2.19 Literature: Jane Eyre (Charlotte Bronte): 2-hour Pack

AQA 8702 · about 120 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions.

Extract: Jane Eyre, Chapter 23 (Jane's declaration of equality)

From Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte (1847, public domain). In this extract, Jane responds to Mr Rochester in the orchard at Thornfield, believing she must leave now that he is expected to marry Blanche Ingram.

"I tell you I must go!" I retorted, roused to something like passion. "Do you think I can stay to become nothing to you? Do you think I am an automaton?--a machine without feelings? and can bear to have my morsel of bread snatched from my lips, and my drop of living water dashed from my cup? Do you think, because I am poor, obscure, plain, and little, I am soulless and heartless? You think wrong!--I have as much soul as you--and full as much heart! 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. I am not talking to you now through the medium of custom, conventionalities, nor even of mortal flesh: it is my spirit that addresses your spirit; just as if both had passed through the grave, and we stood at God's feet, equal--as we are!"

1 'Jane is guided more by passion than by principle.' Using details from elsewhere in the novel, evaluate how far you agree with this statement.

(Total for Question 1 is 6 marks)

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2 In Chapter 34, St John Rivers tells Jane: "I want a wife: the sole helpmeet I can influence efficiently in life, and retain absolutely till death." Explain how St John's attitude to marriage differs from Jane's own view, and how each is shown through their choices in the novel.

(Total for Question 2 is 6 marks)

3 In Chapter 6, Helen Burns tells Jane: "Life is too short to be spent in nursing animosity, or registering wrongs." Explain how Helen's attitude to suffering differs from Jane's own instinctive response, and how each is shown through the novel.

(Total for Question 3 is 6 marks)

4 Explore how Bronte uses language in this extract to present Jane's assertion of equality.

(Total for Question 4 is 6 marks)

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5 Analyse how Bronte structures this extract to show Jane's argument building in intensity.

(Total for Question 5 is 6 marks)

6 Explain what this extract reveals about Jane's attitude to social class and appearance.

(Total for Question 6 is 6 marks)

7 Explore how Bronte's use of direct address to the reader shapes the reader's understanding of Jane elsewhere in the novel.

(Total for Question 7 is 8 marks)

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8 In Chapter 23, Jane tells Rochester: "I am no bird; and no net ensnares me; I am a free human being, with an independent will." Explore how Bronte presents different characters' attempts to control or possess others in the novel.

(Total for Question 8 is 8 marks)

9 Explore how Bronte uses Gothic settings and imagery in the novel's opening chapters to establish Jane's sense of isolation and injustice.

(Total for Question 9 is 8 marks)

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10 Analyse how Bronte presents Rochester's development, from the powerful, controlling man of the earlier chapters to the humbled figure Jane returns to at the end of the novel.

(Total for Question 10 is 10 marks)

11 Explore how Bronte's use of first-person narration and direct, passionate rhetoric in this extract shapes the reader's sympathy for Jane.

(Total for Question 11 is 8 marks)

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12 Using this extract and your knowledge of the novel as a whole, explain what this speech reveals about Jane's sense of independence and how it is shown elsewhere in the novel.

(Total for Question 12 is 8 marks)

13 Explain how this extract reflects ideas about gender and religion in mid-19th-century England.

(Total for Question 13 is 6 marks)

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14 Write about how Bronte presents different attitudes to religion through the range of characters in the novel.

(Total for Question 14 is 12 marks)

15 Write about how Bronte presents independence as important to female happiness in the novel, and comment on how far you think Jane achieves this independence by the end of the novel.

(Total for Question 15 is 15 marks)

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16 Starting with this extract, write about how Bronte presents ideas about independence and equality in the novel as a whole.

In your response you should discuss:
- how independence and equality are presented in this extract
- how Bronte presents independence and equality elsewhere in the novel as a whole
- the methods Bronte uses to present these ideas

(Total for Question 16 is 30 marks)

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Mark scheme · 2.19 Literature: Jane Eyre (Charlotte Bronte): 2-hour Pack

Question 1

Level 3 Detailed, well-supported evaluation weighing Jane's passionate outbursts, such as in this extract, against her disciplined, principled choices elsewhere, reaching a considered conclusion. **5-6**

Level 2 Clear response, supported by relevant reference, showing some awareness of both Jane's passion and her principle. **3-4**

Level 1 Simple, one-sided comment on Jane, with little textual support. **1-2**

Indicative content:

- Jane's passionate outburst in this extract, and her willingness to speak so directly to a social superior, might support the view that she is guided by passion
- however, her refusal to become Rochester's mistress once Bertha's existence is revealed, despite loving him deeply, shows principle overriding passion at the novel's most testing moment
- her refusal of St John Rivers' loveless proposal shows she will not marry for duty or security alone either, suggesting a consistent moral principle rather than passion alone
- a balanced answer might conclude that Jane's passionate feeling is always ultimately disciplined by a strong personal and religious principle, rather than one simply overriding the other

Question 2

Level 3 Detailed explanation of the contrast between St John's dutiful, purpose-driven proposal and Jane's insistence on love and equality, supported by relevant reference to both characters' choices. **5-6**

Level 2 Clear explanation of one difference between St John's and Jane's attitudes to marriage, with reference. **3-4**

Level 1 Simple comment that the two characters view marriage differently, with little development. **1-2**

Indicative content:

- St John proposes marriage based on Jane's suitability for missionary work, describing her as a 'helpmeet' for his purpose rather than as someone he loves
- Jane refuses, recognising that this offer would deny her the emotional equality she has already claimed, and briefly experienced, with Rochester
- Jane's insistence in the earlier extract on being valued for her 'soul' and 'heart' shows she has always sought a marriage of mutual feeling, not duty
- the contrast presents two models of Victorian marriage, dutiful and religiously motivated against equal and love-based, with the novel ultimately endorsing Jane's view through her final choice to return to Rochester

Question 3

Level 3 Detailed explanation of the contrast between Helen's patient forgiveness and Jane's instinct to demand justice, supported by relevant reference to both characters. **5-6**

Level 2 Clear explanation of one difference between Helen's and Jane's attitudes to suffering, with reference. **3-4**

Level 1 Simple comment that the two characters respond differently to suffering, with little development. **1-2**

Indicative content:

- Helen advocates patient forgiveness and endurance, focusing on spiritual reward rather than earthly justice for wrongs suffered
- Jane's instinctive response, shown in her earlier outburst against Mrs Reed before leaving for Lowood, is to demand that injustice be acknowledged rather than quietly forgiven
- Helen's calm acceptance of her own harsh treatment and illness at Lowood contrasts with Jane's more passionate, resistant temperament, shown throughout the novel including in the main extract
- Jane admires and is clearly influenced by Helen's example, shown by her grief at Helen's death, but does not fully adopt her passivity, instead developing her own balance between self-respect and restraint

Question 4

Level 3 Detailed exploration of how a range of language choices combine to assert Jane's equality with Rochester, using precise subject terminology and showing awareness of the extract's rhetorical intensity. **5-6**

Level 2 Clear explanation of how one or two language choices, such as 'soul' and 'heart' or the imagery of 'bread' and 'living water', assert Jane's equality, using some relevant subject terminology. **3-4**

Level 1 Simple identification of a word or phrase connected to equality, with little or no comment on its effect. **1-2**

Indicative content:

- the repeated abstract nouns 'soul' and 'heart' insist that Jane's inner worth matches Rochester's, regardless of her outward poverty or plainness
- the imagery of physical deprivation, 'my morsel of bread snatched from my lips, and my drop of living water dashed from my cup', elevates Jane's emotional needs to something as essential as food and water
- the repeated rhetorical questions, 'Do you think...?', challenge Rochester directly and invite the reader to answer alongside him, reinforcing Jane's argument
- the religious imagery of standing 'at God's feet, equal' appeals to a spiritual authority higher than social convention to justify the claim of equality

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Question 5

Level 3 Detailed analysis of how the extract moves from short, defiant statements through rhetorical questioning to an extended final sentence, structurally mirroring Jane's rising emotion. **5-6**

Level 2 Clear explanation of one structural feature, such as the shift from short exclamations to a long final sentence, marking escalation. **3-4**

Level 1 Simple comment on a structural feature, with little explanation. **1-2**

Indicative content:

- the extract opens with the short, defiant statement 'I tell you I must go!', immediately establishing Jane's resolve before she explains it
- the sequence of rhetorical questions builds cumulatively, each one more personal than the last, moving from her situation in general to her own soul and heart specifically
- the short exclamatory sentence 'You think wrong!' structurally interrupts the pattern of questions, marking the point where Jane moves from questioning to direct assertion
- the final sentence is the longest and most complex in the extract, built from several clauses joined by colons and dashes, so that its structure mirrors the climactic intensity of Jane's claim to equality

Question 6

Level 3 Detailed explanation of how Jane directly rejects the idea that poverty, plainness or low social rank reduce her worth, supported by close reference to the extract and the novel as a whole. **5-6**

Level 2 Clear explanation of one aspect of Jane's attitude to class or appearance shown in the extract, with reference. **3-4**

Level 1 Simple comment on Jane's attitude to class or appearance, with little development. **1-2**

Indicative content:

- Jane explicitly names the qualities that might be used to dismiss her, 'poor, obscure, plain, and little', before rejecting the idea that these make her 'soulless and heartless'
- her claim to have 'as much soul' and 'as much heart' as Rochester directly challenges the class hierarchy that structures her position as his social inferior and employee
- this attitude is consistent with her earlier refusal, as a child, to accept that her poverty and dependent position at Gateshead make her deserving of unkind treatment
- her later discomfort at being given expensive gifts and clothes by Rochester before their first, interrupted wedding shows the same instinct not to be valued, or to value herself, by wealth or appearance

Question 7

Level 4 Detailed, exploratory analysis of direct address across the novel, considering how this technique controls the reader's understanding of Jane throughout. **7-8**

Level 3 Clear analysis of at least one further example of direct address to the reader, with relevant reference. **5-6**

Level 2 Some explanation of how the narrator's direct address shapes understanding of Jane at one point in the novel. **3-4**

Level 1 Simple identification of a moment of direct address, with little comment. **1-2**

Indicative content:

- the famous line 'Reader, I married him' (Ch. 38) addresses the reader directly, creating intimacy and inviting the reader to share in Jane's sense of achievement
- Bronte's narrator frequently pauses to comment on or justify Jane's feelings directly to the reader, building trust between narrator and audience across the whole novel
- because the novel is narrated by an older Jane looking back, these direct addresses remind the reader that events are being interpreted and selected by Jane herself, not presented neutrally
- this technique means other characters, such as Rochester, Mrs Reed or St John Rivers, are seen almost entirely through Jane's own judgement of them, which some critics argue limits how independently the reader can assess them

Question 8

Level 4 Detailed, exploratory analysis of how Bronte presents several distinct attempts to control Jane, considering how these are distinguished by the novel's methods. **7-8**

Level 3 Clear analysis of at least two different attempts to control or possess Jane, with relevant reference and some terminology. **5-6**

Level 2 Some explanation of one character's attempt to control Jane, with reference. **3-4**

Level 1 Simple identification of an attempt at control, with little development. **1-2**

Indicative content:

- Rochester's earlier disguise as the gypsy fortune-teller is a manipulative test of Jane's feelings, a subtler but still controlling method of managing her before he reveals himself
- St John Rivers later attempts to direct Jane's future through a proposal built around his own missionary ambitions rather than her wishes, describing her as suited to his purpose rather than as an equal partner
- Mrs Reed's earlier confinement of Jane, locking her in the red room and later sending her away to school, is a harsher, more literal form of control exercised over a powerless child
- Bronte consistently presents Jane resisting each attempt at control, whether through childhood defiance, calm refusal of St John, or the direct declaration of independence quoted here, suggesting personal freedom as a value sustained across the whole novel

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Question 9

Level 4 Detailed, exploratory analysis of how Gothic setting and imagery combine in the opening chapters to establish Jane's isolation, considering the effect on the reader. **7-8**

Level 3 Clear analysis of how a specific Gothic feature, such as the red room, establishes Jane's isolation or sense of injustice. **5-6**

Level 2 Some explanation of one Gothic feature in the opening chapters. **3-4**

Level 1 Simple identification of a Gothic feature, with little comment. **1-2**

Indicative content:

- the red room, where Jane is confined as punishment, is associated with death, since her uncle died there, immediately linking her isolation to mortality and fear
- Jane's belief that she glimpses a ghostly light in the red room draws on Gothic conventions of the supernatural to intensify her terror at being shut away alone
- the cold, oppressive description of the room's furnishings mirrors Jane's psychological state as an unloved, powerless dependant within the Reed household
- this Gothic opening establishes a pattern of confinement and hidden threat that recurs later at Thornfield, linking Jane's childhood trauma to the adult Gothic mystery surrounding Bertha Mason

Question 10

Level 4 Convincing, well-structured analysis: tracks Rochester's development through clearly identified stages, with confident, well-integrated reference across the whole novel and precise subject terminology. **9-10**

Level 3 Clear analysis: explains at least two stages of Rochester's development with clear reference to the novel. **6-8**

Level 2 Some analysis: identifies one relevant stage in Rochester's development with some supporting reference. **3-5**

Level 1 Simple, limited analysis: makes a simple, undeveloped point about Rochester changing. **1-2**

Indicative content:

- at Thornfield, Rochester is physically strong and socially dominant, testing Jane's feelings through disguise and concealing the existence of his wife, Bertha
- the interrupted wedding and Bertha's revelation expose the extent of his deception, showing pride and self-interest behind his earlier passionate declarations
- the fire at Thornfield, started by Bertha, costs Rochester his sight and one hand, and destroys the house itself, removing much of the physical and material power he once held
- his dependence on Jane at Ferndean, needing her to describe what he can no longer see, reverses the earlier balance of the relationship
- by the end of the novel, Rochester openly welcomes this dependence, and the marriage is presented as a partnership between equals rather than the unequal relationship first proposed in earlier chapters

Question 11

Level 4 Detailed, exploratory analysis of how Jane's own retrospective narrative voice, combined with direct rhetorical address, shapes the reader's sympathy, considering the effect of this technique on the reader's judgement. **7-8**

Level 3 Clear analysis of how Jane's passionate, direct rhetoric, such as the rhetorical questions or exclamations, builds sympathy for her position, using relevant terminology. **5-6**

Level 2 Some explanation of how one feature of Jane's narrative voice creates sympathy. **3-4**

Level 1 Simple identification of a feature of Jane's voice, with little development. **1-2**

Indicative content:

- because Jane narrates her own story, the reader experiences her outburst as she herself remembers and understands it, with no ironic distance from the narrator to undercut her feelings
- the rhetorical questions address Rochester directly but also implicitly invite the reader to judge whether Jane is right, aligning the reader with her point of view
- the sudden shift into passionate, unguarded language, 'roused to something like passion', is notable precisely because Jane's narrative voice elsewhere is usually calm and controlled, so the reader senses the depth of feeling behind it
- the religious imagery in the final sentence elevates Jane's personal claim into something the reader is invited to accept as a universal truth, rather than simply one character's opinion

Question 12

Level 4 Detailed, well-supported explanation of how this speech reveals Jane's sense of independence, tracked convincingly through relevant later events across the novel. **7-8**

Level 3 Clear explanation of how this speech shows Jane's independence and how it is later confirmed by her actions, supported by relevant reference. **5-6**

Level 2 Some relevant comment on Jane's independence, supported by a reference to the extract or novel. **3-4**

Level 1 Simple, general comment on Jane's character, with little textual support. **1-2**

Indicative content:

- in this extract, Jane insists that her worth as an equal is not dependent on wealth, beauty or social rank, asserting an independence of spirit rather than of circumstance
- later in the same chapter, Jane's declaration that she is 'a free human being, with an independent will' extends this claim from emotional equality to personal freedom
- her refusal to become Rochester's mistress once Bertha's existence is revealed shows that her stated independence is acted on, at real personal cost, rather than simply spoken
- her unexpected inheritance from her uncle gives her practical financial independence, so that she no longer depends on marriage or employment for security
- she returns to Rochester at Ferndean only once she can do so as his equal, both emotionally and financially, completing the arc of independence begun in this extract

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Question 13

Level 3 Detailed explanation of how the extract's language draws on religious ideas of equal souls to make a striking claim about gender and social equality, integrated closely with textual detail. **5-6**

Level 2 Clear explanation of one relevant contextual idea, such as expectations of female modesty or the religious idea of equal souls, linked to the extract. **3-4**

Level 1 Simple, general awareness that the period had different attitudes to women or religion, with little development. **1-2**

Indicative content:

- mid-Victorian society generally expected women, and especially poor, unmarried women in dependent positions such as governesses, to be modest, deferential and undemanding rather than openly assertive
- Jane's claim to have an equal 'soul' draws on the Christian teaching that all souls are equal before God, applying a religious idea to a very unequal social and romantic situation
- governesses occupied an ambiguous social position, neither servant nor family member, which intensifies Jane's need to insist on her own worth in this scene
- the novel's early reviewers found passages such as this controversial, some criticising Jane's directness as 'coarse' or unfeminine, showing how far this speech departed from expected female behaviour

Question 14

Level 4 Convincing, well-structured response: sustained analysis comparing several characters' religious attitudes across the novel, with confident subject terminology and clear evaluation of Bronte's overall presentation of religion. **10-12**

Level 3 Clear response: explains how religion is presented through at least two characters, with relevant reference. **7-9**

Level 2 Some response: identifies relevant moments relating to religion with some supporting reference, though development may be limited. **4-6**

Level 1 Simple, limited response: makes a simple, undeveloped point about religion. **1-3**

Indicative content:

- Mr Brocklehurst represents hypocritical, punitive religion, using scripture to justify depriving the Lowood girls of comfort and food while his own family live in visible luxury
- Helen Burns represents patient, forgiving Christian endurance, focused on spiritual reward in the afterlife rather than resistance to earthly injustice
- St John Rivers represents a disciplined, ambitious Christianity channelled into missionary duty, which risks suppressing his own feeling as well as Jane's happiness
- Jane herself develops a personal, conscience-led faith, shown in the main extract's religious imagery of standing 'at God's feet, equal', that avoids Brocklehurst's hypocrisy, Helen's total passivity and St John's self-denial
- the range of religious figures allows Bronte to criticise institutional and self-denying forms of religion while endorsing a more personal, moral form of faith

Question 15

Level 4 Convincing, critical response: sustained, perceptive analysis of independence as central to Jane's happiness across the whole novel, using confident subject terminology; the question of how far independence is achieved integrated fully into the argument, with relevant context woven in. **12-15**

Level 3 Clear, relevant response: explains how independence is presented through several methods; makes a clear, appropriate point about how far Jane achieves it. **8-11**

Level 2 Some, generic response: identifies relevant moments relating to independence; makes a generic or partly relevant comment on how far it is achieved. **4-7**

Level 1 Simple, limited response: makes a simple, undeveloped point about independence; little or no comment on how far it is achieved. **1-3**

Indicative content:

- Jane's insistence on emotional and spiritual equality with Rochester, shown in the main extract, establishes independence as a matter of inner conviction as well as social position
- her refusal to become Rochester's mistress once Bertha's existence is revealed shows independence of conscience, choosing self-respect over financial security and love
- her unexpected inheritance from her uncle gives her genuine financial independence, removing her dependence on marriage or employment for survival
- her refusal of St John Rivers' loveless, duty-based proposal shows she will not sacrifice personal happiness even for a secure, respectable position
- context: in a period when married women had very limited legal and financial rights, Jane's insistence on entering marriage only as an equal, financially independent partner is a notably assertive position for its time
- by the end of the novel, Rochester's injuries and losses have levelled the earlier imbalance of power, allowing Jane to return to him as his equal rather than his dependant, so her independence is fulfilled within marriage rather than in isolation from it
- not all readers agree this counts as full independence, since Jane still chooses to marry rather than remain single, so some argue the novel ultimately reconciles independence with conventional marriage rather than radically rejecting it

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Question 16

Level 4 Compelling, critical response: sustained, sophisticated exploration of independence and equality across the whole novel; judicious, precisely selected references, including to this extract; perceptive analysis of Bronte's methods with consistently precise subject terminology; contextual understanding woven fully into the argument.	**26-30**
Level 3 Critical, exploratory response: clear line of argument sustained across the extract and novel; well-chosen range of references; analyses the effects of Bronte's methods with accurate subject terminology; relevant context integrated where appropriate.	**16-25**
Level 2 Detailed, well-structured response: consistently clear response to the question; well-chosen range of references from the extract and, or, the novel; explains the effects of some of Bronte's methods with some subject terminology; some awareness of context.	**6-15**
Level 1 Simple response: simple response with some relevant reference to the extract or the novel; simple or limited comment on Bronte's methods; little or no awareness of context.	**1-5**

Indicative content:

- in the extract, Jane's repeated assertions of equal 'soul' and 'heart' reject the idea that poverty, plainness or social rank should diminish her worth, directly claiming spiritual equality with Rochester
- the extract's rhetorical questions and exclamatory syntax dramatise Jane's rare open defiance, breaking from her usual measured, self-controlled narrative voice to show the depth of her feeling
- elsewhere in the same chapter, Jane's declaration 'I am no bird; and no net ensnares me; I am a free human being, with an independent will' extends this claim from emotional equality to a wider assertion of personal freedom
- Jane's refusal to become Rochester's mistress once Bertha's existence is revealed shows that her independence is acted on, not merely spoken, even at great personal cost
- her unexpected inheritance from her uncle, John Eyre, gives her genuine financial independence, allowing her later return to Rochester as an equal rather than a dependant
- her refusal of St John Rivers' loveless, duty-based proposal of marriage shows that her independence extends to matters of conscience and personal happiness, not only money
- structurally, the novel's ending at Ferndean, where Rochester's blindness and injuries have levelled the earlier imbalance of power between them, allows Bronte to resolve the theme of equality within marriage rather than through Jane remaining alone
- context: writing when married women had very limited legal and financial rights, Bronte's insistence that Jane secure both emotional and financial independence before marrying represents a notably assertive view of female independence for its time

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