setting?
- What does the narrator’s reaction to the dogs and the house suggest about social norms and hospitality at the time?

Social Class and Power:

- How is the tension between social classes hinted at in this opening scene?
- What can we infer about Mr. Lockwood’s social background based on his language and observations?
- What assumptions does Mr. Lockwood make about the people and place he is visiting? What does this reveal about class attitudes?

Mood and Atmosphere:

- What impression of the world of Wuthering Heights is created in the opening description? Does it feel welcoming or hostile?
- How does the setting (the weather, the isolated house, the aggressive dogs) contribute to the mood of the scene?

Vision of the World:

- Based on this extract, what kind of world does Emily Brontë appear to be introducing us to? One of comfort and connection, or tension and isolation?
- What early hints do we get about relationships or human interaction in this world?
- What expectations does this opening set for the reader about the tone of the rest of the novel?
- Do you think this extract suggests an overall hopeful or pessimistic view of the world? Explain your answer using evidence from the text.