

## **Jane Eyre and Antigone: the cost of a moral decision**

1. Charlotte Brontë's novels are subjective in the sense that they capitalize on her own experience and that is perhaps their importance in the history of the novel. *Jane Eyre* is conceived in a vein of authentic passion. Charlotte is at her best in humble scenes of *Jane Eyre*, and the atmosphere of gloomy foreboding was the very air she breathed in her little corner of Yorkshire. The emotional tension of *Jane Eyre* is so well-managed that the book is still exciting to read—even with its flaws:

- a. pathetic ignorance of the ways of the world,
- b. dialogue between speakers of the higher ranks in society is unconvincing and stilted,
- c. attempts at humor are even sadder.

2. The 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the flowering of the English novel as an instrument portraying a middle-class society. *Jane Eyre* is an important development in the history of the novel because of the vitality of the teller. What was new about *Jane Eyre* was that everything was seen through the eyes of Jane herself, and she is intensely real.

“The real innovation of Charlotte Brontë is that she writes fiction from the point of view of an individual and not from the point of view of society in general. She projects herself without reserve into her leading characters and allows her inmost feelings, her secret impulses, to color her narrative...”

“Her aim was not simply to provoke sympathy for her heroine but rather to express or realize her. She was like Wordsworth, possessed by her feelings as well as possessing them. .. She did not attempt to get at the sources of behavior but simply to present it. What is vital in her work will not quickly perish because it deals with life in terms which do not generally change.”

3. Presentation of Charlotte's convictions—convictions which are of permanent importance in human life:

- a. the right of the humblest person to affection and self-realization (even women)
- b. honesty and integrity
- c. the right to speak out frankly
- d. the claims of morality and religion

The inner story of the novel, much more important than the melodramatic plot on which it hangs, is the story of Jane's long struggle to attain these values, to become a person who is admired, respected, and cared for, without compromising any of her principles.

### **Jane learns:**

- a. to assert herself (at Gateshead)
- b. to recognize her right to be loved (“)
- c. to be realistic and objective (“)—knows why her aunt doesn't like her but admits she doesn't want to live with poor relatives
- d. about real humility and genuine religious faith from Helen and learns to endure her punishment stoically (Lowood)
- e. to be indignant about women's place in society
- f. to keep her feet on the ground and remind herself of her position when she falls in love with

## Jane Eyre and Antigone: the cost of a moral decision

Rochester

g. to act with courage and discretion (w/Mason)

h. to bear the snubs of her cousins

i. to pity her aunt

j. to forgive

k. not to make Rochester her idol, but to learn to serve God first

l. not to compromise herself when Rochester wants her to go away with him—her soul is her own

m. to recognize at Moor's End that she is fully responsible for what she is and does

n. to handle the money left to her without greed or injustice

o. to resist St John's offer of a life of self-sacrifice, duty, and usefulness; but without love. She recognizes instinctively that marriage without love is prostitution,

The joyful conclusion for Jane—she's earned it. Without violating her integrity or her conscience, Jane's struggle for self-realization and her longing for love and fulfillment are both realized.

"Jane suits me: do I suit her" he asks.

"To the finest fibre of my nature, sir."

The finest fibre" is moral and spiritual as well as emotional. Jane's achievement of it is the meaning of the book.

### To Sum Up:

*Jane Eyre* is an intensely personal book

It's not historical.

It's not satirical.

It doesn't mirror society.

It doesn't really have a social message.

It maps a private world. Private, but not eccentric. You don't have to know the period, be able to discriminate past from present, imaginary from actual, be aware of difficulties, or have to adapt to unfamiliar manners or conventions.

Its timelessness is part of the perennial appeal of the book.

"The urban world with all its complications and trivial motives (every day chatter, newspapers, fashions, business houses, duchesses, footmen and snobs) is gone. Instead, the gale rages under the elemental sky, while indoors, their faces rugged the fierce firelight, austere figures of no clearly defined class or period declare eternal love and hate to one another in phrases of stilted eloquence and staggering candor."

Hard to rank Charlotte with other novelists—too faulty to be ranked with the very greatest writers (Shakespeare, Jane Austen), but can't consider her a minor figure.

Because of her creative inspiration, she will find followers in every age.

A unique, a thrilling, a perennial fascination.

## Jane Eyre and Antigone: the cost of a moral decision

Check test: Chapter 1-4 Twenty-minute time limit.

Choose 2 (TWO) of the following quotations, and write an explanation of the context of the quote—what is happening, who is saying the quote if it's in dialogue, whom the quote refers to, implications for the characters, etc. 100 words min. for EACH response.

1. (Chapter 2) This room was chill, because it seldom had a fire; it was silent, because remote from the nursery and kitchen; solemn, because it was known to be so seldom entered. The house-maid alone came here on Saturdays, to wipe from the mirrors and the furniture a week's quiet dust: and Mrs. Reed herself, at far intervals, visited it to review the contents of a certain secret drawer in the wardrobe, where were stored divers parchments, her jewel-casket, and a miniature of her deceased husband; and in those last words lies the secret of the red-room--the spell which kept it so lonely in spite of its grandeur.

2. (Chapter 3) "Would you like to go to school?"

Again I reflected: I scarcely knew what school was: Bessie sometimes spoke of it as a place where young ladies sat in the stocks, wore backboards, and were expected to be exceedingly genteel and precise: John Reed hated his school, and abused his master; but John Reed's tastes were no rule for mine, and if Bessie's accounts of school-discipline (gathered from the young ladies of a family where she had lived before coming to Gateshead) were somewhat appalling, her details of certain accomplishments attained by these same young ladies were, I thought, equally attractive. She boasted of beautiful paintings of landscapes and flowers by them executed; of songs they could sing and pieces they could play, of purses they could net, of French books they could translate; till my spirit was moved to emulation as I listened. Besides, school would be a complete change: it implied a long journey, an entire separation from Gateshead, an entrance into a new life.

"I should indeed like to go to school," was the audible conclusion of my musings.

3. (Chapter 4) Who could want me?" I asked inwardly, as with both hands I turned the stiff door-handle, which, for a second or two, resisted my efforts. "What should I see besides Aunt Reed in the apartment?--a man or a woman?" The handle turned, the door unclosed, and passing through and curtseying low, I looked up at--a black pillar!--such, at least, appeared to me, at first sight, the straight, narrow, sable-clad shape standing erect on the rug: the grim face at the top was like a carved mask, placed above the shaft by way of capital.

Check test:retake/makeup Chapter 1-4 Twenty-minute time limit.

Choose 2 (TWO) of the following quotations, and write an explanation of the context of the quote—what is happening, who is saying the quote if it's in dialogue, whom the quote refers to, implications for the characters, etc. 100 words min. for EACH response.

1. (Chapter 2) "Unjust!--unjust!" said my reason, forced by the agonising stimulus into precocious though transitory power: and Resolve, equally wrought up, instigated some strange expedient to achieve escape from insupportable oppression--as running away, or, if that could not be effected, never eating or drinking more, and letting myself die.

2. (Chapter 3) "No; I should not like to belong to poor people," was my reply.

## Jane Eyre and Antigone: the cost of a moral decision

"Not even if they were kind to you?"

I shook my head: I could not see how poor people had the means of being kind; and then to learn to speak like them, to adopt their manners, to be uneducated, to grow up like one of the poor women I saw sometimes nursing their children or washing their clothes at the cottage doors of the village of Gateshead: no, I was not heroic enough to purchase liberty at the price of caste.

3. (Chapter 4) I stepped across the rug; he placed me square and straight before him. What a face he had, now that it was almost on a level with mine! what a great nose! and what a mouth! and what large prominent teeth!

"No sight so sad as that of a naughty child," he began, "especially a naughty little girl. Do you know where the wicked go after death?"

"They go to hell," was my ready and orthodox answer.

"And what is hell? Can you tell me that?"

"A pit full of fire."

"And should you like to fall into that pit, and to be burning there for ever?"

"No, sir."

"What must you do to avoid it?"

I deliberated a moment; my answer, when it did come, was objectionable: "I must keep in good health, and not die."

Check test: Chapter 5-7 Twenty-minute time limit.

Choose 2 (TWO) of the following quotations, and write an explanation of the context of the quote—what is happening, who is saying the quote if it's in dialogue, whom the quote refers to, implications for the characters, etc. 100 words min. for EACH response.

1. (Chapter 5) "You had this morning a breakfast which you could not eat; you must be hungry:--I have ordered that a lunch of bread and cheese shall be served to all."

The teachers looked at her with a sort of surprise.

"It is to be done on my responsibility," she added, in an explanatory tone to them, and immediately afterwards left the room.

The bread and cheese was presently brought in and distributed, to the high delight and refreshment of the whole school. The order was now given "To the garden!" Each put on a coarse straw bonnet, with strings of coloured calico, and a cloak of grey frieze. I was similarly equipped, and, following the stream, I made my way into the open air.

2. (Chapter 6) "Miss Temple is full of goodness; it pains her to be severe to any one, even the worst in the school: she sees my errors, and tells me of them gently; and, if I do anything worthy of praise, she gives

## Jane Eyre and Antigone: the cost of a moral decision

me my meed liberally. One strong proof of my wretchedly defective nature is, that even her expostulations, so mild, so rational, have not influence to cure me of my faults; and even her praise, though I value it most highly, cannot stimulate me to continued care and foresight."

3. (Chapter 7) "My dear children," pursued the black marble clergyman, with pathos, "this is a sad, a melancholy occasion; for it becomes my duty to warn you, that this girl, who might be one of God's own lambs, is a little castaway: not a member of the true flock, but evidently an interloper and an alien. You must be on your guard against her; you must shun her example; if necessary, avoid her company, exclude her from your sports, and shut her out from your converse. Teachers, you must watch her: keep your eyes on her movements, weigh well her words, scrutinise her actions, punish her body to save her soul: if, indeed, such salvation be possible, for (my tongue falters while I tell it) this girl, this child, the native of a Christian land, worse than many a little heathen who says its prayers to Brahma and kneels before Juggernaut--this girl is--a liar!"

Chapter 5-7: retest/makeup Twenty-minute time limit.

Choose 2 (TWO) of the following quotations, and write an explanation of the context of the quote—what is happening, who is saying the quote if it's in dialogue, whom the quote refers to, implications for the characters, etc. 100 words min. for EACH response.

1. (Chapter 5) Ravenous, and now very faint, I devoured a spoonful or two of my portion without thinking of its taste; but the first edge of hunger blunted, I perceived I had got in hand a nauseous mess; burnt porridge is almost as bad as rotten potatoes; famine itself soon sickens over it. The spoons were moved slowly: I saw each girl taste her food and try to swallow it; but in most cases the effort was soon relinquished. Breakfast was over, and none had breakfasted. Thanks being returned for what we had not got, and a second hymn chanted, the refectory was evacuated for the schoolroom. I was one of the last to go out, and in passing the tables, I saw one teacher take a basin of the porridge and taste it; she looked at the others; all their countenances expressed displeasure, and one of them, the stout one, whispered -

"Abominable stuff! How shameful!"

2. (Chapter 6) "Then learn from me, not to judge by appearances: I am, as Miss Scatcherd said, slatternly; I seldom put, and never keep, things, in order; I am careless; I forget rules; I read when I should learn my lessons; I have no method; and sometimes I say, like you, I cannot BEAR to be subjected to systematic arrangements. This is all very provoking to Miss Scatcherd, who is naturally neat, punctual, and particular."

3. (Chapter 7) "This I learned from her benefactress; from the pious and charitable lady who adopted her in her orphan state, reared her as her own daughter, and whose kindness, whose generosity the unhappy girl repaid by an ingratitude so bad, so dreadful, that at last her excellent patroness was obliged to separate her from her own young ones, fearful lest her vicious example should contaminate their purity: she has sent her here to be healed, even as the Jews of old sent their diseased to the troubled pool of Bethesda; and, teachers, superintendent, I beg of you not to allow the waters to stagnate round her."

## Jane Eyre and Antigone: the cost of a moral decision

### Syntax techniques in Jane Eyre

**Asyndeton** – a deliberate omission of conjunctions in a series of related clauses; it speeds the pace of the sentence.

Chapter 27 (352) in the paragraph that begins “Well, Jane, being so, it was his resolution...”

“Her relatives encouraged me; competitors piqued me; she allured me; a marriage was achieved before I knew where I was”

Additional example

**"Duty, Honor, Country:** Those three hallowed words reverently dictate what you ought to be, what you can be, what you will be. They are your rallying points: **to build courage when courage seems to fail; to regain faith when there seems to be little cause for faith; to create hope when hope becomes forlorn.**"

-- General Douglas MacArthur, Thayer Award Acceptance Address

**Ellipsis** – the deliberate omission of word or words that are readily implied by the context; it creates an elegant or daring economy of words.

Chapter 2 (9) in the paragraph that begins with the sentence.

“This room was chill, because it seldom had a fire; it was silent, because [it was] remote from the nursery and kitchens; [it was] solemn, because it was know to be so seldom entered.”

Additional examples

"The average person thinks he isn't [average]." –Father Larry Lorenzoni

John forgives Mary and Mary [forgives], John.

**Parallel structure** (parallelism) refers to a grammatical or structural similarity between sentences or parts of a sentence. It involves an arrangement of words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs so that elements of equal importance are equally developed and similarly phrased.

Chapter 28 (375) in the paragraph that begins “What a still, hot, prefect day!”

“The burden must be carried; the want provided for; the suffering endured; the responsibility fulfilled.”

Additional example

The coach told the players that **they should get a lot of sleep, not eat too much, and do some warm-up exercises before the game.**

**Polysyndeton** – the deliberate use of many conjunctions for special emphasis – to highlight quantity or mass of detail or create a flowing, continuous sentence pattern.

## Jane Eyre and Antigone: the cost of a moral decision

Chapter 10 (94) in the paragraph that begins “I went to my window, opened it, and looked out.”

“I had had no communication by letter or message with the outer world: school-rules, school-duties, school habits and notions, and voices, and faces, and phrases, and costumes, and preferences, and antipathies: such was what I knew of existence.”

Additional example

"Oh, my piglets, we are the origins of war -- not history's forces, **nor the times, nor justice, nor the lack of it, nor causes, nor religions, nor ideas, nor kinds of government** -- not any other thing. We are the killers."

-- delivered by Katherine Hepburn (from the movie *The Lion in Winter*)

**Repetition** – a device in which words, sounds, and ideas are used more than once to enhance rhythm and to create emphasis.

Chapter 2 (10) in the paragraph that begins with the sentence

“All John Reed’s violent tyrannies, all his sisters’ proud indifference, all his mother’s aversion, all the servants’ partiality, turned up in my disturbed mind like a dark deposit in a turbid well.”

**Anadiplosis** – the repetition of the last word of one clause at the beginning of the following clause; it ties the sentence to its surroundings.

Chapter 15 (159) in the paragraph that begins with the sentence.

“He then said that she was the daughter of a French opera-dancer, Celine Varens, towards whom he had once cherished what he called a ‘*grande passion*.’ This passion Celine had professed to return with even superior ardour.”

Additional examples

"They call for you: The general who became a slave; the slave who became a gladiator; the gladiator who defied an Emperor. Striking story."

-- delivered by Joaquin Phoenix (from the movie *Gladiator*)

"Somehow, with the benefit of little formal education, my grandparents recognized the inexorable downward spiral of conduct outside the guardrails: If you lie, you will cheat; if you cheat, you will steal; if you steal, you will kill."

-- USSC Justice Clarence Thomas, 1993 Mercer Law School Address

**Anaphora** – the repetition of the same word or group of words at the beginning of successive clauses; it helps establish a strong rhythm and produces a powerful emotional effect.

Chapter 4 (30) in the paragraph that begins “I stepped across the rug; ...”

## Jane Eyre and Antigone: the cost of a moral decision

“What a face he had, now that it was almost on a level with mine! What a great nose! And what a mouth! And what large prominent teeth.”

Additional examples

"To raise a happy, healthy, and hopeful child, it takes a family; it takes teachers; it takes clergy; it takes business people; it takes community leaders; it takes those who protect our health and safety. It takes all of us."

-- Hillary Clinton, 1996 Democratic National Convention Address

Mad world! Mad kings! Mad composition!

— (William Shakespeare, King John, II, i)

What the hammer? what the chain?

In what furnace was thy brain?

What the anvil? what dread grasp

Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

— (William Blake, from "The Tyger")

**Epanalepsis** – the repetition at the end of the clause of the word that occurred at the beginning of the clause; it tends to make the sentence or clause in which it occurs stand apart from its surroundings.

Chapter 5 (47) in the paragraph that begins “Ravenous, and now very faint, I devoured ...”

“Breakfast was over, and none had breakfasted.”

Additional examples

"Control, control, you must learn control."

-- from the movie *The Empire Strikes Back*

"A minimum wage that is not a livable wage can never be a minimum wage."

-- Ralph Nader

The King is dead. Long live the King!

**Epistrophe** – the repetition of the same word or group of words at the ends of successive clauses; it sets up a pronounced rhythm and gains a special emphasis both by repeating the word and by putting the word in the final position.

Chapter 17 (196) in the paragraph that begins with the sentence.

“Genius is said to be self-conscious: I cannot tell whether Miss Ingram was a genius, but she was self-conscious – remarkably self-conscious indeed.”

Chapter 23 (293) in the paragraph that begins with the sentence.

## Jane Eyre and Antigone: the cost of a moral decision

“Oh, Jane, you torture me! he exclaimed. ‘With that searching and yet faithful and generous look, you torture me!’”

Additional examples

“What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny compared to what lies within us.” —Emerson

We are born to sorrow, pass our time in sorrow, end our days in sorrow.

**Antimetabole** – a sentence strategy in which the arrangement of ideas in the second clause is a reversal of the first; it adds power through its inverse repetition.

Chapter 23 (291) in the paragraph that begins “I tell you I must go!”

“And if God had gifted me with some beauty and much wealth, I should have made it as hard for you to leave me, as it is now for me to leave you.”

Additional examples

"The absence of evidence is not the evidence of absence." -- Carl Sagan

"We do not stop playing because we are old; we grow old because we stop playing." -- George Bernard Shaw

"And so, my fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country."

-- John F. Kennedy, Inaugural Address

**Inverted order of a sentence** (*inversion*) involves constructing a sentence so the predicate comes before the subject. This is a device in which typical sentence patterns are reversed to create an emphatic or rhythmic effect.

Chapter 4 (27) in the paragraph that begins with the sentence.

“Long did the hours seem while I waited the departure of the company, and listened for the sound of Bessie’s step on the stairs...”

Additional examples

Not only is the standard American aluminum can light in weight and rugged but it is also about the same height and diameter as the traditional drinking tumbler. [beginning with negative, not only]

--William Hostold and John Duncan, "The Aluminum Beverage Can," Scientific American

After the elephants came the clowns.

Beyond the river lay the cliffs.

## Jane Eyre and Antigone: the cost of a moral decision

### ONE-PAGER ON *JANE EYRE* SETTING

Directions:

1. Use one sheet of paper.
2. Carefully place the following on **one** side of the paper:
  - a. name of the setting
  - b. at least 2 significant (and complete) quotations from the novel with chapter and page #'s in parentheses following them
  - c. the prominent season associated with the setting
  - d. the prominent color(s) associated with the setting
  - e. a list of the major characters Jane meets at this place
  - f. an illustration/picture/symbol that reflects something significant about the setting.
  - g. a statement of the setting's influence upon Jane Eyre

### PLACES OF THE HEART

#### Major Grade Assignment

#### Settings in Jane Eyre

“The novel has a structure that allows us to explore the inner landscape in terms of five places of the heart...Each of the houses is a metaphor...of a condition of the private heart.”--Mark Kinkead, “The Place of Love in Jane Eyre and Wuthering Heights,” 1970

Product: 5 dialectic journal entries on SETTINGS in the novel

Due Date: TBA

FORMAT: Divide the page into two columns. On the left side include 3 quotes from the novel; on the right side write your response of 100 words minimum. You will have a total of 15 quotes and 5 responses.

Contents:

1. You should create a SEPARATE entry for each of the 5 chief settings of the novel: Gateshead, Lowood, Thornfield Hall, Moor House/Marsh End, and Ferndean. At the top of each entry, write the name of the setting in the center.
2. For each entry on the left side copy 3 (THREE) passages specifically about the physical setting (outer and/or inner appearance), documented with Ch. and p. #.
3. Then on the right side explain in one response HOW these settings reflect that stage in Jane's life. Consider: season(s) associated with the setting, colors, atmosphere, images/symbols, lessons learned, etc.

Rubric:

90 - 100 = These dialectics will exhibit apt and precise selections of passages and will provide convincing explanations of Bronte's settings reflecting Jane's life stages. The writing will demonstrate consistent control over the elements of effective composition.

80 - 89 = These dialectics will reflect less certain, less incisive, less apt selections of passages, and the explanations will provide less certain, less convincing explanations of Bronte's settings reflecting Jane's life stages.

70 - 79 = These dialectics will not be as clear, convincing, or accurate in selection of passages as the A and B responses, and the explanations may not convey significant understanding of the purposes behind the settings in Bronte's novels.

60 - 69 = These dialectics reflect no effort and/or lack seriousness of purpose.

**Jane Eyre and Antigone: the cost of a moral decision**

**facebook**

Name:

What's on your mind:

**Basic Information:**

Hometown:

Relationship Status:

Political Views:

**Friends**


Religious Views:

**Personal Information:**

Activities: (2)

Interests: (3)

Favorite Books: (3)

**Education/Work:**

School:

Employer:

Position:

Favorite Movies/TV Shows: (3)

**Contact Info:**

E-mail:

Address:

Favorite Quotes: (3) *use back of paper*

**About Me:** (at least 100 words)

**11 THE WALL (USE THE BACK OF THE PAPER)**

5 total posts, at least 3 of the 5 have to be different characters

Name Post

## Jane Eyre and Antigone: the cost of a moral decision

### What is it like to live in a world without technology? You are about to find out.

You must minimize all technology use for a 24 hour period. You may choose the 24 hour period between now and February 7th. However, your parent/guardian must sign the bottom of this page to help keep you honest. You will have a writing assignment over your experience, so be sure to avoid all technology possible.

#### Points to remember...

- ⌚ Make a real effort to avoid all technology
- ⌚ If in school, avoid friends' technology, computers etc. (unless absolutely necessary for school work)
- ⌚ Basically, anything available in the year 1900, you may use. This means...
  - No computers
  - No TVs, no radios
  - No cell phones (landlines are ok)
  - No mp3 players, cds, etc.
  - No microwaves (stoves are ok)
  - Yes, you may use electricity (unless you prefer candle light and fireplaces!)

#### Things to think about during your 24 hours...

- ✎ Could you live like this for an extended period of time?
- ✎ How does it feel not to have technology?
- ✎ Does it change how you think about your life?
- ✎ How did you change your routine? How difficult is it to avoid technology?
- ✎ Did other people help you succeed in avoiding things? Did they try to tempt you to use technology?
- ✎ How do you think other cultures in the world live without so much technology?

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Dear Parent/Guardian:

As you can read from above, your student is about to begin a 24 hour assignment. Please do everything you can to help him/her succeed. Please sign below as part of your student's grade.

*Bringing this page back signed is worth 10 points of your grade for this assignment.*

I, \_\_\_\_\_, promise that I have not used technology for 24 hours starting on January/February \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm and ending on January/February \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

## Technology Avoidance Reflective Essay

Write a reflective essay regarding your time away from technology. Be sure to include details, thought and insight.

✚ **Write at least two paragraphs to include the following:**

- How did it feel to avoid technology?
- How much did it change your daily routine?
- Did this change anyone else's routine (friends, family, etc.)? How?
- How did avoiding technology make you feel about yourself? Better or worse?
- Was there a point when you "cheated" and plugged in? Explain why and for how long. Did you feel guilty?
- Explain why technology is important enough for us to have everywhere.
- Which elements of technology do you feel are absolutely necessary and which are simply luxuries?
- Does technology help us identify ourselves?

✚ **Your next paragraph must discuss your view and commentary on the following quote.**

*"The cost, he says, outweighs the convenience. Kids are writing more than ever online or in text messages, but it's not the kind of narrative skill needed as adults, he says. 'Those forms groove bad habits, so when it comes time to produce an academic paper ... or when they enter the workplace, their capacity breaks down.'*

*Social networking sites can give young users 'the sense of them being the center of the universe,' Bauerlein says.*

*That gives them a distorted understanding of how the world works, he says. 'If you go into a room of strangers, you don't know how to relate. You can't replicate your IM habits,' he says. 'It closes people off from a wider engagement with the world.'*

- Excerpt from USA Today article by Erin Thompson on Mark Bauerlein's book, *The Dumbest Generation: How the Digital Age Stupefies Young Americans and Jeopardizes Our Future*

✚ **Your last paragraph must discuss other cultures that live without technology.**

- What cultures do you know of that do not have technology?
- How would you cope if you had to relocate to one of these locations for six months?
- Do you believe it is the responsibility of developed countries to try and aid these cultures in gaining technology?
- Do you think the introduction of technology into these cultures would be better or worse for the people? Explain.

**Jane Eyre and Antigone: the cost of a moral decision**

***REFLECTIVE ESSAY RUBRIC:***

*EXCELLENT (100-90):*

- ✓ *Paragraphs are completed with all requirements met*
- ✓ *Discussion is insightful, convincing and fully developed*
- ✓ *All ideas are well elaborated*
- ✓ *Error free writing*

*PROFICIENT (89-80):*

- ✓ *Paragraphs are completed with all requirements met*
- ✓ *Discussion is convincing and developed*
- ✓ *Most ideas are well elaborated*
- ✓ *Some grammar/spelling errors*

*ADEQUATE (79-70):*

- ✓ *Paragraphs are written with most requirements met*
- ✓ *Discussion is limited or repetitious*
- ✓ *Some ideas are elaborated*
- ✓ *Frequent grammar/spelling errors*

*NOT ADEQUATE (50-69)*

- ✓ *Paragraphs meet few requirements*
- ✓ *Discussion is repetitious and/or incomplete*
- ✓ *Few ideas are present*
- ✓ *Frequent grammar/spelling errors*

## Jane Eyre and Antigone: the cost of a moral decision

### Antigone and Ismene Argument

**ANTIGONE:** The same blood  
Flows in both our Veins, doesn't it, my sister,  
The blood of Oedipus. And suffering,  
Which was his destiny, is our punishment too,  
The sentence passed on all his children.  
Physical pain, contempt, insults,  
Every kind of dishonour: we've seen them all,  
And endured them all, the two of us.  
But there's more to come. Now, today...  
Have you heard it, this new proclamation,  
Which the king has made to the whole city?  
Have you heard how those nearest to us  
Are to be treated, with the contempt  
We reserve for traitors? People we love!

**ISMENE:** No one has told me anything, Antigone,  
I have heard nothing, neither good nor bad  
About anyone we love...

**ANTIGONE:** I thought you hadn't. That's why I asked you  
To meet me here, where I can tell you everything  
Without any risk of being overheard.

**ISMENE:** What is it then? More terrible news?  
Something black and frightening, I can see that.

**ANTIGONE:** Well, what do you think, Ismene? Perhaps  
You can guess. We have two brothers,  
Both of them dead. And Creon has decreed  
That a decent burial shall be given to one,  
But not to the other. Eteocles, apparently,  
Has already been buried, with full military honours,  
And all the formalities due to the dead  
Meticulously observed. So that his rest  
In the underworld among the heroes is assured.  
But Polynices, who died in agony  
Just as certainly as his brother did,  
Is not to be buried at all. The decree  
Makes that quite plain. He is to be left  
Lying where he fell, with no tears,  
And no ceremonies of mourning, to stink  
In the open: till the kites and vultures  
Catch the scent, and tear him to pieces  
And pick him to the bone. Left unburied  
There is no rest for him in the underworld,

## Jane Eyre and Antigone: the cost of a moral decision

No more than here. What a great king  
Our Creon is, eh Sister? . . . The punishment  
For anyone who disobeys the order  
Is public stoning to death. So that's the news,  
And you know it now. The time has come  
For you too to stand up and be counted  
With me: and to show whether you are worthy  
Of the honour of being Oedipus' daughter.

**ISMENE:** Wait a minute Antigone, don't be so headstrong!

If all this is as you say it is,  
What can I do, one way or the other?

**ANTIGONE:** Just say you will help me. Commit yourself.

**ISMENE:** To do what? Something dangerous?

**ANTIGONE:** Just to give me a hand to lift the body.

It's too heavy for me to move on my own.

**ISMENE:** To bury him you mean? In spite of the decree?

**ANTIGONE:** He is my brother. And like it or not

He's yours too. I won't betray him

Now that he's dead. No one will ever

Throw that in my face.

**ISMENE:** You must be mad!

Creon has publicly forbidden it.

**ANTIGONE:** He can't forbid me to love my brother.

He has neither the right nor the power to do that.

**ISMENE:** Have you forgotten what happened to our father?

Contempt and loathing from everyone,

Even from himself, that was his reward

Think for a moment Antigone, please!

We are women, that's all. Physically weaker —

And barred from any political influence.

How can we fight against the institutionalised strength

Of the male sex? They are in power,

And we have to obey them — this time

And maybe in worse situations than this.

May God forgive me, and the spirits of the dead,

I have no choice! State power

Commands, and I must do as I am told.

When you are powerless, wild gestures

And heroic refusals are reserved for madmen!

**ANTIGONE:** Don't say any more. I won't ask again.

In fact, if you were to offer help now,

I would refuse it. Do as you please.

I intend to bury my brother,

## Jane Eyre and Antigone: the cost of a moral decision

And if I die in the attempt, I shall die  
In the knowledge that I have acted justly.

Do as you please. Live, by all means.

The laws *you* will break are not of man's making.

**ISMENE:** I reverence them. But how can I defy  
The unlimited power of the State? What weapons  
Of mine are strong enough for that?

**ANTIGONE:** Fine. That's a good excuse. I'll go  
And shovel the earth on my brother's body.

**ISMENE:** I'm frightened, Antigone. I'm frightened for you.

**ANTIGONE:** Don't be frightened for me. Fear for yourself.

**ISMENE:** For God's sake, keep it quiet. Don't tell anyone.  
I'll keep our meeting secret.

**ANTIGONE:** Don't you dare!

You must tell everybody, shout it in the streets.

If you keep it secret, I shall begin to hate you.

**ISMENE:** There's a fire burning in you Antigone,  
But it makes me go cold just to hear you!

**ANTIGONE:** I'm not doing it to please you. It's for him.

**ISMENE:** This obsession will destroy you! You're certain to fail!

**ANTIGONE:** I shall fail when I have failed. Not before.

**ISMENE:** But you know it's hopeless. Why begin  
When you know you can't possibly succeed!

**ANTIGONE:** Be quiet, before I begin to despise you

For talking so feebly! *He* will despise you

Too, and justly. You can go now. Go!

If I'm mad, you can leave me here with my madness

Which will doubtless destroy me soon enough.

Death is the worst thing that can happen,

And some deaths are more honourable than others.

**ISMENE:** If you've made your mind up. . . Antigone, it's  
madness...

Remember, I love you . . . whatever happens...

*Exit Antigone and Ismene in opposite directions*

### Haemon and Creon argument

**HAEMON:** Father, the most enviable of a man's gifts

Is the ability to reason clearly,

And it's not for me to say you are wrong,

Even if I were clever enough, or experienced enough,

Which I'm not. But it's also true to say

That some men think differently about these things,

And as your son, my most useful function,

## Jane Eyre and Antigone: the cost of a moral decision

It seems to me, is to keep you in touch  
With what other people are thinking,  
What they say, and do, and approve or disapprove of,  
And sometimes what they leave unsaid.  
The prospect of your disapproval is great  
Silence of most men's tongues, and some things  
Are never said, for fear of the consequences.  
But I can sometimes hear what people whisper  
Behind their hands: and everywhere, I hear sympathy  
Expressed for this unfortunate girl,  
Condemned, as she is, to a horrifying death  
That no woman has ever suffered before,  
And unjustly, in most people's eyes.  
In burying her brother, who was killed  
In action, she did something most people consider  
Decent and honourable — rather than leaving him  
Naked on the battlefield, for the dogs to tear at  
And kites and scavengers to pick to the bone.  
She should be given a medal for it,  
Those same people say, and her name inscribed  
On the roll of honour. Such things are whispered  
In secret, Father, and they have reached my ears.  
Sir, your reputation matters to me  
As much as your good health and happiness do,  
Indeed, your good name matters more.  
What can a loving son be more jealous of  
Than his father's reputation, and what could please  
A father more than to see his son's concern  
That people will think well of him?  
Then let me beg you to have second thoughts,  
And not be certain that your own opinion  
Is the only right one, and that all men share it.  
A man who thinks he has the monopoly  
Of wisdom, that only what *he* says  
And what *he* thinks are of any relevance,  
Reveals his own shallowness of mind  
With every word he says. The man of judgement  
Knows that it is a sign of strength,  
Not weakness, to value other opinions,  
And to learn from them: and when he is wrong,  
To admit it openly and change his mind.  
You see it when a river floods, the trees  
That bend, survive, those whose trunks

## Jane Eyre and Antigone: the cost of a moral decision

Are inflexible, are snapped off short  
By the weight of the water. And a sailor in a storm  
Who refuses to reef his sail, and run  
With the wind, is likely to end up capsized.  
I beg you Father, think twice about this.  
Don't let your anger influence you. If a man  
Of my age may lay some small claim  
To common sense, let me say this:  
Absolute certainty is fine, if a man  
Can be certain that his wisdom is absolute.  
But such certainty and such wisdom  
Is rare among men: and that being so,  
The next best, is to learn to listen,  
And to take good advice when it is offered.

CHORUS: There's a lot of sense, my Lord Creon,  
In what this young man has said: as indeed,  
There was in everything that you said too.  
The fact is, you are both in the right,  
And there's a good deal to be said for either.

**CREON:** Is there indeed? Am I expected to listen  
And take lessons in political tactics  
At my age, from a mere boy?

**HAEMON:** I'm a man, Father, and my arguments are just.  
They stand upon their merits, not my age.

**CREON:** Oh, they stand upon their merits do they? What merit  
Is there, please tell me, in breaking the law?

**HAEMON:** If she'd done something shameful I wouldn't defend her.

**CREON:** She has brought the law into contempt! That's shameful!

**HAEMON:** Listen to the people in the street, Father,  
The ordinary Thebans! They say she hasn't!

**CREON:** I have never based my political principles  
On the opinions of people in the Street!

**HAEMON:** Now you're the one who's speaking like a boy!

**CREON:** I'm speaking like a king. It's my responsibility,  
And I will act according to my own convictions!

**HAEMON:** When the State becomes one man it ceases to be a State!

**CREON:** The State is the statesman who rules it, it reflects  
His judgement, it belongs to him!

**HAEMON:** Go and rule in the desert then! There's nobody there  
To argue with you! What a king you'll be there!

**CREON:** This boy of mine is on the woman's side!

**HAEMON:** Yes, if *you* are a woman, I am.  
I'm on your side Father, I'm fighting for you.

## Jane Eyre and Antigone: the cost of a moral decision

**CREON:** You damned impertinent devil! Every word  
You say is against me. Your own father!

**HAEMON:** When I know you are wrong, I have to speak.

**CREON:** How am I wrong? By maintaining my position  
And the authority of the State? Is that wrong?

**HAEMON:** When position and authority  
Ride roughshod over moral feeling...

**CREON:** You're weak, and uxorious, and contemptible,  
With no will of your own. You're a woman's mouthpiece!

**HAEMON:** I'm not ashamed of what I'm saying.

**CREON:** Every word you have said pleads for her cause.

**HAEMON:** I plead for you, and for myself,  
And for common humanity, respect for the dead!

**CREON:** You will never marry that woman, she won't  
Live long enough to see that day!

**HAEMON:** If she dies,  
She won't die alone. There'll be two deaths, not one.

**CREON:** Are you threatening me? How dare you threaten...

**HAEMON:** No, that's not a threat. I'm telling you  
Your policy was misbegotten from the beginning.

**CREON:** Misbegotten! Dear God, if anything's misbegotten  
Here, it's my son. You'll regret this, I promise you.

**HAEMON:** If you weren't my father, I'd say you were demented.

**CREON:** Don't father me! You're a woman's plaything,  
A tame lap dog!

**HAEMON:** Is anyone else  
Allowed to speak? Must you have the last word  
In everything, must all the rest of us be gagged?

**CREON:** I must, and I will! And you, I promise you,  
Will regret what you have spoken here  
Today. I will not be sneered at or contradicted  
By anyone. Sons can be punished too.

Bring her out, the bitch, let her die here and now,  
In the open, with her bridegroom beside her  
As a witness! You can watch the execution!

**HAEMON:** That's one sight I shall never see!  
Nor from this moment, Father, will you  
Ever see me again. Those that wish  
To stay and watch this disgusting spectacle  
In company with a madman, are welcome to it!

*Exit Haemon.*