



2016 specification  
first exams in 2017

# Women in Literature

Unseen Prose Preparation Pack for  
A Level OCR English Literature

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# Teacher's Introduction

This resource has been designed to support the teaching and study of the OCR A Level English Literature 'Women in Literature' topic. Its aim is to provide students with the skills needed to complete the first task of the Comparative and Contextual Study Component 2 exam, a critical analysis of an unseen prose extract from the topic. The resource includes 10 examples of prose extracts from texts that are not on the OCR list of specified texts for this unit, making them suitable for use in preparing for the unseen extract element of the OCR English Literature exam. There are also activities and essay practice questions that will help students develop the necessary skills for writing excellent essay responses in the summer exam.

At the front of the pack you will find guidance on the exam question wording, an assessment objective breakdown and some points on the exam structure. This offers an overview both of the module and of the style of assessment that students will face in the exam. A guide on the structure of the resource, outlining its inclusion of example analyses and additional unseen extracts for students to use as exam practice, has also been included in this section. We have also included a timeline of key historical events, and some key texts.

In the main body of this resource, you will find 10 unseen extracts of prose taken from a range of texts under the Women in Literature umbrella that span various genres and time periods. These have been supplied as unannotated and annotated versions to provide differentiation, practise close-reading skills and demonstrate how to analyse a previously unseen piece of literature. The extracts are also accompanied by a paragraph of example analysis, with reflective activities to encourage students to evaluate responses. Each section contains an additional unannotated passage from the same text with activities that are designed to further test students' analysis skills. Also included within these notes are some of the key literary concepts, contexts and terminology that define the topic.

## Remember!

Always check the exam board website for new information, including changes to the specification and sample assessment material.

The analysis and activities relating to the unseen extracts included in this resource have been designed to cover and test the three assessment objectives against which the exam board will test students' responses. Note, in particular, that the primary assessment objective being tested is AO2.

Assessment Objective	
AO1	Articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression (12.5%)
AO2	Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts (75%)
AO3	Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received (12.5%)

At the back of the resource is a series of general practice essay questions, written in the style of the OCR examination. These are designed to help students bring together the knowledge and skills they have acquired and apply it to an exam-style task. You may choose to set these essay questions as classroom activities under timed conditions in order to prepare your students for the conditions of the exam itself, or use them as homework tasks.

Answers / indicative content for all tasks have also been provided at the back of the resource. The answers are not intended to be comprehensive, but should offer you and your students some ideas on the kinds of interpretation they may want to consider in their essay responses. You will also find a glossary of key literary and contextual terms that have been taken from the main body of the resource, which will consolidate any important vocabulary used during the analyses of the set texts and encourage students to use these in their future essays on the topic. All key terms throughout the resource are in bold italics, and the glossary is arranged in alphabetical order for ease of use.

You may want to photocopy pages from this study guide and use them in your lessons, or hand them out as homework resources to consolidate students' critical analysis skills. Alternatively, you may want to split your use of the resource between lesson time and homework time (for instance, you could read through and discuss a section of notes collectively during a class, and set the activities at the end for homework). The resource is for you to use in whichever way you wish.

This resource exists as a supplement to the ZigZag Education Women in Literature: Student Guide for A Level OCR, which contains an overview of the themes and contexts related to the topic, as well as analysis of the set texts specified by the exam board for this unit.

We hope you and your students find the resource helpful and informative. Good luck!

April 2025





# Exam Guidance

## Exam Question Breakdown

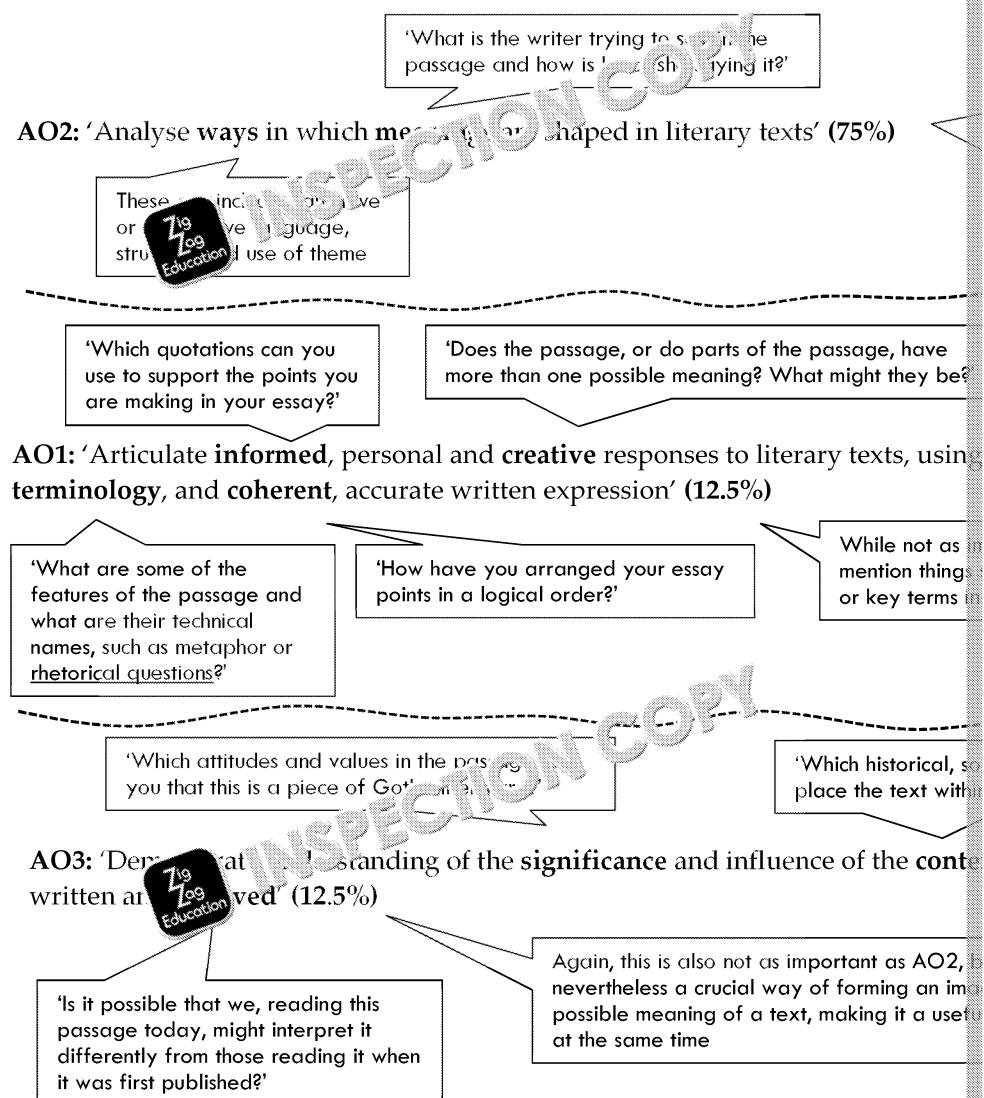
### What are you being asked to do in the exam?

In this section of the exam, you will always be asked to write a **'critical appreciation'** and **relate it to your study of Women in Literature**. Looking at this question for the first time, it is not immediately clear what you are being asked to do. To help you, remember these:

1. 'Critical appreciation' is another way of saying **'critical analysis'**, which is a method of analysing a text in two stages: firstly, you identify some of the **language** present in the text, and, secondly, you suggest what the **effect** of each of these has on the reader's response to the text. Completing both of these stages gives you a **'critical appreciation'** of a quotation or passage; by working out **how something has been written** and **what it is intended to have on the reader**, you have identified the meaning.
2. With this in mind, it is often useful to **reword the task** so that it actually forms a question, essentially being asked a question in two parts, which we have separated into two.

**'What are the ways in which the writer of this passage uses language, then, to create meanings in this passage? Use your knowledge of how other female writers have used language in texts to help you write your answer.'**

Let's look at how the reworded question above relates to each of the three assessment objectives the exam board will use to measure the quality of your answer:



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## Suggested Timings

In the Comparative and Contextual Study exam you have two and a half hours to answer the questions, the first of which asks for an analysis of an unseen extract. Therefore, it is advised that you spend 15 minutes writing your critical analysis before moving on to the second question. You might choose to divide up the 75 minutes you should give to the comparative study question. **However, you must bear in mind these are guidelines only – that you should feel free to adapt them to suit your needs, and to spend as much time as you like on the various stages, such as planning, in whatever way helps you the most.**

Exam Timings	Stages of the Exam
0–5 minutes	Read through the extract two or three times. It's important to read the extract carefully: the first time around, you are reading the passage purely to get a general sense of it, while the second and third readings will enable you to identify specific usages and thematic details that will form the basis of your response. Take notes in your answer book about some of the features of the passage.
5–15 minutes	Plan your essay by organising these bullet points under subheadings. Consider: what particular theme or type of language used throughout? Could you identify different types of language are used to present another element of the text? Each bullet point that you go on to mention in your essay must have evidence to back it up.
15–70 minutes	Aim to write between five and seven paragraphs that each analyse a different aspect of the text, such as its use of characterisation, presentation of setting or consistency of tone. You should spend approximately eight to ten minutes writing each paragraph. Each paragraph should also be a brief introduction to the content of the paragraph, summarising the main points of your response. Unlike other types of essay, while studying A Level English, you don't need a strong line of argument. What your opening and concluding sentences do need to show is that you understand how each aspect of the passage identified in your paragraphs contributes to the overall effect.
70–75 minutes	Read through your essay, checking your spelling, punctuation and grammar. Make sure you have included enough text quotation throughout. Since this is the final stage, it is tempting to skip this stage in favour of gaining a head start on Question 2. However, going over your work is an invaluable way of checking that your use of words is strong enough to meet the standard required by AO1.

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# Student Instructions

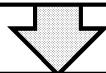
## How to Use This Guide

This pack is made up of 10 sections, each based around passages from the topic or not on the list of set texts provided by the exam board for the topic. They are in thematic order to help you acclimatise to the 'unseen' nature of the exam. Like the exam itself, it is likely that you will have read these extracts before. Each that will help you develop the critical analysis skills that are needed to do well in the exam.



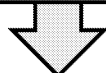
### 1) Unannotated and annotated unseen extract

The first part of each section provides an unseen passage that you must analyse. You will be asked to identify language features of the text and comment on their possible meanings. Annotations are provided afterwards for you to compare your own annotations to. The annotations are examples of what you will be expected to notice about your own unseen passage. Terminology that will be useful to your own analysis has been highlighted in the glossary. Definitions of these terms can be found in the glossary at the back of the resource.



### 2) Example analysis

After each unseen passage is an example of a paragraph of analysis showing how these annotations are used. Each paragraph looks at a specific language feature that we have picked out from the extract in our annotations. The questions below are designed to increase your understanding of how the analysis is done and evaluates the effectiveness of the extract.



### 3) Second unseen extract

A further unseen extract, taken from the same text, has also been included. This is unannotated for you to make notes on yourself, using the annotated extract as a guide. Examples of how to pick out key features of an unseen passage. While you are not allowed to annotate the provided passage in the exam itself, it is nevertheless a useful tool while learning how to do critical analyses for the first time.



### 4) Close reading and topic-linking activities

The final part of each section is a series of activities that test your understanding of how a writer shapes meaning in the second unseen extract while encouraging you to develop your own. The 'Close Reading' activities are primarily intended to test AO1 and AO2. The 'Topic Linking' activities focus more on the creative and contextual aspects of the text, requiring AO3.



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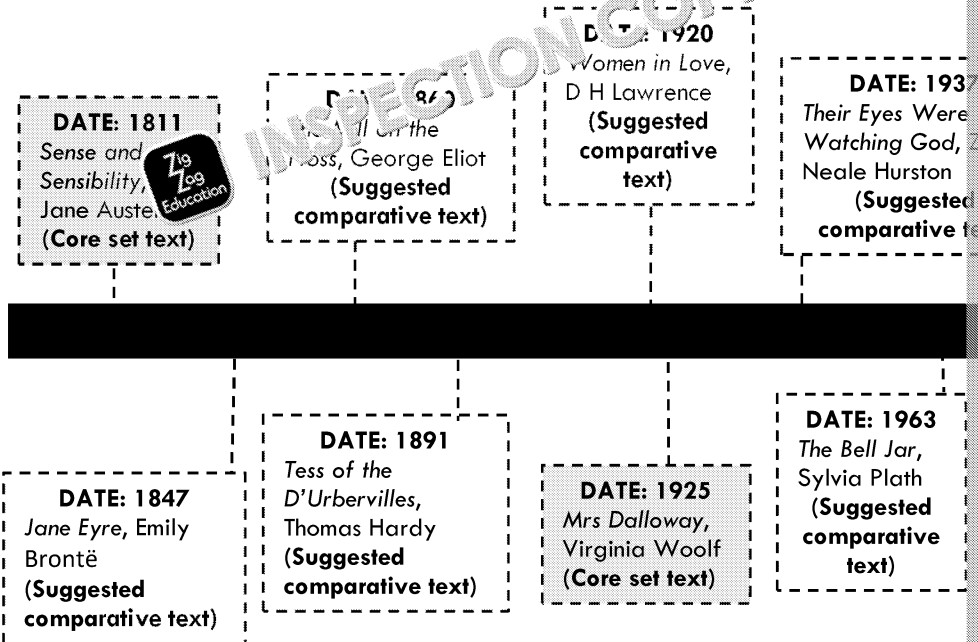
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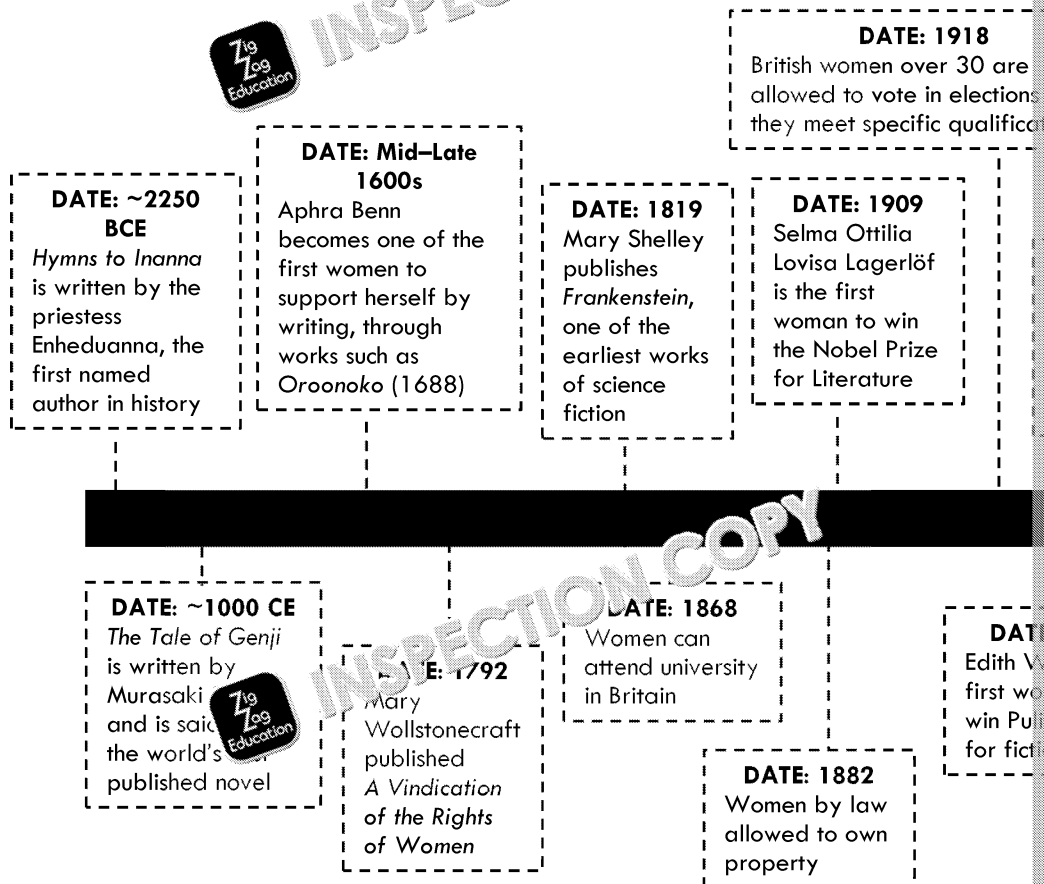


# Timelines of Key Texts Historical Events

## Module Texts



## Key Historical Events



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## Introduction to the Extracts in This Resource

We have included some background information on the plots and general themes of the extracts contained in this resource. Although this info will not be provided in the exam, it is important to consider this contextual background while you familiarise yourself with the texts. This section also includes a mind map which recaps the key literary features of the texts, which we will be identifying in the unseen extracts, as well as a timeline of set texts in English literature.

### 1) *The Secret of Good Mothers*, Jessamine Chan

Chan's debut novel is a dystopian tale about motherhood on a dystopian background, drawing comparisons to Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*. It follows Frida, a woman working for the government, who is sent to an experimental facility as part of a government program to study mothers who commit even minor missteps.

**Key Themes and Subjects:** motherhood, governmental control, societal expectations

**Key Literary Features:** clinical tone, short sentence structure, allusion, symbolism

### 2) *Wuthering Heights*, Emily Brontë (1847)

The only novel published by Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* was initially published in 1847. It is a classic and much-studied tale of destructive love, obsession and vengeance. Heathcliff, rejected by Cathy, the woman he loves, swears to have his revenge. With a dark, moorland setting, the novel also explores the impact of social class and status on relationships.

**Key Themes and Subjects:** obsession, revenge, social class

**Key Literary Features:** dual narrative, emphasis on setting, Romantic imagery

### 3) *The Bread the Devil Kneads*, Lisa Allen-Allen

Nominated for the Booker Prize, *The Bread the Devil Kneads* is a tale of self-discovery, intimate partner violence and racism. Set in Trinidad, the story is told by 40-year-old Alethea, who reflects on her life and uncovers repressed memories. Alethea has a strong character and a compelling narrative in her tale in Trinidadian culture.

**Key Themes and Subjects:** intimate partner violence, self-discovery, generational trauma

**Key Literary Features:** use of dialect, violent imagery, juxtaposition

### 4) *The Well of Loneliness*, Radclyffe Hall

*The Well of Loneliness* is a lesbian novel about Stephen Gordon, a daughter born with a lesbian personality. She demonstrates lesbian leanings from a young age. She falls in love with another woman, and their lives are fraught with rejection and social isolation, with the story following her journey as she seeks acceptance in a society that does not accept or tolerate her existence. Upon first being published, the novel was banned from libraries and was not published again in Britain until 1949.

**Key Themes and Subjects:** lesbianism, isolation, pressure from societal expectations

**Key Literary Features:** allusion, tragedy, omniscient narrator

### 5) *Little Women*, Louise May Alcott (1868)

Originally published in two volumes in 1868 and 1869, *Little Women* was compiled into a single volume in 1880. It found immediate success. It is a semi-autobiographical coming-of-age novel about the March family, and is a quintessential portrayal of girlhood and the transition to womanhood. The characters are passionate, pursue romance, and experience loss, love and life.

**Key Themes and Subjects:** transition from girlhood to womanhood, love and loss

**Key Literary Features:** symbolism, coming-of-age narrative, allusion

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### 6) *The House of Mirth*, Edith Wharton (1905)

*The House of Mirth* introduces us to Lily Bart, a woman who is part of high society in New York but is currently impoverished. Throughout the novel, Lily attempts to raise her social standing in various ways but ends up with her reputation besmirched. In contrast, the novel was a commercial success, establishing Wharton's reputation as an author, and is considered to be a scathing criticism of class society in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

**Key Themes and Subjects:** upper-class society (class), pressure to conform to societal expectations

**Key Literary Features:** satire, flashbacks, symbolism

### 7) *A Girl of the Limberlost*, Gene Stratton-Porter (1915)

Gene Stratton-Porter was a naturalist, which is made evident in *A Girl of the Limberlost*, as shown through the main character, Elnora, who collects animal and plant specimens to fund her education. Elnora's tumultuous relationship with her mother, which develops and changes throughout the novel, is a key theme of confidence and independence.

**Key Themes and Subjects:** nature and the natural world, mother-daughter relationships, symbolism

**Key Literary Features:** natural imagery, archetypal characters, moralism

### 8) *The Yellow Wall-Paper*, Emily Perkins Gilman (1892)

*The Yellow Wall-Paper* is considered a key text in American feminist literature, as it explores mental illness and nineteenth-century societal attitudes towards women's mental health. It is a short story consisting of a series of journal entries as the narrator, a young married woman, is confined in an upstairs room by her husband and barred from working or writing for the supposed sake of her health. Instead, she has nothing to do but stare at the room's yellow wallpaper, descends slowly into madness.

**Key Themes and Subjects:** mental illness, dismissal of women's mental health, isolation

**Key Literary Features:** epistolary novel, fast-paced structure, exclamative sentences

### 9) *Madame Bovary*, Gustave Flaubert (1857)

Often described as a masterpiece and one of the world's most influential novels, *Madame Bovary* follows the character of Emma as she marries into the role of the eponymous Madame Bovary but, finding her provincial life dull, searches for romance and passion through various affairs. As a result, she incurs a serious debt. *Madame Bovary* exemplifies nineteenth-century literary realism through philistine characters and a rejection of Emma's romanticised ideal of life.

**Key Themes and Subjects:** Romanticism vs. realism, pursuit of passion, debt

**Key Literary Features:** epistolary style, third-person narration, religious imagery

### 10) *The Tale of Genji*, Murasaki Shikibu (~1000)

Considered to be one of the world's first published novels, *The Tale of Genji* follows the life of Prince Genji, a son of the Japanese emperor who is removed from the line of succession but nevertheless has a career in the imperial court. No original copy of the text has survived to the modern day, but it has been translated into English several times – though the difficulty of the translation means each version has received both praise and criticism on various fronts.

**Key Themes and Subjects:** court affairs and expectations, political manoeuvring, pursuit of passion

**Key Literary Features:** episodic structure, complex sentence structures, translation

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# Unseen Extracts

## Unseen Extract 1 - *The School for Good Mothers*, Jessamine Chan

In this passage, the theme of motherhood is front and centre as it explores the ten expectations for women: those of a mother, and those of a working woman. Annotations feature that relate to the devices used and themes of women in Literature.

Extract from *The School for Good Mothers* by Jessamine Chan (2022)



...I'd been up off and on since 4:00 a.m. Friday's article was due last week. I went back and forth between Harriet's play corner and back to the living room where she had her notes spread out on the coffee table. She wrote the same thing over and over, trying to explain Bayesian modelling in layman's terms. Harriet was crying. She wanted to climb onto Frida's lap. She wanted to be held. She grabbed Frida's hand and threw them on the floor. She kept touching the keyboard.

Frida should have put on a show for Harriet to watch. She remembers this time when she couldn't finish the article, couldn't keep up, her boss would rescind work-from-home privileges and Harriet would have to go to day care, something Frida hoped to avoid. She remembers that she then plopped Harriet in her ExerSaucer, a contraption that had been retired months ago as soon as Harriet started walking. Later, Frida gave Harriet water and animal crackers. She checked Harriet's diaper. She kissed Harriet's forehead. It smelled oily. She squeezed Harriet's pudgy arms.



Harriet would be safe in the ExerSaucer, she thought. It couldn't go anywhere. What could happen in an hour?

Under the harsh lights of the interrogation room, Frida bites her cuticles, scratches her skin. Her contacts are killing her. She takes a compact from her purse and looks at her gray rings under her eyes. She used to be considered lovely. She is petite and beautiful with her round face and bangs and porcelain-doll features, people used to tell her she was still in her twenties. But at thirty-nine, she has deep creases between her eyebrows, lines bracketing her mouth, lines that appeared postpartum, becoming more pronounced. Gust left her for Susanna when Harriet was three months old.



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Look at the annotations below and compare the features identified to those identified in the text.

Presents mother and child as a team

'Off and on' / 'back and forth' create a sense of tension and opposition



**Anaphora** emphasises the importance of the issue to the narrator and the pressure she's under

**Rhetorical question** creates a sense of irony



Ties into themes of Women in Literature such as childbirth and **postpartum depression**

Provides **context** for the narrator's life relates to themes of infidelity, divorce

# Extract from *The School for Good Mothers* by Jessamine Chan

*They'd been up off and on since 4:00 a.m. Friday's article was due. All morning, she went back and forth between Harriet's play corner and the living room sofa, where she had her laptop. She read out on the coffee table, wrote the same paragraph over and over, trying to explain Bayesian probability in layman's terms. Harriet woke screaming. She wanted to climb onto Frida, wanted to be held. She grabbed Frida's papers and threw them on the floor, then the keyboard.*

*Frida should have put on a show for Harriet to watch. She remembers if she couldn't finish the article, couldn't keep up, he boss would take away her from-home privileges and Harriet would have to go to day care, something she hoped to avoid. And she remembers that she then plopped Harriet in the ExerSaucer, a contraption that should have been retired months ago and that Harriet started walking. Later, Frida gave Harriet water and animal crackers, checked Harriet's diaper. She kissed Harriet's head, which smelled like baby, and squeezed Harriet's pudgy arms.*

*Harriet would be safe in the ExerSaucer, she thought. It couldn't go anywhere. What could happen in an hour?*

*Under the harsh lights of the internet cafe, Frida bites her cuticles, her skin. Her contractions are coming. She takes a compact from her pocket, examines her face, looking under her eyes. She used to be considered beautiful, slender, and with her round face and bangs and porcelain skin, the kind of people used to assume she was still in her twenties. But at thirty-nine, the creases between her brows and bracketing her mouth, lines that appeared postpartum, becoming more pronounced after Gust left her for Susan. Harriet was three months old.*



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The paragraph below is an example of a paragraph of analysis that responds to the text and evaluates how it relates to Women in Literature.

### Example of Analysis

Quotations are integrated with the text to support points



Terms such as 'suggests' avoid definitive statements about the text and its interpretations

In this passage, Chan highlights the challenge many modern women are facing in balancing their work lives with their roles as mothers. Opening the paragraph with phrases such as 'off and on' and 'back and forth' creates an atmosphere of constant opposition, of push and pull. Frida is torn between tending to her daughter and finishing her overdue work. This sense of pressure is reinforced by the use of anaphora - 'couldn't finish the article, couldn't finish the article' - which creates an urgent tone and highlights Frida's desperation. In contrast to this heightened emotion in relation to her work, her comments about her daughter are all neutral statements with no emotional attachment, such as Harriet's head smelling 'oily' with no elaboration on whether this is good or bad. This suggests an indifference towards her daughter that ties into an exploration of the societal expectations surrounding women and motherhood and the often-condemned idea of prioritising work over children. This, in turn, emphasises the sense of isolation Frida's confinement in an interrogation room, possibly because she was the only one who happened to Harriet due to neglect.

Analysis works within the context of the text on this and the conventions of the genre



### Exam Tip

In one of your paragraphs in your essay response, try to provide more than one point that you can make; this will strengthen the validity of your argument.

Complete the activities below to gain a greater understanding of how the example paragraph identifies and analyses meaning in the unseen extract, and how it relates this to Women in Literature.



### Activities: Analysis in Action

- 1) Go through the passage from the text and highlight or make notes on what Frida makes about, or in relation to, her daughter. Do you agree with the analysis that Frida feels indifferent towards Harriet? Using your own words, write a short paragraph explaining your opinion.
- 2) Make a list of three things you would change or expand upon in the paragraph. Write a short explanation of what you would change and why for each.
- 3) Come up with four or five more 'paragraph headings' relating to the themes of the extract that you would use as a guideline when writing your own paragraph. Use the annotations provided alongside the extract to help you.

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We have provided a second unseen extract, also from *The School for Good Mothers* by Jessamine Chan, for you to make similar annotations as you go, on the next page.

### Second Extract from *The School for Good Mothers* by Jessamine Chan (2022)

"I was ten minutes late," Alicia says. "Theu said it smelled like alcohol. I was a waitress then. Showed up in my uniform. Someone had spilled beer on me. I didn't believe me when I said I didn't drink."

Ms. Gibson asks Alicia to take responsibility.

"No excuses."

"It was my fault," Alicia says through gritted teeth. "I am a narcissist. I am a bad child."

Alicia and Margaret are blushing so hard they could be glowing. Margaret hides her hands. Alicia fidgets with her sleeves.

Frida remembers coming home from her boyfriend's house at one in the morning, when she was seventeen, finding her parents waiting up for her. She and her boyfriend had been asleep watching a movie. Her parents didn't believe her. She remembers them looking at her, how her father didn't speak to her for days.

Ms. Gibson asks Alicia and Margaret to confess their degree of sexual contact. Questions about fondling, heavy petting, digital penetration, oral sex, who initiated, who climaxed, who came first.

The mothers avert their eyes. They generally understood that the school found them unmotherly.

Alicia starts to cry. "We kissed a little. That's it. We didn't hurt anyone. Please don't put this in my file."

"I appreciate that," Ms. Gibson says, "but what I'm not understanding is how you put your selfish desires before your mothering." Loneliness is a form of narcissism. A mother who is in harmony with her child, who understands her place in her child's life, who is in society, is never lonely. Through caring for her child, all her needs are met. What problems can possibly be solved by running?

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Complete the activities below. They are related to the second unseen extract and about writing a critical analysis on a passage you have not seen before.



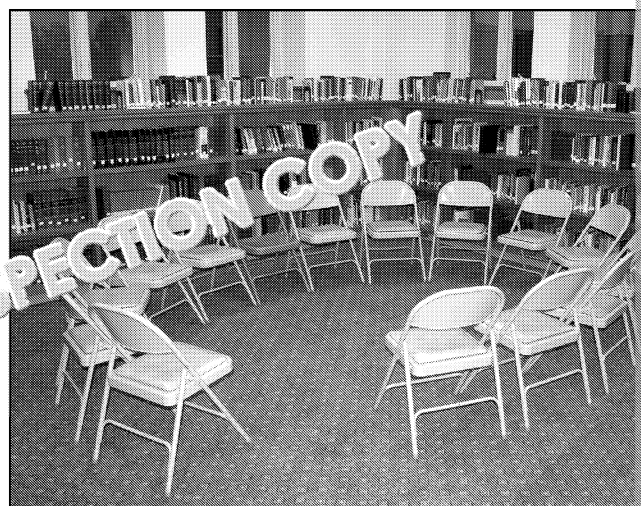
### Activities: Close-reading Skills

- 1) What is the significance of the setup of this passage – the mother and Ms Gibson – seeming to mimic a support group? Use quotations to support your answer.
- 2) How are the characters of Lucia, Ms Gibson and Frida presented? Choose two quotations for each and analyse what they tell us about them.
- 3) What does this passage suggest about expectations for motherhood in the novel? Go through the passage and highlight or make notes on anything that relates into this topic, then explain what each one tells us about Charlotte.
- 4) **Extension Task:** What is being suggested by the phrase 'Lonely Mothers'?



### Activities: Links with Topic Conventions

- 1) In the genre of Women in Literature, texts often critique societal expectations of women. Create a table with three columns: 'Quotation', 'Link to Convention', and 'Real-world Parallels'. Using the quotations you identified in Activities 1 and 2, fill out the table by linking the presentation of motherhood in *The School for Good Mothers* with other texts you have read or studied for Women in Literature.
- 2) What might be the significance of Ms Gibson's title being 'Ms' instead of 'Mrs'? Discuss this question, then discuss your interpretations in groups.
- 3) Relationships between women often play a key role in Women in Literature. How are relationships presented in the passage above? Write an essay-style paragraph comparing *The School for Good Mothers* to one other text for Women in Literature as you do.



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## Unseen Extract 2 - *Wuthering Heights*, Emily Brontë

In the passage below, Cathy (Catherine), the young daughter of the Earnshaw family, is introduced. This introduction is notable for the ways Cathy breaks from the societal expectations of an upper-class Victorian woman. Annotate the passage to identify features that relate to the theme of Women in Literature.

### Extract from *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë (1847)

Certainly she had ways of her own. As I never saw a child take up before; and so our patience suffered. She was often in a day: from the hour she came downstairs to the hour she went to bed, she had not a minute's security that she wouldn't be in mischief. Her spirit was wild, her tongue always going—singing, laughing, and plaguing everybody the same. A wild, wicked slip she was—but she had the bonniest eye, the sweetest foot in the parish: and, after all, I believe she meant no harm; for when once she was earnest, it seldom happened that she would not keep you company, and oblige you in some way. She was much too fond of Heathcliff. The greatest punishment she had was to keep her separate from him: yet she got chided more than any of us on that account. She liked exceedingly to act the little mistress; using her hands freely, and commanding as she did so to me, but I would not bear slapping and ordering; and so I let her know my mind.

Now, Mr. Earnshaw did not understand jokes from his children: he had always been kind to them; and Catherine, on her part, had no idea what her father should be cross with him for his ailing condition than he was in his prime. Her father's reproofs awakened in her a desire to provoke him: she was never so happy as when we were all scolding her at once. With her bold, saucy ways, and her ready words; turning Joseph's religious curses into jests; and doing just what her father hated most—showing how her pretended innocence was only a disguise for her wilfulness, she had more power over Heathcliff than his kindness: how the boy would obey her in anything, and his only when it suited his own inclination. After behaving as badly as she could, she sometimes came fondling to make it up at night. "Nay, Cathy," the old man would say, "I love thee, thou'rt worse than thy brother. Go, say thy prayers, child, and ask God to bless thee. Thy mother and I must rue that we ever reared thee!" That made her cry, at first; but as she grew, she repulsed continually hardened her, and she laughed if I told her to say she was so sorry for her sins, and beg to be forgiven.

But the hour came, at last, that ended Mr. Earnshaw's troubles on earth. He died one October evening, seated by the fire-side. A high wind whistled round the house, and the chimney: it sounded wild and stormy, yet it was so cold, and we were all together, from the hearth, busy at my knitting, and Joseph reading his Bible near the table (we generally sat in the parlour, after their work was done). Miss Cathy had been sitting on the floor, leaning against her father's knee, and Heathcliff was lying on the floor with his head on the master's feet, before he fell into a doze, stroking her bonny hair—it pleased her so—gentle—and saying, "Why canst thou not always be a good lass, Cathy?" And so he died, his head on her lap, and she answered, "Why cannot you always be a good man, father?" And so he died, his head on her lap, and she answered, "Why cannot you always be a good man, father?" And so he died, his head on her lap, and she answered, "Why cannot you always be a good man, father?"

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# Extract from *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë (1847)

Introduces Cathy as a character who breaks from **societal expectations** for Victorian women

A relationship between a male and female character, frowned upon by the **narrator**

A contentious relationship between father and daughter in a time where the man of the house had total control

Use of religion and religious language places us in time and emphasises Cathy resists **societal expectations and norms**

Death of a parent and the impact this has on characters

Certainly she had ways with her such as I never saw a child take up but **put all of us past our patience fifty times and oftener in a day**. When she came downstairs till the hour she went to bed, we had not a minute that she wouldn't be in mischief. Her brothers were always at high-water of tongue always going—singing, laughing, and plaguing everybody who would do the same. And she would **slip she was—but she had the bonniest and sweetest nature and lightest foot in the parish**: and, after all, I believe her heart was true when once she made you cry in good earnest, it seldom happened but she would keep you company, and oblige you to be quiet that you might hear her. **She was much too fond of Heathcliff**. The greatest punishment we could give her was to keep her separate from him: yet she got chided more than the others on his account. In play, **she liked exceedingly to act the little mistress of the house, and commanding her companions: she did so to mortification of her mother, who would not bear slapping and ordering; and so I let her know.**

Now, Mr. Earnshaw did not understand jokes from his children: he was very strict and grave with them; and Catherine, on her part, had no idea of being crosser and less patient in his ailing condition than he was. **His peevish reproofs wakened in her a naughty delight to provoke him**. She was never so happy as when we were all scolding her at once, and she would with her bold, saucy look, and her ready words; turning Joseph's religion into ridicule, baiting me, and doing just what her father hated most—her pretended insolence, which he thought she had more power over than his kindness: **how the boy would do nothing but bidding in anything, and when it suited his own inclination**. After behaving as badly as possible, she would sometimes come and beg me to make it up at night. "Nay, Cathy," she would say, "I cannot love thee, thou'rt worse than thy brother. Come, kiss thy fingers, child, and ask God's pardon. I doubt thy mother and I may never rear thee!" That made her cry, at first; and then being repulsed, it hardened her, and **she laughed if I told her to say she was sorry for it and beg to be forgiven.**

But the hour came, at last, that ended Mr. Earnshaw's troubles on earth. He died **quietly in his chair one October evening, seated by the fire-side**. His death blustered round the house, and roared in the chimney: it sounded wild, yet it was not cold, and we were all together—I, a little removed from my usual busy at my knitting, and Joseph reading his Bible near the table (for he generally sat in the house then, after their work was done). Miss Catherine was sick, and that made her still; **she leant against her father's knee, and was lying on the floor with his head in her lap**. I remember the night he fell into a doze, stroking her bonny hair. He pleased him rarely to see her and saying, "Why canst thou not grow up to be a good lass, Cathy?" And she would her face up to his, and I asked her, and answered, "Why cannot you always be a good man, father?" But at a season as she saw him vexed again, she kissed him and would sing him to sleep.

Despite the various negative characteristics Cathy has been shown to have, the passage closes with an example of tenderness that humanises her and makes her more sympathetic

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The paragraph below is an example of a paragraph of analysis that responds to the text and evaluates how it relates to Women in Literature.

### Example of Analysis

Identification and explanation of literary and linguistic devices



Additional quotation to strengthen point

A core idea explored through Women in Literature is the conflict of expressing oneself truthfully and conforming to societal norms and expectations. In this passage, Cathy embodies this dichotomy by being both sweet and spoiled, disobedient and devoted. Her introduction as 'wicked slin'g' in the 'bonniest eye' uses alliteration and assonance to emphasise the lightness and freedom of Cathy's character. This makes her an intriguing character as this is a clear juxtaposition of the rigid rules of Victorian society, especially when it came to the expectations of women, who were expected to be the loving, sweet 'angels of the household'. Cathy's contentious relationship with her father - the head of the household and of absolute authority in this time period - further highlights the tension within female characters. Cathy finds 'naughty delight' in provoking her father and resisting his authority, but her immediate inclination to 'go to sleep' in his illness - a motherly and angelic gesture - reconciles their relationship. This exploration of female characters as complex human characters is a central theme of the genre of Women in Literature.

Awareness of how passage conforms to features of the wider context



### Exam Tip

Never use quotations as a means of simply retelling the plot of the passage. Quotations are only useful if you comment on what you believe it relates to your pre-existing knowledge of Women in Literature.



Complete the activities below to gain a greater understanding of how the example identifies and analyses meaning in the unseen extract, and how it relates this to Women in Literature.



### Activities: Analysis in Action

- 1) If you were to give this paragraph a subheading that identified its purpose, what might it be?
- 2) Go through the passage and highlight all the words or phrases that describe Cathy's character. How else could the paragraph be structured to emphasise its points?
- 3) Write three bullet points that show how you could expand this paragraph into a full paragraph, including a quotation from the passage that you would use to support each point.



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We have provided a second unseen extract, also from *Wuthering Heights*. Read it with annotations as you go as we have done with the previous extract, and then complete the tasks.

### Second Extract from *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë (1847)

"Nelly, will you keep a secret for me?" she pursued, kneeling down by me, and lifting her face with that sort of look which turns off bad temper, even when one has all the right to be angry. "Is it worth keeping?" I inquired, less sulkily.

"Yes, and it worries me, and I must let it out. I don't know what I should do. To be sure, I must tell you that I have agreed to marry him, and I've given him my answer. Now, before I tell you whether it is worth keeping, tell me which it ought to be." "Which?"

"Real?" she asked me, how can I know?" I replied. "To be sure, considering the circumstances, this afternoon, I might say it would be wise to refuse him: since he asked me to marry him, either he is hopelessly stupid or a venturesome fool."

"If you talk so, I won't tell you any more," she returned, peevishly rising to her feet, and saying quickly, and say whether I was wrong!"

"You accepted him! Then what good is it discussing the matter? You have pledged yourself, and you can't retract."

"But say whether I should have done so—do!" she exclaimed in an irritated tone; and then, looking at me and frowning.

"There are many things to be considered before that question can be answered properly."

"First and foremost, do you love Mr. Edgar?"

"Who can help it? Of course I do," she answered.

Then I put her through the following catechism: for a girl of twenty-two it was not a bad one.

"Why do you love him, Miss Cathy?"

"Nonsense, I do—that's sufficient."

"By no means; you must say why?"

"Well, because he is handsome, and I like to be with him."

"Bad!" was my comment.

"And because he is rich and cheerful."

"Bad,"

"And because he loves me."

"Indifferent, coming there."

"And he will be rich, and I shall like to be the greatest woman of the neighbourhood, having such a husband."

"Worst of all. And now, say how you love him?"

"As everybody loves—You're silly, Nelly."

"Not at all—Answer."

"I love the ground under his feet, and the air over his head, and everything he touches, and I love all his looks, and all his actions, and him entirely and altogether. There now!"

"And why?"

"Nay; you are making a jest of it: it is exceedingly ill-natured! It's no jest to me!" she said, and turning her face to the fire.

"I'm very far from jesting, Miss Catherine. You love Mr. Edgar because he is handsome, and rich, and cheerful, and all that sort of thing. The last, however, goes for nothing: you would love him just as much if he were ugly, and poor, and ill-natured; and with it all, unless he possessed the four former attractions, you would not love him."

"No, I should only pity him—hate him, perhaps, if he were ugly, and ill-natured. But I should not love him. There are several other handsome, rich young men in the world: handsomer, poorer, and less cheerful than Mr. Edgar. What should hinder you from loving them?"

"If there be any, they are out of my way: I've seen none like Edgar."

"You may see some; and he won't always be handsome, and young, and may not always be cheerful."

"He is now; and I have only to do with the present. I wish you would speak rationally."

"Well, that settles it: if you have only to do with the present, marry Mr. Linton."

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Complete the activities below. They are related to the second unseen extract and about writing a critical analysis on a passage you have not seen before.



### Activities: Close-reading Skills

- 1) This passage is a conversation between two characters and... Using quotations, summarise the point and purpose of the conversation.
- 2) How does Brontë distinguish between the two speakers in this passage?
- 3) Analyse this passage by writing three bullet points each for what Cathy says, Cathy's character, and their relationship.
- 4) **Extension Task:** What is the significance of Cathy ordering Ned to 'have done so—do!'?



### Activities: Links to Women in Literature

- 1) What themes, topics, and conventions relating to Women in Literature are present in this passage? Highlight or annotate a quotation linked to each one you identify.
- 2) Using the annotations you have made, draw a table with three columns: 'Features of Women in Literature', 'Relevant Quotations', and 'Meanings'. Use the table to identify how meaning is created by the passage in relation to Women in Literature.
- 3) Each row in your table now acts as a plan for a paragraph you write in your critical analysis. Choose one of the features of Women in Literature, write an essay-style paragraph of analysis based around it, make a relevant quotation and the meaning that you have also identified.



#### Exam Tip

As a revision strategy, make your own glossary of literary vocabulary. You can then make informed comments on the unseen extract in the exam. You might turn the glossary that we have provided at the back of this book into cards so that you can familiarise yourself with the definitions of the terms.

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### Unseen Extract 3 - *The Bread the Devil Knead*, Lisa Allen

Written in Trinidadian creole, the passage below explores key themes of Women in Literature of intimate partner violence and societal expectations surrounding women, age and beauty. You are to identify features of the language and structure that relate to the themes of Women in Literature.

Extract from *The Bread the Devil Knead* by Lisa Allen Aggrey (2021)

Every time I watch that ha'ra does crawl my blood, but Leo lie if he  
He could do what I do. I not scrubbing that moss and mildew off  
zy. If he beat me, he beat me.



I hang the duster on the towel rail, scrub my mouth looking in the mirror  
seeing the thin, white face, long, straight brown hair, hazel eyes, the mouth  
rude. I have a small waist and a flat belly, but right now that belly was bl  
red and green, depending on what bruises you was looking at: the older o  
the ones from last night was still red.

Sun now starting to think about coming up. A greyish light was glowing  
cobwebs in the ventilation blocks high up on the wall of the bathroom. I b  
my rag and some cheap vanilla body wash – real gentle when I rubbing m  
and rinse off under the one tap gushing cold water from the bathroom wa  
slippers on still.



I know is really a thing I have that I could count on, and that is my lo  
erty. I would never know it, because every morning and night God  
anise and tone and moisturise from head to foot. I have special cream fo  
my hand, my body, my food. Is not that I vain. I does think of it as an in  
had a nice car, ent you would take care of it? Depreciation is a hell of a th



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Look at the annotations below and compare the features identified to those identified in the text.

Extract from *The Bread the Devil Knead* by Lisa Allen Agostini (2021)

First person connects the reader to the **narrator** and their state of mind.

Every time I watch that bathroom it does **eat** my blood, but Leo is cleaning it. He could do what. I don't air not scrubbing that **moss** off the wall for he lazy as **me**, he beat me.

Expectations for women to be demure and soft-spoken or non-combative



I hang the towel on the towel rail, scrub my mouth looking in the mirror. I have the thin, white face, long, straight brown hair, hazel eyes **men does call rude**. I have a small waist and a flat belly, but right now was black and blue and red and green, depending on what bruises you get at: the older ones was lighter; the ones from last night was still red.

**Personification** highlights Alethea's lack of control in her life, despite trying to claim control of it

**Sun now starting to think about coming up**. A greyish light was coming through the cobwebs in the ventilation blocks high up on the wall of the bathroom. I bathe myself with my rag and some **cheap vanilla body wash** – really just rubbing my belly and back – and rinse off under the one tap gushing cold water at the bathroom wall. I had my slippers on still.

**Anaphora** ties to the theme of control / **bodily autonomy** and places emphasis on what Alethea and society value in women



I know is really one thing I have that I could count on, and that is my **body** on forty but you would never know it, because **every morning and every spare life** I does cleanse and tone and moisturise from head to foot. I use cream for **my hair, my face, my hand, my body, my foot**. Is not the way I does think of it as an investment. **If you have a nice car, ent you would of it?** Depreciation is a hell of a thing.

**Rhetorical question** emphasises the value of the body and its **objectification**



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The paragraph below is an example of a paragraph of analysis that responds to the question and evaluates how it relates to Women in Literature.

### Example of Analysis

Introduces the topic of the paragraph

Control, and women's control over their own bodies, is a topic discussed both in reality and in texts under the umbrella of Women in Literature. In this passage we are introduced to Alethea as she defies the control of an abusive boyfriend. Her defiance is made evident through statements such as 'I don't care' and 'if he beats me, with his belt'. The first-person perspective invites the reader into the character's most intimate thoughts and circumstances. We are sympathetic towards her and supportive of her defiance as she challenges an oppressive system. However, an oppressive system Alethea can't escape is the beauty industry and beauty standards for women, as seen through her elaborate hair- and skincare routine. In a house filled with 'moisturiser', 'mildew', 'cold water', and 'cheap vanilla bodywash' - all of which she uses - Alethea is closer to the poverty line than not - she spends money on creams for everything from her hair to her feet. She has to follow this routine or she will 'depreciate' in the eyes of society, a statement that dehumanises Alethea, comparing her to a car, and highlights the way women's bodies are treated as objects for consumption under societal expectations regarding beauty. Alethea cannot escape this system, as to reject it would be to reject the one thing that gives her value, especially when she is in an abusive relationship.

Use of short embedded quotations keeps the analysis concise and persuasive

Understanding how individual aspects of passage combine to create meaning

### Exam Tip

Leave five minutes at the end of your unseen passage question in the exam and check it for spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

Complete the activities below to gain a greater understanding of how the example identifies and analyses meaning in the unseen extract, and how it relates this to Women in Literature.

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### Activities: Analysis in Action

- 1) Find an example within the analysis above in which the writer **explain** by providing **evidence**, all in just **one sentence**.
- 2) Annotate and highlight the analysis above to show where it engages with assessment objectives (AO2, AO1, and AO3) that a critical analysis must meet to be marked highly.
- 3) Using your answers from the previous activity, decide how you would revise the paragraph of analysis to further include the assessment objectives for AO2, AO1, and AO3.



We have provided a second unseen extract, also from *The Bread the Devil Knead* annotations as you go such as those included with the previous extract, and then next page.

**Second Extract from *The Bread the Devil Knead* by Lisa Allen Agostini (2021)**

'When I left I thought I'd do so many things. I wanted to go to Princeton if. Instead, I got pregnant, had three kids – bam, bam, bam – and that was my life. I did everything I wanted. I was the perfect wife. Even this, she breastfed me, she squeezed, 'this was his idea. I went along with it, a *dulahin*\* does, right? You listen to your husband.'

'Not *dulahin* alone, Jankie,' I say. 'Don't be so hard on yourself.'

She snorts, as if to say I talking shit. 'I've never been anybody in my adult life. Rudranath Inalsingh. I'm tired of it, Alethea. I'm tired of it. I want my own life.'

'So you just going to leave him in Miami?'

She shrug she shoulders.

'You sure you think this through, Jankie?' I ask her, soft soft. She might be somebody wife and somebody mother out there and have tell she the alternative. People does look at you like something wrong with you when you tell them no children. It's all a woman could do. Worse yet when you tell them you never married. Is like a crime in this island to be a woman on your own.

But Jankie don't know nothing about that. She married we junior sec PE teacher was seventeen years – is either she married him or Raj would have kill the teacher and she never know what it is to be a single woman, or a woman living in a house with a woman without children. To she, living in that marriage come like a cage.

\**dulahin*

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Complete the activities below. They are related to the second unseen extract and about writing a critical analysis on a passage you have not seen before.



### Activities: Close-reading Skills

- 1) Create a table with two columns, one labelled 'Jankie' and the other 'Alethea'. Choose three quotations that relate to each character from your table, then analyse what each quotation tells us about the character.
- 2) Make a bullet point plan of the points that you would include in your essay. How does the passage conform to your expectations of Women in Literature? As far as possible and include one quotation from the passage for each of your points. Aim to list 5–6 bullet points in your plan for each paragraph that you would write in the exam essay.
- 3) Form groups of 5–6 and discuss your planned bullet points. See if your group has included any points that you haven't. Add these to your plan.
- 4) **Extension Task:** Once you have swapped ideas with a group, write a short paragraph using bullet points from your plan that you would explore in a critical analysis essay-style introduction and conclusion for your plan.



### Activities: Links with Topic Conventions

- 1) Find a quotation in the above texts that relates to the often abusive or controlling relationships in Women in Literature.
- 2) Texts under the Women in Literature umbrella often explore the male characters in relation to women and female characters. Compare the two extracts from *The Bread the Devil Knead* or *How are men presented in these extracts?*
- 3) **Research Task:** *The Bread the Devil Knead* is set in Trinidad and the author was born and raised. With a partner, research the culture of Trinidad and Tobago and its attitudes towards women and marriage. Then write a short paragraph outlining how the two passages from the novel reflect this culture.

Here are some links to get you started:

- <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/trinidad-and-tobago-culture-beliefs.html>
- <https://feminine.com.ng/2021/04/13/5-things-you-should-know-about-trinidad-and-tobago/>



#### Exam Tip

When preparing for the exam, you might find it useful to write practice paragraphs to give you an idea of how much information you will be able to realise in 15 minutes. You will have to complete the unseen extract question.

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## Unseen Extract 4 - *The Well of Loneliness*, Radclyffe Hall

Initially banned for its presentation of homosexuality and lesbian relationships, *The Well of Loneliness* explores themes of social isolation and rejection, queer love, and sacrifice. In the novel, the protagonist – a daughter born to parents expecting a son – shows queer tendencies and the passage to identify features that relate to the devices used and themes of *Women in Literature*.

### Extract from *The Well of Loneliness* by Radclyffe Hall (1928)

The son that they waited for so long a-coming; he had not arrived when Anna was born. Nor had Anna had any other female offspring. Thus Stephen remained cocksure that any only child is to be envied, for the only child is bound to become a person. Having no one of its own ilk in whom to confide, it is apt to confide in itself. Even at seven years old the mind is beset by serious problems, but nevertheless it is not yet so much as may already be subject to small fits of dejection, may already be struggling to cope on the limited life of its surroundings. At seven there are miniature loves and hates, but they however, loom large and are extremely disconcerting. There may even be present a sense of frustration, and Stephen was often conscious of this sense, though she could not express it in words. To cope with it, however, she would give way at times to sudden fits of self-pity, and would herself up over everyday trifles that usually left her cold. It relieved her to stand in tears at the first sign of opposition. After such outbreaks she would feel that she would find it almost easy to be docile and obedient. In some vague, childish way she would find life, and this fact had restored her self-respect.

Anna would send for her turban and would say: 'Stephen darling, don't cross – tell Mother that if you give way to these tempers; she'll promise you anything you'll like.'

Her eyes would look cold, though her voice might be gentle, and her hand would be tentative, unwilling. The hand would be making an effort to fondle, but she would be conscious of that effort. Then looking up at the calm, lovely face, Stephen would feel a sudden contrition, with a sudden deep sense of her own shortcomings; she would tell this out to her mother, yet would stand there tongue-tied, saying nothing at all. She was strangely shy with each other – it was almost grotesque, this shyness of them both, mother and child. Anna would feel it, and through her Stephen, young as she was, would be conscious of it; so that they held a little aloof when they should have been drawn together.

Stephen, acutely responsive to beauty, would be dimly longing to find expression almost amounting to worship, that her mother's face had awakened. But Anna, her daughter, noting the plentiful colour, the brave hazel eyes that were as indeed were the child's, the expression and bearing, would be filled with a sense of that came with the danger.

She would awake at night and ponder this thing, scourging herself in an accusation accusing herself of hardness of spirit, of being an unnatural mother. Sometimes, in slow, miserable tears, remembering the inarticulate Stephen.

She would think: 'I ought to be proud of the likeness, proud and happy and gay. Then back would come flooding that queer antagonism that amounted almost to a hatred.'

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Extract from *The Well of Loneliness* by Radclyffe Hall (1928)

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Use of 'it' **dehumanises** Stephen and creates distance between **narrator**, reader and character

Formal **tone** and **complex sentence structures** tie into **conventions** of the time period and reflect the **protagonist's** upper-class upbringing

**Expectations** for mothers and how they are expected to respond to their children

Contrasts the common theme of comparing a father figure to God

**Omniscient narrator** allows insight into each character's psyche

The son that they waited for seemed long a-coming; he had not arrived. Stephen was seven. Nor had Anna produced other female offspring. The remained cock of the roost. **It is doubtful if any only child is to be** only child is bound to become introverted, having no one of its own to confide, **it is apt to corrode its life**. It cannot be said that at seven its mind is beset by perplexing problems, but nevertheless it is already groping already in the small fits of dejection, may already be **struggling** on the limited life of its surroundings. At seven there are miseries and hatreds, which, however, loom large and are extremely disconcerting, may even be present a dim sense of frustration, and Stephen was conscious of this sense, though she could not have put it into words. With it, however, she would give way at times to sudden fits of hot temper, herself up over everyday trifles that usually left her cold. It relieved her then burst into tears at the first sign of opposition. **After such outbreaks** would feel much more cheerful, would find it almost easy to be obedient. In some vague, childish way she had hit back at life, and thus restored her self-respect.

Anna would send for her turbulent offspring and would say: 'Stephen Mother's not really cross—tell Mother what makes you give way to this, she'll promise to try to understand if you'll tell her—'

But her eyes would look cold, though her voice might be gentle, when it fondled would be tentative, unwilling. The hand would be an effort to fondle, and Stephen would be conscious of that effort. Then to the calm, level face, Stephen would be filled with a sudden contrition, a sense of her own shortcomings; she would long to blurt out her mother, yet would stand there tongue-tied, saying nothing at all. **They were strangely shy with each other—it was almost grotesque, of theirs, as existing between mother and child.** Anna would feel through her Stephen, young as she was, would become conscious of it, held a little aloof when they should have been drawing together.

Stephen, acutely responsive to beauty, would be dimly longing to find a feeling **almost amounting to worship**, that her mother's face had. Anna, looking gravely at her daughter, noting the plentiful auburn hair, hazel eyes that were **so like her father's, as indeed were the child's expression and bearing**, would be filled with a sudden antagonism, near to anger.

She would awake at night and ponder this, scourging herself in contrition; accusing herself of 'barrenness', of **being an unnatural**. Sometimes she would shed miserable tears, **remembering the time when Stephen**.

She would think: 'I ought to be proud of the likeness, proud and happy when I see it!' Then back would come flooding **that queer antagonism** amounted almost to anger.

Deviation from **societal norms** is often met with anger, hostility and violence

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The paragraph below is an example of a paragraph of analysis that responds to the text and evaluates how it relates to Women in Literature.

### Example of Analysis

Correctly identifies technical elements of the text

Consideration of **context** and comparisons between past and present



Quotation is used to introduce the point of the paragraph then is analysed closely

The use of an omniscient narrator demonstrates commonly held views towards motherhood in 1920s Britain by allowing insight into the thoughts of a mother and child in a strained relationship. Anna herself as an 'unnatural' mother for struggling to connect with her child which highlights the general and ongoing societal expectation for daughters to be a unit, in opposition to fathers and sons. However, the narrator tells us, Stephen not only has a masculine name, she has the same 'expression and bearing' as her father, which further drives the disconnect between her and her mother. The use of 'unnatural' to describe Anna's feelings about herself suggests that there must be a natural way for a mother and child to exist in and that Anna and Stephen have disrupted it somehow - by not conforming to traditional roles and expectations. In both past and present society, mothers are expected to be unconditionally good and loving and never have a negative feeling towards their children, which denies them personhood and the fact that they are human and humans are complex beings. When they step outside the boundaries that society creates for them, they are considered 'unnatural'.

Last sentence continues analysis while summing up the points made throughout the paragraph

### Exam Tip

You can ensure that you explain your quotations by asking yourself the question 'Why did the writer write it this way and not another way?', every time you find evidence in the text.



Complete the activities below to gain a greater understanding of how the example identifies and analyses meaning in the unseen extract.



### Activities: Analysis in Action

- 1) Flip the paragraph of analysis by continuing its exploration but from a different view: How do Stephen's behaviours and feelings towards her mother show their relationship breaking social norms and becoming 'unnatural'?
- 2) Discuss with a partner whether you feel there is anything about the paragraph of analysis that could be improved. Make any additions to the paragraph to improve its literary analysis.



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We have provided a second unseen extract, also from *The Well of Loneliness*. Read the annotations as you go such as those included with the previous extract, and then

### Second Extract from *The Well of Loneliness* by Radclyffe Hall (1928)

For answer Angela kissed her.

Stephen's strong but unhappy arms went round her, and suddenly stretching switched off the little lamp on the table, so that the room was lit only by firelight. They could not see each other's faces any more, because there was only firelight. Stephen never will speak when his heart is burdened to breaking; when he is alone and be swept away before the unruly flood of his passion. There in the room, she spoke such words as lovers have spoken ever since the divine, sweet first moment when she flung the thought of love into Creation.

But Angela suddenly pushed her away: 'Don't, don't—I can't bear it—it's too much—it hurts me—I can't bear this thing—for you. It's all wrong, I'm not worth it, Stephen, it's making me—can't you understand? It's too much—' She could not explain. 'If you were a man—' She stopped abruptly, and burst into uncontrollable weeping. And somehow this weeping was different from any that had gone before, so that she felt. There was something frightened and desolate about it; it was like the sobbing of a child. The girl forgot her own desolation in her pity and the need that she felt to comfort. More than ever before she felt the need to protect this weak creature, and to comfort.

She said, grown suddenly passionately, 'Tell me—try to tell me what it is. Don't be afraid of making me angry—we love each other, and that's all that matters. What's wrong? Then let me help you; only don't cry like this—I can't endure it.' Angela hid her face in her hands: 'No, no, it's nothing; I'm only so tired. I've been so strained these last months. I'm just a weak, human creature, Stephen—sometimes I feel worse than mad. I must have been mad to have allowed you to love me like this. You should despise and hate me. It's my fault, but I was so terribly lonely that I let you comfort me now—oh, I can't explain, you wouldn't understand; how could you understand?

And so strangely complex is poor human nature, that Angela really believed in that moment of sudden fear and remorse, remembering those guilty weeks in which she had paved the way for another. In her weakness she could not part from the girl, and she felt something so strong about her. She seemed to combine the strength of a man with the more subtle strength of a woman. And though she was the crude young animal Ransome, brusque, rather brutal and unrefined, she was filled with a kind of regretful self-loathing. She had done, and for what she well knew she would do again, a thing which she hated herself for.

Feeling humble, she groped for the girl's kind hand; then she tried to speak. 'I will always forgive this very miserable sinner, Stephen?'

Stephen said, not apprehending her meaning, 'If our love is a sin, then heaven forgive us, tender and selfless sinning as ours.'

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Complete the activities below. They are related to the second unseen extract and about writing a critical analysis on a passage you have not seen before.



### Activities: Close-reading Skills

- 1) 'The omniscient narrator allows room for the author to explore characters.' Do you agree with this statement? Choose three and analyse them to answer the question.
- 2) What can we learn from the description of Roger as 'the crude his...' and 'the brutal appeal to the senses'? Write a paragraph and what it tells us.
- 3) Using your analysis from the previous activity, compare Roger's descriptions of Stephen and Angela. Think about language or devices and what these tell us about each character.
- 4) **Extension Task:** To what extent do you agree with the following passage, the reader feels great sympathy for the narrator.'? Discuss your opinion with a partner, using the extract to support your ideas.



### Activities: Links with Topic Conventions

- 1) Make a list of the themes you can find in both extracts. Are any conventional to the genre of Women in Literature? Mark these bear in mind during your exam revision.
- 2) Considering the themes you listed for the previous activity, plan a paragraph answering this question: How does the use of religion above relate to context and the central themes of Women in Literature?
- 3) Reread the two extracts from *The Well of Loneliness* and compare your presentation as a child and a grown woman. Write 1–2 paragraphs your comparison.



#### Exam Tip

You will be provided with a date for the unseen extract in the exam. Think about the context in discussing how the passage relates to the wider genre of Women in Literature. You might have been written in the same decade as a part of your own set text. Compare any similarities between the two and make a point about what this tells us about Women in Literature of this particular time period.



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## Unseen Extract 5 - *Little Women*, Louisa May Alcott

In this passage, Jo and Amy (who are sisters) argue and fall out after Amy destroys the text highlights a domestic scene, familial relationships, and societal expectations and sisters try to repair the relationship between Jo and Amy. Read the passage and features of it that relate to the devices used and themes of Women in Literature.

In this passage, the theme of motherhood is front and centre as it explores the ten expectations for women: those of a mother, and those of a working woman. Annotations features that relate to the devices used and themes of Women in Literature.

### Extract from *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott (1868)

"Scold me as much as you like, you'll never see your silly old book again," cried Amy, on her turn.

"Why not?"

"I burned it up."

"What! My little book I was so fond of, and worked over, and meant to finish before you really burned it?" said Jo, turning very pale, while her eyes kindled and her hands trembled nervously.

"Yes, I did! I told you I'd make you pay for being so cross yesterday, and I have, so Amy got no farther, for Jo's hot temper mastered her, and she shook Amy till her face was crying in a passion of grief and anger...

"You wicked, wicked girl! I never can write it again, and I'll never forgive you as long as I live," Meg flew to rescue Amy, and Beth to pacify Jo, but Jo was quite beside herself, and in her sister's ear, she rushed out of the room up to the old garret, and finished her book. The storm cleared up below, for Mrs. March came home, and, having heard the story, she had a sense of the wrong she had done. Jo's book was the pride of her heart, and she had given it to her family as a literary service, or a promise. It was only half a dozen little fairy tales, but she had poured her whole heart into her work, hoping to make something of them. She had viewed them with great care, and had destroyed the old manuscript, so that she had consumed the loving work of several years. It seemed a small loss to others, but to Jo it was a calamity, and she felt that it never could be made up to her. Beth mourned as for a pet, and refused to defend her pet. Mrs. March looked grave and grieved, and Amy felt that she had asked pardon for the act which she now regretted more than any of them. When the tea bell rang, Jo appeared, looking so grim and unapproachable that it took some time to say meekly...

"Please forgive me, Jo. I'm very, very sorry."

"I never shall forgive you," was Jo's stern answer, and from that moment she ignored her. No one spoke of the great trouble, not even Mrs. March, for all had learned by experience that mood words were wasted, and the wisest course was to wait till some little accident, or a change of nature, softened Jo's resentment and healed the breach. It was not a happy evening, and the usual, while their mother read aloud from Prentiss, or Edgeworth, something sweet home peace was disturbed. This was most when singing time came, for Jo stood dumb as a stone, and Meg broke down, so Meg and Mother sang alone. But when the fatherly voices did not seem to chord as well as usual, and as Jo refused her good-night kiss, Mrs. March whispered gently, "My dear, don't let your anger. Forgive each other, help each other, and begin again tomorrow."

Jo wanted to lay her head down on that motherly bosom, and cry her grief and anger, but she felt an unmanly weakness, and she felt so deeply injured that she really couldn't quite hard, shook her head, and said gruffly because Amy was listening, "It was an accident, and it doesn't deserve to be forgiven."

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Extract from *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott (1868)

"Scold as much as you like, you'll never see your silly old book again, getting excited in her turn.

"Why not?"

"I burned it up."

"What! My little book? You were so fond of, and worked over, and meant to publish?" said Jo, turning very red, and her hands clutched Amy nervously.

"Yes, I did! I told you I'd make you pay for being so cross yesterday, and Amy got no farther, for **Jo's hot temper mastered her, and she showed her teeth chattered in her head**, crying in a passion of grief and anger.

"You wicked, wicked girl! I never can write it again, and I'll never forgive you as I live."

Meg flew to rescue Amy, and Beth to pacify Jo, but Jo was quite beside herself with a parting box on her sister's ear, she rushed out of the room up to the garret, and finished her fight alone.

**The storm cleared up below, for Mrs. March came home, and, having a story, soon brought Amy to a sense of the wrong she had done her sister. The pride of her heart, and was regarded by her family as a literary spirit. It was only half a dozen little fairy tales, but Jo had worked patiently, putting her whole heart into her work, hoping to make some money enough to print. She had just copied them with great care, and had deposited the manuscript, so that Amy's bonfire had consumed the loving work of several weeks. It seemed a small loss to other people, but to Jo it was a dreadful calamity, and never could be made good. Beth mourned as for a departed kitten, and refused to let her pet. Mrs. March looked grave and grieved, and could not love her till she had asked pardon for the act which she now regretted more than any of them.**

When the tea bell rang, Jo appeared, looking so grim and unapproachable that it took all Amy's courage to say meekly...

"Please forgive me, Jo. I'm very, very sorry."

"I never shall forgive you," was Jo's stern answer, and from that time she ignored Amy entirely.

No one spoke of the great trouble, not even Mrs. March, for all had learned by experience that when Jo was in that mood words were wasted, and the best was to wait till some little accident, or her own generous nature should relieve the resentment and healed the breach. It was not a happy evening, for Meg sewed as usual, while their mother read aloud from Bremer, Scott, or something was wanting, and the sweet home peace was disturbed most when singing time came, for Beth could not play, Jo stood dumb, and Amy broke down, so Meg and Mother sang alone. But in spite of their sadness, **cheery as larks**, the girls' voices did not seem to chord as well as usual, and were out of tune.

As Jo gave her good-night kiss, Mrs. March whispered gently, "My dear, let the sun go down upon your anger. Forgive each other, help each other again tomorrow."

Jo wanted to lay her head down on that motherly bosom, and cry her grief all away, but **tears were an unmanly weakness**, and she felt so deep that she really couldn't quite forgive yet. So she winked hard, shook her head **gruffly because Amy was listening**, "It was an abominable thing, and I don't deserve to be forgiven."

Suggests Jo holds a reverence/respect for her father and is eager to impress him.

Positions their mother as a source of calm in the household; this ties into expectations around mothers and their role in the household.

Jo subverts expectations refusing to forgive Amy, though women are expected to be soft and forgiving.

Simile relates to the innocence and sweetness of birds, traits women are expected to display.

Demonstrates a complex relationship between sisters.

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The paragraph below is an example of a paragraph of analysis that responds to the text and evaluates how it relates to Women in Literature.

### Example of Analysis

Opens on point the context

Quotations are integrated naturally and then expanded on



States an opinion / highlights an interpretation and justifies it

The language of the passage is used to emphasise Jo's rejection of norms and societal expectations of the 1860s America). The adverbs such as 'gruffly' and 'unladylike' position her as a more masculine figure by suggesting a roughness to Jo's speech and behaviour. She is seen as tomboyish and unladylike. Her actions towards Amy, such as 'her teeth chattered' or giving her a 'parting box' or 'highlight this as she resorts to physical violence in her anger. This is emphasised by the contrast between Jo and her sisters, who do not display displays of anger but rather 'mourn' and 'grieve' and 'regret', their responses falling in line with the demure and restrained emotions of women. However, Jo is the aggrieved party and thus her anger is justified, and the language of the text supports this. Where someone might scold Jo or tell her to act more appropriately, instead Jo is given the opportunity to express her unladylike feelings with the support and understanding of her family.

Closing statement of paragraph also provides analysis by setting up a potential point for the next paragraph

Complete the activities below to gain a greater understanding of how the example identifies and analyses meaning in the unseen extract.



### Activities: Analysis in Action

- 1) 'Jo is the aggrieved party and thus her anger feels justified, and the text supports this.' Find a quotation from the passage that supports this and incorporate it into the paragraph of analysis above.
- 2) Write an essay-style paragraph in response to this analysis which focuses on the feminine traits Jo displays, or the norms she conforms to, in contrast to the example paragraph.



#### Exam Tip

Where possible, make use of shorter quotations to support your points. This will save time and extract takes away from the amount of time that you have to comment on a particular quotation.



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Complete the activities below. They are related to the second unseen extract and about writing a critical analysis on a passage you have not seen before.



### Activities: Close-reading Skills

- 1) Annotate the passage by identifying the literary devices. Also write a short paragraph explaining your answer to this question.
- 2) How are women presented in this passage? Using evidence from the paragraph exploring your answer to this question.
- 3) What is the purpose and effect of the author addressing the reader? Using evidence from the text and thinking about your opinion.
- 4) What can we infer from the quotation 'many silent sacrifices of love itself make the faded faces beautiful in God's sight'? Write your interpretation.



### Activities: Links with Topic Conventions

- 1) Find three tropes within the above extract that are conventional for Women in Literature umbrella. Use evidence from the extract to support your interpretation.
- 2) Using your ideas from the previous activity, plan a critical analysis that conforms to your own expectations of the genre. These expectations 'reference to the genre', for example, isn't focused enough, while 'but the organisation of women by society as they age'. You have 10 points in total, one for each paragraph that you would write.
- 3) **Research Task:** In pairs, research 'attitudes towards women in the 1860s', about women's rights, societal expectations around marriage and other topics relevant to Women in Literature. Then, in your paragraph, explain how the passage above relates to these societal attitudes – either by accepting or rejecting them.

Here are some links to get you started:

- <https://medium.com/@clairegriffin/1860s-etiquette-bcb77d1592>
- <https://www.historynewsnetwork.org/article/what-the-women-o>
- <https://journals.openedition.org/eica/1592>



#### Exam Tip

When planning or writing practice essays for the exam, make a habit of discussing your work with others in the class. This should help you identify in which areas you can improve. For example, you might be good at identifying literary devices while a partner's work might show you how to discuss the structure of a paragraph.

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## Unseen Extract 6 - *The House of Mirth*, Edith Wharton

In *The House of Mirth*, Wharton is criticising upper-class New York society and the women, particularly in regard to reputation and marriage. This passage uses frank and witty statements to highlight these criticisms. Read the passage below and annotate the parts that relate to the themes of Women in Literature.

Extract from *The House of Mirth* by Edith Wharton (1905)

Lily sank with a sigh into one of the shabby leather chairs.

"How delicious to have a place like this all to one's self! What a miserable thing to be a governess!" She leaned back in a luxury of discontent.

Selden was rummaging in a cupboard for the cake.

"Even women," he said, "have been known to enjoy the privileges of a flat."

"Oh, governesses—or widows. But not girls—not poor, miserable, marriageable girls."

"I even know a girl who lives in a flat."

She sat up in surprise. "You do?"

"I do," he assured her, emerging from the cupboard with the sought-for cake.

"Oh, I know—you mean Gerty Farish." She smiled a little unkindly. "But I saw her MARRIAGEABLE—and besides, she has a horrid little place, and no maid, and no money to eat. Her cook does the washing and the food tastes of soap. I should hate that."

"You shouldn't dine with her on wash-days," said Selden, cutting the cake.

They both laughed, and he knelt by the table to light the lamp under the kettle, and poured out the tea into a little tea-pot of green glaze. As he touched her hand, polished ivory, with its slender pink nails, and the sparkling bracelet slipping over her wrist with the irony of suggesting that she was living a life as his cousin Gertrude Farish had so evidently the mark of civilization which had produced her, that the link between the two lives was chaining her to her fate.

Selden tried to read his thought. "It was horrid of me to say that of Gerty," she said with compunction. "I forgot she was your cousin. But we're so different, you know. I'm good, and I like being happy. And besides, she is free and I am not. If I were, I could manage to be happy even in her flat. It must be pure bliss to arrange the furniture and give all the horrors to the ash-man. If I could only do over my aunt's draperies, I should be a better woman."

"Is it so very bad?" he asked sympathetically.

She smiled at him across the tea-pot which she was holding up to be filled.

"That shows how seldom you come there. Why don't you come oftener?"

"When I do come, it's not to look at Mrs. Peniston's furniture."

"Nonsense," she said. "You don't come at all—and yet we get on so well when you do."

"Perhaps that's the reason," he answered promptly. "I'm afraid I haven't any idea how to make a slice of lemon juice."

"I shall like it better." She waited while he cut the lemon and dropped a thin slice into the tea.

"But that is not the reason," she insisted.

"What reason, then, for what?"

"For your never coming." She leaned forward with a shade of perplexity in her eyes. "I wish I knew—I wish I could make you out. Of course I know there are men who one can tell that at a glance. And there are others who are afraid of me: they tell me so. But I don't think you dislike me—and I think I want to marry you."

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Look at the annotations below and compare the features identified to those identified in the text.

### Extract from *The House of Mirth* by Edith Wharton (1905)

**Sibilance** creates an atmosphere of softness and ease

Lily sank with a sigh into one of the shabby leather chairs.

"How delicious to have a place like this all to one's self! What a misfortune to be a woman." She leaned back in a burst of discontent.

Selden was rummaging in a cupboard for the cake.

"Even women," he said, "have been known to enjoy the privileges of a man's life."

"Oh, yes—**MARRIAGEABLE**—or widows. But not girls—not poor, miserable, marriageable girls!"

"I even know a girl who lives in a flat."

She sat up in surprise. "You do?"

"I do," he assured her, emerging from the cupboard with the sought-for cake.

"Oh, I know—you mean Gerty Farish." She smiled a little unkindly.

**MARRIAGEABLE**—and besides, she has a horrid little place, and makes such queer things to eat. Her cook does the washing and the food taste should hate that, you know."

"You shouldn't dine with her on wash-days," said Selden, cutting the cake. They both laughed, and he knelt by the table to light the lamp under the table. She measured out the tea into a little tea-pot of green glaze. As he watched her, **polished as a bit of old ivory**, with its slender pink nails, and the silver bracelet slipping over her wrist, he was struck with the irony of suggesting such a life as his cousin Gertrude Farish had chosen. **She was so even a victim of the civilization which had produced her**, that the links seemed like manacles chained her to her fate.

She seemed to find his thought. "It was horrid of me to say that of Gertrude," he said with compunction. "I forgot she was your cousin. But we're young, you know: she likes being good, and I like being happy. And besides, she is not. If I were, I daresay I could manage to be happy even in her flat. **pure bliss to arrange the furniture just as one likes**, and give all the credit to the ash-man. If I could only do over my aunt's drawing-room I know I could be a better woman."

"Is it so very bad?" he asked sympathetically.

**She smiled at him across the tea-pot which she was holding up**

"That shows how seldom you come there. Why don't you come oftener?"

"When I do come, it's not to look at Mrs. Peniston's furniture."

"Nonsense," she said. "You don't come at all—and yet we get on so well when we meet."

"Perhaps that's the reason," he answered lightly. "I'm afraid I have no cream, you know—shall you mind a slice of lemon instead?"

"I shall like it better," he said, **while he cut the lemon and dropped a slice into his cup**. "But that is not the reason," she insisted.

"Why not?"

"For your never coming." She leaned forward with a shade of perplexity in her charming eyes. "I wish I knew—I wish I could make you out. Of course there are men who don't like me—one can tell that at a glance. And **there are men who are afraid of me: they think I want to marry them**." She smiled frankly. "But I don't think you dislike me—and you can't possibly think I want to marry you."

Intense emphasis highlights the importance the speaker places on the concept

**Simile** creates **imagery** of an old and wizened hand in conflict with Lily's implied age and eligibility for marriage; suggests the toll **societal expectations** place on her

Framing puts them in Selden's home, but Lily is the one preparing tea and serving Selden—ties into **societal expectations** of men and women

Gives insight into **societal expectation** and **norms** around attitudes towards marriage, placing men and women in opposition

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The paragraph below is an example of a paragraph of analysis that responds to the question and evaluates how it relates to Women in Literature.

### Example of Analysis

Relevant quotations are embedded throughout the paragraph

Lily's statement that, '[Gerty] likes being good, and I like being good', encapsulates the tension Wharton explores in this passage between societal expectations and pursuing one's own desires. Lily presents marriage as a 'miserable' prospect for young women that can only be achieved through eminent death, or by lacking the desirable qualities of a woman. She longs for independence and freedom from these expectations, as seen by her romanticising of a concept as simple as her own furniture and its arrangement, but she is held back by expectations of marrying - and marrying well - that are 'like a chain' chaining her to her fate'. To be good is to accept your lot in life. Women in this time period have the limited options of being governesses, widows, wives, or spinsters - as Gerty does, as Lily both envies and resents her position. To be happy is to break free of the manacles of societal expectation, but the 'poor, miserable, marriagable girls' may never be able to.

Closing statement rounds out the paragraph by linking back to the point made in the opening sentence

**Exam Tip**

When revising, make notes of words, such as 'suggests', 'highlights' and 'implies', to use to demonstrate that you are making an analytical point about what the meaning of a passage might be.

Complete the activities below to gain a greater understanding of how the example identifies and analyses meaning in the unseen extract.

### Activities: Analysis in Action

- 1) In pairs, decide three ways you could expand on or improve the paragraph. Choose a quotation from the passage to support each of your points.
- 2) Plan a second paragraph for a critical appreciation that leads on from the example analysis above.
- 3) Is there another way of interpreting the symbol of the bracelet? Write a sentence in which you would include in this paragraph that detail in the text that you would use to support your interpretation. Use the sentence starter 'The bracelet might symbolise...'

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We have provided a second unseen extract, also from *The House of Mirth*. Read the annotations as you go such as those included with the previous extract, and then

### Second Extract from *The House of Mirth* by Edith Wharton (1905)

It was no longer, however, from the vision of material poverty that she took the greatest shrinking. She had a sense of deeper impoverishment — of an inner compared to which outward conditions dwindled into insignificance. It was miserable to be poor, but to forward to a shabby, anxious middle-age, less degrees of isolation and self-denial to gradual absorption in the dingy corner of the boarding-house. But there was something more miserable still — it was the solitude at her heart, the sense of being swept like a stray uprooted growth in the heedless current of the years. That was the feeling which possessed her now, being something rootless and ephemeral, mere spin-drift of the whirling existence, without anything to which the poor little tentacles of self could cling as an awful flood submerged them. And as she looked back she saw that there had been no time when she had had any real relation to life. Her parents too had been swept hither and thither on every wind of fashion, without any personal existence of their own from its shifting gusts. She herself had grown up without any one spot of attachment to her than another: there was no centre of early pieties, of grave endearments from which her heart could revert and from which it could draw strength for its own tenderness for others. In whatever form a slow accumulation of past lives had come to her, whether in the concrete image of the old house stored with visual memories, or in the conception of the home that she had built with hands, but made up of inherited passions and loyalties — it was the same power of broadening and deepening the individual's life, and of making it by mysterious links of kinship to all the mighty sum of human

Such a vision of the solidarity of life had never before come to Lily. She had had a premonition of it in the blind motions of her mating-instinct; but they had been overpowered by the disintegrating influences of the life about her. All the men and women who had been like atoms whirling away from each other in some wild centrifugal dance of the continuity of life had come to her that evening in Nettie Struther's

The poor little working-girl who had found strength to gather up the fragments and build herself a shelter with them, seemed to Lily to have reached the centre of existence. It was a meagre enough life, on the grim edge of poverty, with its possibilities of sickness or mischance, but it was the frail audacious permanent nest built on the edge of chaos, where a wisp of leaves and straw, yet so precious, held the lives entrapped and hung safely over the abyss.

—but it had taken time to build the nest; the man's faith as well as the woman's. Lily remembered Nettie's words: I KNEW HE KNEW ABOUT ME. Her husband had made her renewal possible — it is so easy for a woman to become what she believes her to be!

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Complete the activities below. They are related to the second unseen extract and about writing a critical analysis on a passage you have not seen before.



### Activities: Close-reading Skills

- 1) Highlight the similes and metaphors you can find in the passage and write a short analysis of 'one'.
- 2) Take one of your analyses from the previous activity and expand it into a critical analysis using the quotation as 'evidence' and 'evidence'.
- 3) Using your ideas from the two previous activities, answer the question: To what extent does the writer's use of figurative language influence our interpretation of Lily? Share your opinion with a partner, using your findings to support your interpretation.



### Activities: Links with Topic Conventions

- 1) Compare the presentation of Lily in the two passages from *The Great Gatsby*. Does this character arc tell us about character progression in American Literature?
- 2) What is the significance of the theme of conventions in this extract? Discuss this question in your analysis, using evidence from the text to support your ideas.
- 3) Write a paragraph of critical analysis on the presentation of Lily, relating it to the conventions you have studied for Women in Literature.
- 4) **Extension Task:** In pairs, swap your paragraphs from the previous activity and read one another's responses, as we have done for the example analysis section. Try to find one strength of your partner's analysis and one way it could improve it.

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## Unseen Extract 7 - *A Girl of the Limberlost*, Gene Stratton-Porter

Relationships between mothers and daughters are at the heart of much literature. The same is true for *A Girl of the Limberlost*. In this passage, the fraught relationship between them is on display, with both characters demonstrating how they break from and conform to the expectations of mothers and daughters of the time. Annotate the passage to identify features that relate to the themes of Women in Literature.

Extract from *A Girl of the Limberlost* by Gene Stratton-Porter (1909)

With every bit of courage returned, for she was a healthy young thing, she said, "Well, I'm willing to bear the hard part to pay for what I selected the ward building in which I shall teach in about four years. I am going to have a south exposure so that the flowers and moths I take in from the swamp to show will be well."

"You little idiot!" said Mrs. Comstock. "How are you going to pay your expenses?" "Now that is just what I was going to ask you!" said Elnora. "You see, I have news to-day. I did not know I would need any money. I thought the city fund there is an out-of-town tuition, also. I need ten dollars in the morning. Will you give it?"

"Ten dollars!" cried Mrs. Comstock. "Ten dollars! Why don't you say a hundred? I could get one as easy as the other. I told you! I told you I couldn't raise a cent to grow bigger and bigger. I told you not to ask for money!"

"I never meant to," replied Elnora. "I thought clothes were all I needed and I knew about buying books and tuition."

"Well, I did," said Mrs. Comstock. "I knew what you would run into! But you said you liked it, and so set in your way, I thought I would just let you try the world."

Elnora pushed back her chair and looked at her mother.

"Do you mean to say," she demanded, "that you knew, when you let me go into the city, to reveal the fact before all of them that I expected to have my books handed out to me, that you knew I had to pay for them?"

Mrs. Comstock evaded the direct question.

"Anybody but an idiot mooning over a book or wasting time prowling the woods, you had to pay. Everybody has to pay for everything. Life is made up of pay, pay, forever pay! If you don't pay one way you do another! Of course, I knew you had to pay. I knew you would come home blubbering! But you didn't get a penny! I haven't seen one! Have your way if you are determined, but I think you will find the road so swampy, you mean, mother," said Elnora. She arose white and trembling.

God will teach me to understand you. He knows I do not now. You can't pay for me to go through to-day, or how you let me go, but I'll tell you this: if you had the money, and would offer it to me, I wouldn't touch it for this much more. I'll get it myself. I'll raise it, and do it some honest way. I am going the next day, and the next. You need not come out, I'll do the night work, and so on. It was ten o'clock when the chickens, pigs, and cattle were fed, the turnips hoed, and the vines was stacked beside the back door.

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Look at the annotations below and compare the features identified to those identified in the text.

**Extract from *A Girl of the Limberlost* by Gene Stratton-Porter (1909)**

Sarcastic **tone** in term of address introduces the relationship between mother and daughter

Mother's response and address contrasts with daughter's, highlighting their differing feelings for one another

Harsh language presents a broken or **antagonistic** relationship between mother and daughter

Use of religious elements informs **context** and character

Elnora, the **protagonist**, shows a quality of character that her **antagonistic** mother doesn't hold

With every bite Elnora's courage returned, for she was a healthy young

"You've heard about doing evil that good might come from it," she said. **mother mine**, it's something like that. I'm willing to bear the pay for what I'll learn. Already, I have selected the ward building in town to teach in about four years. I am going to ask for a room with a south exposure on the floor. I will take in from the swamp to show the children

"**little idiot!**" said Mrs. Comstock. "How are you going to pay your expenses?"

"Now that is just what I was going to ask you!" said Elnora. "You see, I have two startling pieces of news to-day. I did not know I would need any money. I thought the city furnished the books, and there is an out-of-town tuition of ten dollars in the morning. Will you please let me have it?"

"Ten dollars!" cried Mrs. Comstock. "Ten dollars! **Why don't you stop and be done with it!** I could get one as easy as the other. I told you I couldn't raise a cent. Every year expenses grow bigger and bigger. I have to ask for money!"

"I never meant to," replied Elnora. "I thought clothes were all I needed to bear them. I never knew about buying books and tuition."

"Well, I did!" said Mrs. Comstock. "I knew you would run into so bull-dog stubborn, and so set in your ways. I thought I would just let the world a little and see how you would know it!"

Elnora moved to her chair and looked at her mother.

"What do you mean to say," she demanded, "that you knew, when you let me go to the city classroom and reveal the fact before all of them that I expected to be handed out to me; do you mean to say that you knew I had to pay for it?" Mrs. Comstock evaded the direct question.

"Anybody but an **idiot mooning** over a book or wasting time prowling would have known you had to pay. Everybody has to pay for everything they **made up of pay, pay, pay! It's always and forever pay!** If you do your way you do another! **Of course, I knew you had to pay. Of course** you would come home blubbing! But you don't get a penny! I haven't one! I can't get one! Have your way if you are determined, but I think you are a road somewhat rocky."

"Swampy, you mean, mother," corrected Elnora. She arose white and said, "**Perhaps some day God will teach me to understand you**." "Not now. You can't possibly realize just what you let me go through. I let you let me go, but I'll tell you this: **You understand enough that if you give me money, and I will offer it to me, I wouldn't touch it now. And this is my promise. I'll get it myself. I'll raise it, and do it some honest way by to-morrow, the next day, and the next. You need not come out, and night work, and hoe the turnips.**"

It was ten o'clock when the chickens, pigs, and cattle were fed, the turnips a heap of bean vines was stacked beside the back door.

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The paragraph below is an example of a paragraph of analysis that responds to the text and evaluates how it relates to Women in Literature.

### Example of Analysis

Introduces the topic of the paragraph succinctly



Incorporates historical **context** to support and strengthen analysis

Mothers and daughters are often at the core of works within Women in Literature, and in this passage Stratford Porter presents a new antagonistic relationship between a mother and daughter. Mrs Comstock, Elnora's mother, is hostile towards her daughter, as seen in the way she addresses Elnora, calling her 'bull-dog stubborn' and 'idiot' and her words would make a fool of herself. Through her words and actions Mrs Comstock defies expectations for mothers to be loving, patient and supportive of their children - particularly daughters - as discussed in Women in Literature often do. Throughout history, mothers have been presented as, and expected to be, paragons of virtue, as seen in the Victorian concept of the angel in the house. This expectation denies women's personhood and refuses to allow them to be complex and individual people are. Mrs Comstock's hostility towards Elnora therefore breaks these norms; she is shown to be spiteful and unpleasant, and this enhances her presentation as **antagonist** as audiences of old and modern times are disappointed by her presentation as an unloving mother.

Closing statement sets up potential for discussion in the next paragraph, providing flow throughout the critical appreciation rather than just jumping from point to point



### Exam Tip

Presenting two different interpretations of a quotation or feature of the poem is a good way of meeting the criteria of responding creatively to texts.



Complete the activities below to gain a greater understanding of how the example paragraph identifies and analyses meaning in the unseen extract.



### Activities: Analysis in Action

- 1) How would you expand this example analysis? Choose two more points from the passage and incorporate them into the critical paragraph.
- 2) Write a paragraph of critical analysis in response to the analysis. Explore Elnora's position of daughter in the antagonistic mother-daughter relationship presented in the passage.
- 3) Could it be argued that Mrs Comstock is trying to help Elnora? Would you agree or disagree with justifying this point? Discuss your ideas about the text, providing evidence from the text to support your opinions.



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We have provided a second unseen extract, also from *A Girl of the Limberlost*. Re-making annotations as you go such as those included with the previous extract, and activities following.

### Second Extract from *A Girl of the Limberlost* by Gene Stratton-Porter (1909)

Mrs. Comstock wanted to hunt moths, but she was timid about making a venture. So she wisely sat on a log and watched Philip and Elnora to learn how they proceeded. In the deep woods a hermit thrush was singing his chant to the rising sun. Oriole notes, pure, sweet, and clear as gold, poured out while on wing. The robins were still in their morning songs had awakened all the other birds an hour ago. They were on half the bushes. Excepting late species of hawks, tree bloom was almost over. Flowers made the path border and all the wood floor a riot of colour. Elnora, and Philip, working eagerly, but to the city man, recently from a hospital, they seemed like a miss. He frequently stooped to examine a flower face, paused to listen intently, then lifted his head to see the gold flash which accompanied the oriole's trailing flight. He uttered the first cry, as she softly lifted branches and peered among the grass.

"My find!" she called. "Bring the box, mother!"

Philip came hurrying also. When they reached her she stood on the path holding the box. Her eyes were wide with excitement, her cheeks pink, her red lips parted. In her hand she held out to them clung a pair of delicate blue-green moths, with touches of lavender and straw colour. All around her lay flower-brocaded grass on a deep green background of the forest. The sun slowly sifted gold from the leaves, and her hair. Mrs. Comstock turned a sharp breath behind her.

"What a picture!" exulted Philip at her shoulder. "She is absolutely and perfectly beautiful. Give a small fortune for that faithfully set on canvas!"

He picked the box from Mrs. Comstock's fingers and slowly advanced with it. He laid it down her hand and transferred the moths. Philip closed the box carefully, but his mother saw that his eyes were following the girl's face. He was not making any attempt to conceal his admiration.

"I wonder if a woman ever did anything lovelier than to find a pair of Luna moths on the path, early on a perfect June morning," he said to Mrs. Comstock, when he returned.

She glanced at Elnora who was intently searching the bushes.

"Look here, young man," said Mrs. Comstock. "You seem to find that girl lovely. Is she right?"

"I could suggest no improvement," said Philip. "I never saw a more attractive girl. She seems to me perfectly perfect to me."

"I suppose you don't start any scheme calculated to spoil her!" proposed Mrs. Comstock dryly. "I don't think you can, or that any man could, but I'm not taking any chances. You must come to come here to help in this work. We are both glad to have you, if you can, but it's the least you can do to leave us as you find us."

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Complete the activities below. They are related to the second unseen extract and about writing a critical analysis on a passage you have not seen before.



### Activities: Close-reading Skills

- 1) In pairs, write 1–2 sentences summarising what you feel moths represent in the passage.
- 2) Highlight the places in the passage that relate to nature and how Mrs Comstock and Philip use nature in this passage? Discuss this question with your ideas.
- 3) How does this passage present the character of Philip, and how does it tie into the conventions of Women in Literature? Using evidence from the paragraph of critical analysis answering this question.

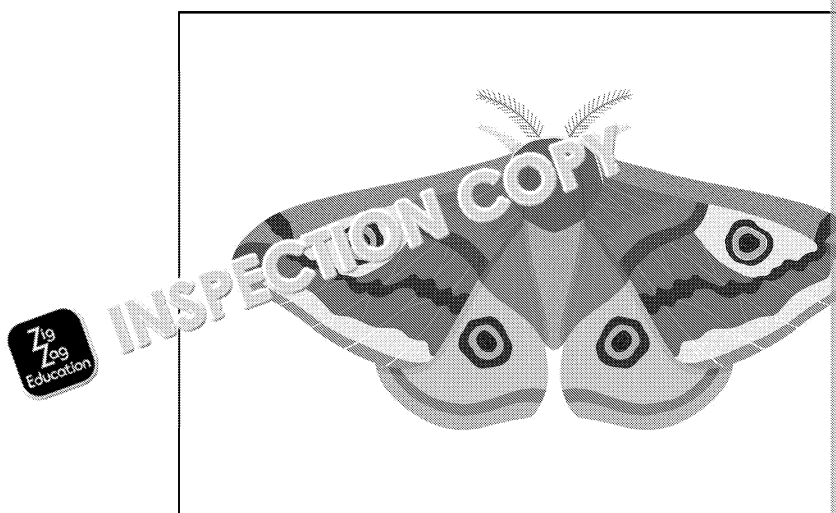


### Activities: Links with Topic Conventions

- 1) Think about Mrs Comstock's presentation in the first passage and how the statement that 'she was timid about making a wrong move' relates to her relationship with Elnora as well. Write a paragraph explaining this.
- 2) In groups of five, assign each person one of the following relationships:
  - Elnora and moths
  - Elnora and Mrs Comstock
  - Mrs Comstock and Philip
  - Philip and Elnora

For each chosen relationship, choose one quotation from the text that demonstrates it. Then, make a list of the conventions of Women in Literature that this relationship demonstrates. Share your paragraphs in your group and discuss each other's ideas.

- 3) Using the relationship you explored in the previous activity, write a paragraph of critical analysis exploring how this relationship and its presentation in the text fits into your expectations of the Women in Literature genre.



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## Unseen Extract 8 - *The Yellow Wall-Paper*, Emily Perkins

In this passage, the theme of women's mental health and societal dismissals of it is central focus. The structure and language work to support this theme as the narrator summer. Annotate the passage to identify features that relate to the devices and t

Extract from *The Yellow Wall-Paper* by Emily Perkins Gilman (1892)

It is very seldom that mere ordinary people like John and myself secure ancestral A colonial mansion, an old-timey estate, I would say a haunted house, and reach the felicitous condition of being asked to do nothing but eat and sleep and be well. I could be asking too much of fate!

I will proudly declare that there is something queer about it.

Else, why should it be let so cheaply? And why have stood so long untenanted?

John laughs at me, of course, but one expects that in marriage.

John is practical in the extreme. He has no patience with faith, an intense horror he scoffs openly at any talk of things not to be felt and seen and put down in figures.

John is a physician, and perhaps—(I would not say it to a living soul, of course, and a great relief to my mind)—perhaps that is one reason I do not get well faster.

You see, he does not believe I am sick!

And what can one do?

If a physician of high standing, and one's own husband, assures friends and relatives that there really really nothing the matter with one but temporary nervous depression—a slight nervousness—what is one to do?

My brother is also a physician, and of high standing, and he says the same thing. So I take phosphates, or phosphates—whichever it is, and tonics, and journeys, and am forbidden to "work" until I am well again.

Personally, I disagree with their ideas.

Personally, I believe that congenial work, with excitement and change, would do me good.

But what is one to do?

I did write for a while in spite of them; but it does exhaust me a good deal—has done so, it, or else meet with heavy opposition.

I sometimes fancy that in my condition if I had less opposition and more society I might get well. John says the very worst thing I can do is to think about my condition, and I do. I feel bad.

So I will let it alone and talk about the house.

The most beautiful place! It is quite alone, standing well back from the road, quite a village. It makes me think of English places I have read about, for there are high gates that lock, and lots of separate houses for the gardeners and people.

There is a delicious garden! I never saw such a garden—large and shady, full of and aged and grape-covered arbors with seats under them.

There were greenhouses, too, but they are all broken now.

There was some legal trouble, I believe, something about the heirs and co-heirs; the house has been empty for years.

That spoils my ghostliness, I am afraid; but I don't care—there is something strange about this house—I can feel it.

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Look at the annotations below and compare the features identified to those identified in the previous task.

### Extract from *The Yellow Wall-Paper* by Emily Perkins Gilman (1892)

It is very seldom that mere ordinary people like John and myself secure sunny summer-halls for the summer.

Ties into **conventions** of genre (haunted houses)

A colonial mansion, a hereditary estate, I would say a haunted house, of fantastic height of romantic felicity—but that would be asking too much of history. Still I will proudly confess there is something queer about it.

Establishes relationship between husband and wife, and theme of dismissing women's feelings

Else how could it be let so cheaply? And why have stood so long? John laughs at me, of course, but one expects that in marriage.

John is practical in the extreme. He has no patience with faith, an intense superstition, and he scoffs openly at any talk of things not to be felt and measured down in figures.

John is a physician, and perhaps—(I would not say it to a living soul, but this is dead paper and a great relief to my mind)—perhaps for that reason I do not get well faster.

**Direct address** engages the reader and evokes sympathy for the character

You see, he does not believe I am sick!

And what can one do?

If a physician of high standing, and one's own husband, assures friends and ourselves that there is really nothing the matter with one but temporary nervous depression—a slight hysterical tendency—what is one to do?

My brother is also a physician, and also of high standing, and he says the same thing.

**Anaphora** suggests friction between narrator and husband

So I take phosphates or phosphates—whatever it is, and tonics, and fresh air, and exercise, and am absolutely forbidden to “work” until I am well again.

Personally, I don't agree with their ideas.

I believe, I believe that congenial work, with excitement and change, would do me good.

But what is one to do?

I did write for a while in spite of them; but it does exhaust me a good deal, and I have to be so sly about it, or else meet with heavy opposition.

I sometimes fancy that in my condition if I had less opposition and more stimulus—but John says the very worst thing I can do is to think about my condition, and I confess it always makes me feel bad.

So I will let it alone and talk about the house.

The most beautiful place! It is quite alone, standing well back from the village. It makes me think of English places, about, for there are hedges and walls and gates that lock, and lots of secret houses for the gardeners and people.

There is a delicious garden! I never saw such a garden—large and shady, with many bordered paths, and a long grape-covered arbor with seats under it.

There are old-fashioned houses, too, but they are all broken now.

There was some legal trouble, I believe, something about the heirs and anyhow, the place has been empty for years.

That spoils my ghostliness, I am afraid; but I don't care—there is something about the house—I can feel it.

Closes passage on an ominous **tone** and demonstrates the narrator will continue in opposition to her physician by refusing to change her opinion.

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The paragraph below is an example of a paragraph of analysis that responds to the text and evaluates how it relates to Women in Literature.

### Example of Analysis

Shows knowledge of the genre as a whole



Demonstrates knowledge of context surrounding the text and how this relates to conventions of genre

In *Women in Literature*, style and structure often play a key role in establishing an authentic portrayal of female characters and their lives. This might be through elements such as language choice or dialects, and in this passage Perkins Gilman immediately brings the narrator's perspective through the use of first-person narrative. The epistolary style, means we are privy to the most intimate thoughts and are directly addressed by her; for example, she asks questions such as, 'Else, why should it be let so cheaply'. This allows the author to emphasise the character's mental state who has been diagnosed with 'nervous depression' and 'slight hysteria', which has been established to be a key theme of the text. Modern audiences will relate to this with the historical precedent of women being marked as 'hysterical' in their manner of ailments, and even for pushing boundaries of social expectations which creates an even greater capacity for empathy towards the character. The use of short sentences and simplistic descriptions - as opposed to long sentences or flowery language - as well as questions and exclamatory statements, altogether creates a personable and relatable style that allows the author to state the narrator's thoughts and feelings clearly and straightforwardly. This, in turn, will allow her determination to become that much more obvious in any analysis of style and structure in the story.



### Exam Tip

Ensure that your paragraphs are not too long and remain roughly between 10-15 lines in length. The longer your paragraphs, the more difficult it becomes to ensure you have discussed into a summarising sentence and the more likely you will be to lose marks for two aspects of the passage.

Complete the activities below to gain a greater understanding of how the example identifies and analyses meaning in the unseen extract.

### Activities: Analysis in Action



- 1) Using highlighters or annotation, break the above paragraph into groups:
  - a) General statement about feature of the genre
  - b) Evidence and analysis of this statement
  - c) Link to contextual factors
- 2) Discuss with a partner whether you feel there is anything about the paragraph that could be improved. Make any additions to the paragraph to improve the level of analysis.



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We have provided a second unseen extract, also from *The Yellow Wall-Paper*. Read the extract with the annotations as you go such as those included with the previous extract, and then answer the questions.

### Second Extract from *The Yellow Wall-Paper* by Emily Perkins Gilman (1892)

*I really have discovered something at last.*

*Through watching so much at night, when it changes so, I have finally found out. The front pattern does move—and no wonder! The woman behind shakes it!*

*Sometimes I think there are a great many women behind, and sometimes only one, crawling fast, and her crawling shakes it all over.*

*Then in the very bright spots she keeps still, and in the very shady spots she just toils forward hard.*

*And she is all the time trying to climb through. But nobody could climb through that pattern—so; I think that is why it has so many heads.*

*They get through, and then the pattern strangles them off and turns them upside-down and white!*

*If those heads were covered or taken off it would not be half so bad.*

*I think that woman gets out in the daytime!*

*And I'll tell you why—privately—I've seen her!*

*I can see her out of every one of my windows!*

*It is the same woman, I know, for she is always creeping, and most women do not creep. I see her on that long shaded lane, creeping up and down. I see her in those dark groves around the garden.*

*I see her on that long road under the trees, creeping along, and when a carriage comes by, she hides behind a blackberry vine.*

*I don't blame her a bit. It is very humiliating to be caught creeping by daylight. I always pretend that I don't know. When I creep by daylight, I can't do it at night, for I know John would see me. I don't want to be caught once.*

*And John is so queer now, that I don't want to irritate him. I wish he would take a vacation. I don't want anybody to get that woman out at night but myself.*

*I often wonder if I could see her out of all the windows at once.*

*But, turn as fast as I can, I can only see out of one at one time.*

*And though I always see her she may be able to creep faster than I can turn!*

*I have watched her sometimes away off in the open country, creeping as fast as a cloud in a wind.*

*If only that top pattern could be gotten off from the under one! I mean to try it, like John says. I have found out another funny thing, but I shan't tell it this time! It does not do to tell anything. There are only two more days to get this paper off. I don't believe John is beginning to look in his eyes.*

*And I heard him ask Jennie not to ask professional questions about me. She had a very good answer. She said I slept so peacefully in the daytime.*

*John says I don't sleep very well at night, for all I'm so quiet!*

*He asks me all sorts of questions, too, and pretended to be very loving and kind.*

*As if I couldn't see through him!*

*Still, I don't wonder he acts so, sleeping under this paper for three months.*

*It only interests me, but I feel sure John and Jennie are secretly affected by it.*

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Complete the activities below. They are related to the second unseen extract and about writing a critical analysis on a passage you have not seen before.



### Activities: Close-reading Skills

- 1) How are exclamative statements used in this passage? In pairs, highlight each one. Then discuss their effect and how the author utilises them.
- 2) What is the intention of this passage being written in first person? What might change if it had been written in third-person? Write a short paragraph answering each of these questions, using evidence from the text to support your ideas.
- 3) Create a list of 5–6 titles for subheadings you would use for paragraphs in a critical appreciation of this passage. Try to be specific, e.g. instead of a broad category of 'mental health', the subheading would become 'dismissal of women's mental health'. In groups, discuss your ideas and see whether anyone has different ideas from yours.
- 4) For each of the subheadings you listed in the previous activity, find a quotation from the passage that you would use as evidence to support this subtopic.



### Activities: Links with Topic Conventions

- 1) What critiques might the author be making of society and its women in this extract? Choose three quotations from the text that might be critiquing.
- 2) How is the female narrator presented in this passage, and how does this relate to the conventions of Women in Literature that you have studied? Write a paragraph of analysis answering this question.



#### Exam Tip

In one or two places in your essay response, try to include information about the context in which the text was written. For example, a passage about a 'strong' female heroine would allow you to mention the patriarchal society of the 18th and 19th centuries, during which the Gothic was so popular.

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## Unseen Extract 9 - *Madame Bovary*, Gustave Flaubert

Often described as a masterpiece of literature, *Madame Bovary* explores the tension between Romantic and Realist ideals, as can be seen in the passage below, which explores ideas of grief, reality and illusion. Use the passage to identify features that relate to the devices used and themes of *Women in Literature*.

Extract from *Madame Bovary* by Gustave Flaubert (1857)

And the shade of the argenteous wall listened to the wall above Emma's head, these pictures passed before her one by one in the silence, and the faint noise of some belated carriage rolling over the Boulevard.

When her mother died she cried much the first few days. She had a funeral with the hair of the deceased, and, in a letter sent to the Bertaux full of sorrowful life, she asked to be buried later on in the same grave. The goodman thought it was a joke and came to see her. Emma was secretly pleased that she had reached at last a rare ideal of pale lives, never attained by mediocre hearts. She let herself go to Lamartine meanderings, listened to harps on lakes, to all the songs of dying, to the falling of the leaves, the pure virgins ascending to heaven, and the voice of the wind discoursing down the valleys. She wearied of it, would not confess it, continued to read, and at last was surprised to feel herself soothed, and with no more sadness, no more wrinkles on her brow.

The good nuns, who had been so sure of her, perceived with great alarm that Mademoiselle Bovary seemed to be slipping from them. They had in vain tried to her of novenas, novenas, and sermons, they had so often preached to her of saints and martyrs, and given so much good advice as to the modesty of her soul, that she did as tightly reined horses; she pulled up so that she slipped from her teeth. This nature, positive in the midst of its enthusiasm, that loved the church for the sake of the flowers, and music for the words of the songs, for its passionate stimulus, rebelled against the mysteries of faith as it grew into discipline, a thing antipathetic to her constitution. When her father took her away, one was sorry to see her go. The Lady Superior even thought that she had been somewhat irreverent to the community.

Emma, at home once more, first took pleasure in looking after the servants, who were disgusted with the country and missed her company. When Charles came back for the first time, she thought herself quite content, with nothing more to feel, nothing more to do.

But the calmness of her new position, or perhaps the disturbance caused by the death of her father, had sufficed to make her believe that she at last felt that wondrous calm, till then, like a great bird with rose-coloured wings, hung in the splendour of the poesy; and now she could not think that the calm in which she lived was the calm she had dreamed.

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Look at the annotations below and compare the features identified to those identified in the text.

### Extract from *Madame Bovary* by Gustave Flaubert (1857)

Establishes setting, suggesting a girls' school or convent

And the shade of the argand lamp fastened to the wall above Emma's bed, all these pictures of the world, that passed before her one by one in the dormitory, and to the distant noise of a belated carriage rolling on the Boulevards.

Raises themes of grief, loss and mother-daughter relationships; simultaneously explores Romantic and Gothic elements in relation to female characters

When her mother died, she cried much the first few days. She had a faint remembrance of the deceased, and, in a letter sent to the Bertauxs, she asked to be buried later on in the same grave. The goodman thought she must be ill, and came to see her. Emma was so tired that she had reached at a first attempt the rare ideal of pale lives, never before known to mediocre hearts. She let herself glide along with Lamartine meandering to harps on lakes, to all the songs of dying swans, to the falling of the pure virgins ascending to heaven, and the voice of the Eternal discoursing in the valleys. She wearied of it, would not confess it, continued from day to day, but at last was surprised to feel herself soothed, and with no more sadness than wrinkles on her brow.

Religious themes and language relate to character and context

The good nuns, who had been so sure of her vocation, perceived with astonishment that Mademoiselle Rouault seemed to be slipping from their grasp. Indeed, she had indeed been so lavish to her of prayers, retreats, novenas, and sermons, often preached the respect due to saints and martyrs, and given so much as to the modesty of the body and the salvation of her soul, that she did not restrain her horses; she pulled up short and slipped from her seat. Her nature, positive in the midst of its enthusiasms, that had loved the chase for the sake of the flowers, and the words of the songs, and literature for the sake of the passions, rebelled against the mysteries of faith as it grew in the distance, and was antipathetic to her constitution. When her father told her so, no one was sorry to see her go. The Lady Superior even thought she had latterly been somewhat irreverent to the community.

Female character breaking from societal and religious expectations of the time

Emma, at home once more, first took pleasure in looking after the servants, and then grew disgusted with the country and missed her convent. When she went to the Bertauxs for the first time, she thought herself quite disillusioned. She had more to learn, and nothing more to feel.

Presents female character as fickle, shallow and discontented – ostensibly because of her disinterest in religiosity

But the uneasiness of her new position, or perhaps the disturbance caused by the presence of this man, had sufficed to make her believe that she had found that wondrous passion which, till then, like a great bird with rose-coloured wings, hung in the splendour of the skies of poesy; and now she could feel the calm in which she lived was the happiness she had dreamed.

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The paragraph below is an example of a paragraph of analysis that responds to the text and evaluates how it relates to Women in Literature.

### Example of Analysis

Awareness of the passage's relation to the genre as a whole



Provides evidence of two separate interpretations that combine to support the overarching point being explored in the paragraph

There is much discussion in literary and feminist circles about the 'men writing women' and how successful a male author can or will be in writing female characters. In this passage, Flaubert introduces Emma as a discontent young woman with 'rich' ideals about life. She is 'disgusted' by her 'life in town', but finds 'wondrous passion' in the young man who can presume, marriagable age and quality. In this way, Flaubert presents Emma as shallow and idealistic, her head full of daydreams about romance and passion that would not be out of modern-day assumptions and expectations for young women. Conversely, the heavy emphasis on religion throughout the passage relates to the context of the piece, written in mid-1800s France, and suggests that Emma's 'disillusionment' with life after returning home stems from her rejection of religious practices and piety. In this way, then, the passage once Emma returns to the societal expectations of young women at the time. In a heavily religious and patriarchal society, being a 'pure virgin' was an ideal for all young women, and by turning away from this, Flaubert suggests Emma is breaking from the norms and, therefore, forfeiting any satisfaction in life. In this way, Emma could be interpreted as more than a fully formed female character, denied full personhood by the male author making a point.

Concluding statement with a smooth transition into the next paragraph

### Exam Tip

When approaching an unseen extract, you could make use of a 'who/when/why' way of ordering your thoughts and understanding of the extract. It is a quick reminder to consider the characters of the passage ('who'), along with the date of publication ('when' – which will be provided on the exam paper) and 'why' columns will allow you to comment on the ways the writer mentions character and setting as well as the possible meanings for the use of these

Complete the activities below to gain a greater understanding of how the example identifies and analyses meaning in the unseen extract.

### Activities: Analysis in Action



- 1) How could the paragraph be updated to include deeper analysis of the passage? Choose two quotations from the passage and incorporate the language and literary devices used into the paragraph of analysis.
- 2) The example paragraph makes several decisive statements about the context and author. Do you agree with the writer's assessment and analysis in response to the text, or do you argue against the writer's analysis from the text? Support your ideas.
- 3) **Research Task:** In pairs, research Alphonse de Lamartine, the poet referenced in this passage. Consider the writing style of his poem 'Lamartine meanderings' – and compare it to the language of the passage. In pairs, discuss how you might bring this research into the paragraph of analysis.

Here is a link to get you started:

- <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Alphonse-de-Lamartine>

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We have provided a second unseen extract, also from *Madame Bovary*. Read it together as you go such as those included with the previous extract, and then complete the

### Second Extract from *Madame Bovary* by Gustave Flaubert (1857)

The winter was severe, Madame Bovary's convalescence slow. When it was wheeled her arm-chair to the window that overlooked the square, for she had antipathy to the garden, and the blinds on that side were always down. She wanted her horse to be sold; what she formerly liked now displeased her. All her ideas were limited to the care of herself. She stayed in bed taking little meals, rang for her maid about her gruel or to chat with her. The snow on the market-roof fell right into the room; then the rain began to fall; and Emma waited daily with eagerness for the inevitable return of some trifling events which nevertheless had no relation to her. The most important was the arrival of the "Hirondelle" in March. Then the landlady shouted out, and other voices answered, while Hippolyte fetched the boxes from the boot, was like a star in the darkness. At mid-day she then he went out again; next she took some beef-tea, and towards five o'clock he drew in, the children coming back from school, dragging their wooden shoes on the pavement, knocked the clapper of the shutters with their rulers one after the other.

It was at this hour that Monsieur Bournisien came to see her. He inquired about her health, gave her news, exhorted her to religion, in a conventional little prattle that was full of charm. The mere thought of his coming so comforted her.

One day, in the height of her illness, she had thought herself dying. Her friends came to her; and, while they were making the preparations in her room for the sacrament, while they were turning the night table covered with syrups and flowers, while Félicité was strewing dahlia flowers on the floor, Emma felt some pain that freed her from her pains, from all perception, from all feeling. Her mind was no longer thought; another life was beginning; it seemed to her that her body, toward God, would be annihilated in that love like a burning incense that rises in vapour. The bed-clothes were sprinkled with holy water, the priest drew forth the white wafer; and it was fainting with a celestial joy that she put out her hand to the body of the Saviour presented to her. The curtains of the alcove floated like clouds, and the rays of the two tapers burning on the night-table seemed dazzling halos. Then she let her head fall back, and, as if she heard in space the seraphic harps, and perceived in a blue sky, on a golden throne in the firmament, holding green palms, a Father, resplendent with majesty, who with his angels of earth and of fire to carry her away in their arms.

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Complete the activities below. They are related to the second unseen extract and about writing a critical analysis on a passage you have not seen before.



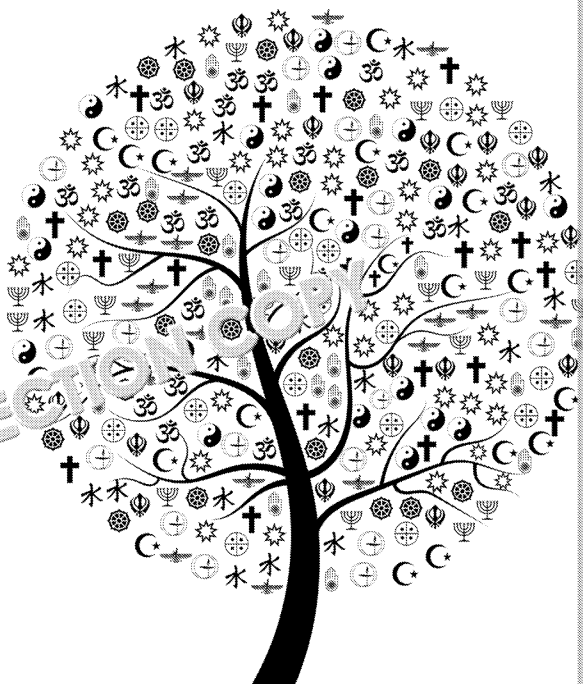
### Activities: Close-reading Skills

- 1) Highlight or annotate the passage to identify as many literary devices as you can.
- 2) In groups, discuss the religious imagery in this passage. What impact does it have on the reader? Write down your group's ideas and, on your own, write a critical analysis of the use of religion in the passage.
- 3) How is Emma (Madame Bovary) presented in this passage? Consider the details that relate to the character and her presentation. Then, for each paragraph that uses the quotation as 'evidence' for a paragraph, write a critical analysis.



### Activities: Links with Topic Conventions

- 1) If this passage had been written in first-person, how might its presentation have changed – or not changed? Write a paragraph answering this question. Consider ideas such as language, literary devices used, context, and the conventions of Women in Literature.
- 2) Think about your discussions about the use of religion in the passage. How do religion and religious themes relate to the conventions of Women in Literature? Discuss your ideas with a partner and write a paragraph about religion to the use of religion in other texts you have studied for this topic.
- 3) Write your opinion on male authors writing about female characters and vice versa (female authors writing about male characters)? As a class, discuss your ideas around this topic. Then, write a paragraph of critical analysis about the text.



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## Unseen Extract 10 - *The Tale of Genji*, Murasaki Shikibu

Although the structure and context of the passage may be unfamiliar to modern Western readers, the ideas it explores – such as class, wealth, and relationships between women – are universal. While the elaborate language and sentence structures serve to highlight the theme of courtly life, the passage to identify features that relate to the devices used and themes of Women in Literature.

### Extract from *The Tale of Genji* by Murasaki Shikibu (c. 1000)

At the Court of an Emperor (and it matters not when) there was among the gentlewomen of the Wardrobe and Chamber one, who though she was not of high rank, was far beyond all the rest; so that the great ladies of the Palace, who had formerly hoped that she herself would be chosen, looked with scorn and hatred on her who had dispelled their dreams. Still less were her former companions, the ladies of the Wardrobe, content to see her raised so far above them. Thus her position at Court, preponderant though it was, exposed her to constant jealousy and ill will; and with petty vexations, she fell into a decline, growing very melancholy and withdrawing to her home. But the Emperor, so far from wearying of her now that she was no longer gay, grew every day more tender, and paid not the smallest heed to those who pointed out his conduct became the talk of all the land; and even his own barons and courtiers looked askance at an attachment so ill-advised. They whispered among themselves: 'Beyond the Sea such happenings had led to {18} riot and disaster. The people of the land indeed soon have many grievances to show: and some likened her to Yang Kuei-fei of Ming Huang.<sup>2</sup> Yet, for all this discontent, the Emperor was the sheltering power, and his love that none dared openly molest her.

Her father, who had been a Councillor, was dead. Her mother, who never found a husband, in her youth a man of some consequence, managed despite all difficulties to bring up her daughter, bringing as generally falls to the lot of young ladies whose parents are of high rank and height of fortune. It would have helped matters greatly if there had been some guardian to busy himself on the child's behalf. Unfortunately, the mother was left to the world and sometimes, when troubles came, she felt very bitterly the lack of a father she could turn for comfort and advice. But to return to the daughter. In due time she bore a little Prince who, perhaps because in some previous life a close bond had existed between them, came out as fine and likely a man-child as well might be in all the land. The Emperor, who had contained himself during the days of waiting,<sup>3</sup> But when, at the earliest possible moment, the child was presented at Court, he saw that rumour had not exaggerated its truth. The young prince was the son of Lady Kōkiden, the daughter of the Minister of the Right. The child was treated by all with the respect due to a Heir Apparent. The Emperor found fine a child as the new prince; moreover, the Emperor's great affection for the mother made him feel in a peculiar sense his own possession. He was not of the same rank as the courtiers who waited upon him in {19} the palace, but he showed his love for her, and though she wore all the airs of a great lady, he considered considerable qualms that he now made it his practice to have her by him not as a lady, but as to be some entertainment, but even when any business of importance was to be done, he indeed he would keep her when he woke in the morning, not letting her go to bed, so that willy-nilly she acted the part of a Lady-in-Perpetual-Attendance.

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Look at the annotations below and compare the features identified to those identified in the text.

Extract from *The Tale of Genji* by Murasaki Shikibu (circa 1000)

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Establishes setting, which informs **context** and character

Presents conflicts between female characters of different **classes**

Highlights a romantic relationship between a male and female character as a source of joy and support (although **power dynamics** might also be considered)

Conversational **tone** engages the reader and brings them more firmly into the text, as they are listening to court gossip themselves

*At the Court of an Emperor* (he lived it matters not when) there were many gentlewomen of the Wardrobe and Chamber one, who though of very high rank was favoured far beyond all the rest; so that the great Palace, each of whom had secretly hoped that she herself would be chosen with scorn and hatred by the upstart who had dispelled their power. Still were there other companions, the minor ladies of the Wardrobe to see her as far above them. Thus her position at Court, preponderant as it was, exposed her to constant jealousy and ill will; and soon, worn by petty vexations, she fell into a decline, growing very melancholy and retiring frequently to her home. But the Emperor, so far from wearying now that she was no longer well or gay, grew every day more tender to her, not the smallest heed to those who reproved him, till his conduct was talk of all the land; and even his own barons and courtiers began to look at an attachment so ill-advised. They whispered among themselves that Beyond the Sea such happenings had led to riot and disaster. The people of the country did indeed soon have many grievances to show: and some like Yang Kuei-fei, the mistress of Ming Huang.<sup>2</sup> Yet, for all this discontent, great was the sheltering power of her master's love that none dared molest her.

Her father, who had been a Councillor, was dead. Her mother, who near the father was in his day a man of some consequence, managed despite to give her as good an upbringing as good fortune falls to the lot of young parents are alive and at the height of her life. It would have helped matters there had been some fatherly guardian to busy himself on the child's training. Unfortunately, she was entirely alone in the world and sometimes, she felt very bitterly the lack of anyone to whom she could turn for comfort and advice. **But to return to the daughter.** In due time she had a little Prince who, perhaps because in some previous life a close bond had been formed between them, turned out as fine and likely a man-child as well might be in all the world. The Emperor could hardly contain himself during the days of waiting.<sup>3</sup> But at the earliest possible moment, the child was presented at Court, he saw that he did not exaggerate its beauty. His eldest born prince was the son of Lady Fujiwara daughter of the Minister of the Right, and this child was treated by all with the respect due to an undoubted Heir Apparent. **But he was not so fine a new prince;** moreover the Emperor's great affection for the new child made him feel the boy to be in a peculiar sense his own possession. Unfortunately, he was not of the same rank as the courtiers who waited upon him in the Upper Palace; that despite his love for her, and though she wore all the airs of a great lady, he was not without considerable qualms that he now made it his practice to keep her not only when there was to be some entertainment, but even when any great importance was afoot. Sometimes indeed he would keep her when he was in the morning, not letting her go to her lodging, so that willy-nilly she became a part of a **Life of perpetual-Attendance.**

Humour emphasises the conversational **tone** which is used in creating commentary about events and characters according to the **context** of the piece.

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The paragraph below is an example of a paragraph of analysis that responds to the question and evaluates how it relates to Women in Literature.

### Example of Analysis

Shows awareness of genre **conventions**



Awareness of how structure can shape meaning as well as language

From the first line of the passage, 'At the Court of an Emperor', it becomes clear that *The Tale of Genji* will be preoccupied with the politics and social structures of the Japanese imperial court. Although the setting of this might be unfamiliar to modern, Western readers, the focus on 'issues' similar to much of the *Women in Literature* text, such as social expectations, class, and social status. The class conflict is immediately presented through the description of Genji, 'not of very high rank' but 'favoured far beyond all the rest', a woman raised above her station by the affections of the emperor. To this shirking of societal norms and expectations, particularly of her status, she is reviled by much of the court, and especially other women. In modern times, there are many discussions about the girl hate and internalised misogyny in how antagonistic relations female characters are presented, but for women in the olden days, their security and prosperity often relied entirely upon men due to their rights and societal status, this antagonism might be more easily understood. This conflict of class and status can also be found in the writing style where conversational asides such as 'he lived it matters not who' are interspersed throughout long and complex sentences. It presents a flow of gossip among the high-ranking members of the court, the kind of flow when the emperor focuses his attention on someone deemed deserving of them.



### Exam Tip

Don't panic! There is a piece of the passage which you don't understand. As long as the question is not asking you to provide a plot summary of the unseen extract or to analyse a specific sentence, it is perfectly fine to avoid mentioning a sentence or paragraph whose meaning you do not understand.

Complete the activities below to gain a greater understanding of how the example paragraph identifies and analyses meaning in the unseen extract.



### Activities: Analysis in Action

- 1) Look at the first and last sentences of the paragraph. What is the analysis reaches about the context of the setting in relation to the extract?
- 2) Could the final sentence of the paragraph be improved or strengthened? Write your conclusion clearly. Use your ideas to update the final sentence of the paragraph.
- 3) Split the example analysis into two paragraphs, with the second paragraph focusing on the conflict of class and status. Can you also find this conflict in the writing of the passage? Expand each of the new smaller paragraphs into two paragraphs of analysis that discuss the presentation of societal norms and class in the passage from *The Tale of Genji*.

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We have provided a second unseen extract, also from *The Tale of Genji*. Read it together as you go such as those included with the previous extract, and then complete the

### Second Extract from *The Tale of Genji* by Murasaki Shikibu (circa 1000)

Sitting near the middle pillar, a sutra-book propped upon a stool by her side, a nun. She was reading aloud; there was a look of great unhappiness in her face. She was to be about forty; not a woman of the common people. Her skin was white and though she was somewhat plump, there was a certain roundness and freshness about her cheeks. Her hair, clipped short on a level with her eyes, hung in so delicate a mass over her brow that she looked, thought Genji, more elegant and even faster in convent guise, than if her hair had been long. Two very well-conditioned arms were upon her. Several little girls came running in and out of the room at play. There was one who seemed to be about ten years old. She came running into the room in a rather worn white frock lined with stuff of a deep saffron colour. Never had Genji seen like this. What an astonishing creature she would grow into! Her hair, though short, stood out fan-wise about her head. She was very flushed and her lips were red. 'Is it? Have you quarrelled with one of the other little girls?' The nun raised her voice and spoke and Genji fancied that there was some resemblance between her and the child. 'No doubt she was its mother. 'Inu has let out my sparrow—the little one that was in the clothes-basket,' she said, looking very unhappy. 'What a tiresome boy that is! One of the two maids. 'He deserves a good scolding for laying such a stupid charge on me. I have got to? And this after we have taken so much trouble to tame it nicely. The crows have not four legs!' and so saying she left the room. She was a woman, of the common sort, with long, wavy hair. The others called her Nurse Shōnagon. 'What is the charge of the child. 'Come,' said the nun to the little girl, 'you must be a baby. You are thinking all the time of things that do not matter at all. Just when I am so ill that any day I may be taken from you, you do not trouble me, but are grieving about a sparrow. It is very unkind, particularly as I do not know how many times that it is naughty to shut up live things in cages here!' and the child sat down beside her. Her features were very exquisite, all the way her hair grew, in cloudy masses over her temples, but thrust back in a fashion from her forehead, that struck him as marvellously beautiful. As he wondered what she would be like when she grew up it suddenly occurred to him that she bore no small resemblance to one whom he had loved with all his being, and in that resemblance he secretly wept.

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Complete the activities below. They are related to the second unseen extract and about writing a critical analysis on a passage you have not seen before.



### Activities: Close-reading Skills

- 1) Consider the descriptions of the different female characters in these tell us about context and character?
- 2) In pairs, discuss what you think the purpose is of:
  - the nun being identified as the girl's mother
  - the young girl looking similar to the narrator's former love
- 3) What might the significance of the nun's words, 'It is naughty cages' be in relation to the passage and the wider convention?



### Activities: Links with Topic Conventions

- 1) What is the effect of this passage being written by a female author from the perspective of a male character? Discuss your ideas in pairs or groups.
- 2) *The Tale of Genji* has been translated into English several times, and this resource uses the translation by Arthur Whaley that was produced in 1925. In groups, discuss the following question and write down your ideas: How can translation affect the presentation of and reader response to a piece of literature?
- 3) **Extension Task:** Take your ideas from the previous activity and write a paragraph discussing how the topic of translation might relate to and tie into the discussions surrounding, and explored in, *Women in Literature*.

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# Practice Essay Questions

These questions have been written in the style of the A Level OCR English Literature some of the second unseen extracts used in this resource. Using the close-reading studying the unseen extract sections, as well as referring back to the introductory advice, write full-length essay responses to each of these questions. Use the table to assemble your points as you plan your answer using the essay subtopics as suggested.

- 1) Using your close-reading skills and contextual knowledge of Women in Literature, write a critical analysis of the extract from Jane Chan's *The School for Good Mothers* on page 8.
- 2) Analyse the meanings contained in the extract from Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, commenting on the writer's use of language, presentation of theme and how they relate to your knowledge of Women in Literature.
- 3) Using your close-reading skills and contextual knowledge of Women in Literature, write a critical analysis of the extract from Lisa Allen Agostini's *The Bread the Devil Knead* on page 18.
- 4) Write a critical analysis of the extract from Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness*, making reference to the effects produced on the reader by the text and how they relate to the conventions of Women in Literature.
- 5) Using your close-reading skills and contextual knowledge of Women in Literature, write a critical analysis of the extract from *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott on page 28.
- 6) Using your close-reading skills and contextual knowledge of Women in Literature, write a critical analysis of the extract from Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth* on page 33.
- 7) Write a critical analysis of the extract from *A Girl of the Limberlost* by Gene Scowen, making reference to the effects produced on the reader by the text and how they relate to the conventions of Women in Literature.
- 8) Analyse the meanings contained in the extract from Emily Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper* on page 43, commenting on the writer's use of language, presentation of theme and how they relate to your knowledge of Women in Literature.
- 9) Write a critical analysis of the extract from Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, making reference to the effects produced on the reader by the text and how they relate to your knowledge of Women in Literature.
- 10) Using your close-reading skills and contextual knowledge of Women in Literature, write a critical analysis of the extract from *The Tale of Genji* by Murasaki Shikibu on page 53.

Essay subtopics / 'paragraph titles'	Quotations (aim to include at least two quotations per paragraph)
(theme)	
(characterisation)	
(presentation of setting)	
(use of imagery and symbolism)	
(influence of contextual factors)	

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# Supporting Materials

## A10 Checklist

### OCR A Level Student Self-reflection Scheme

This mark scheme is given in the AOs and the OCR mark scheme and combines them. You should use it to help you to reflect on your work and to ensure that you are working to the highest standards.

Level		Level 1	Level 2
Key words		Irrelevant, undeveloped, inaccurate	Limited understanding, inconsistent
AO1	I demonstrate my knowledge of the texts		
AO1	I present an effective and sustained argument in my writing		
AO1	I use literary terminology and concepts in my work		
AO1	I express myself clearly and with precision		
AO2	I use the language, form and structure used by the author		
AO2	I use analytical methods in my work		
AO3	I understand the importance of the context in which the texts were written		
AO3	I understand the importance of the context in which the texts were received		

NB: AO4 and AO5 are not marked in Part 1 of the scheme.

Best area: ..... Areas to work on: .....

Teach ..... Id refer to the mark schemes given on the OCR website for marking and to ensure

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# Key Terms Glossary

In this section, we have collated all of the literary and contextual terminology useful when writing informed, detailed answers during the exam. This is not an exhaustive list, but you might find it helpful to add to these lists while you complete independent research.

## Literary Terminology

Allusion	In literary terms, this is a reference that a writer or narrator makes to a pre-existing work
Anaphora	beginning sequential sentences, phrases or clauses with the same word
Antagonist	the opposing force against a narrative's protagonist, which can be another external force
Assonance	repeated use of consecutive vowel sounds for a particular effect
Complex sentence	a sentence which is made especially long either through the use of subordinate clauses or a combination of clauses and commas
Consonance	repeated use of consecutive consonant sounds for a particular effect
Dialect	a variety of language specific to a region, group or social class, which differs from the language and speech patterns of the wider culture that surrounds it
Dichotomy	the presentation of two ideas or groups that are contradictory or mutually exclusive
Epistolary	a style of literature that takes the form of sequential entries in a letter or series of letters
Exclamative sentence	a sentence that ends with an exclamation mark and expresses strong feelings or emotions
Exposition	an explanation of what is going on in the plot of a narrative, often at the beginning
Figurative language	a description of something which is not literally true; examples include metaphors, similes, and hyperbole
Foreshadowing	a suggestion made either explicitly or implicitly by the narrator or characters that something will happen later in the plot
Imagery	descriptive language that is designed to create a mental picture or evoke a sense of atmosphere
Juxtaposition	placing two elements or aspects of a text in close proximity to each other for the purpose of comparison or contrast
Motif	an idea or image that is used throughout a narrative for a particular purpose
Omniscient narrator	a narrative told from the point of view of an external figure who knows everything about the 'omniscient' (possibly the author themselves)
Personification	inanimate or non-human objects and creatures being given human qualities or characteristics
Protagonist	the character which a narrative follows or centres around (the 'main character')
Rhetorical question	a question which does not require an answer, usually because the answer is obvious or the question is meant to make a point
Rule of three	a principle that states that a group of three examples, repetitions or events is more satisfying or effective than one or two
Sibilance	repeated use of consecutive 's' sounds for a particular effect
Stream of consciousness	a narrative style that has been written in the style and patterns of a character's thoughts and feelings
Symbol	a physical thing which is used to represent something else, such as an emotion or a philosophic idea
Tone	the use of word choice, figurative language and other devices to create a particular mood or atmosphere

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## Contextual Terminology

Bodily autonomy	a person's right to control their own body without any outside interference
Class	how members of a society are divided into specific groups based on their level of power or wealth
Context	in terms of literature, the circumstances surrounding the creation of a particular text. These could be historical, social, political, or cultural
Conventions	the features, such as character archetypes, that a work of literature is expected to follow as a genre or tradition
Dehumanisation	the process of denial of a person's human qualities that denies their humanity, often by seeing them as less than human
Feminism	a political movement centred around advocating for social, political, and economic equality for women with the goal of equality
Gender norms	the accepted ideas and expectations of a society or community about how women and men should behave and present themselves
Infantilisation	the act of treating or presenting a person as a child, often to restrict their ability or doubting their capacity to make decisions
Intersectionality	the ways in which different types of discrimination overlap and interact. Effects this can have, e.g. the intersection between sexism and racism
Matriarchy	a social system in which the leading figure (or figures) is a woman or women, or a society
Misandry	a mistrust and hatred of, or prejudice against, men
Misogynoir	the intersection between misogyny and racism that creates a specific form of discrimination against Black women
Misogyny	a mistrust and hatred of, or prejudice against, women
Norms	the behaviours and attitudes that are accepted as standard or typical within a social group
Objectification	a derogatory term in which a person is treated as an object or commodity rather than as a human being
Patriarchy	a society in which men control both the laws of public life (by acting as the primary breadwinners, for example) and the conventions of the home (by acting as the primary decision-makers)
Postpartum depression	a medical diagnosis in which a parent (usually a mother) experiences a period of intense sadness and anxiety after childbirth
Power dynamics	the levels of control or influence different individuals or groups have within a society or community
Privilege	a special right, advantage or immunity that specific individuals or groups have based on their class or social class
Religiosity	the state of being religious or having a religious feeling, devotion, or faith
Social criticism	a critical work that examines social issues, such as injustice, inequality, or corruption, in contemporary society
Societal expectations	the expected behaviours, beliefs and attitudes that individuals are expected to follow and uphold in order to be accepted within a society

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# Indicative Content for A

For each of the questions and activities in this pack, we have included suggested relevant students' answers. This is intended to provide an indication as to the direction which students might take; the more open-ended or debate-based activities; it should not, however, prevent students from thinking creatively about Women in Literature.


Resource Section	Question	Indicative Content			
Unseen Extract 1 – <i>The School for Good Mothers</i>	Analysis : 1. This activity asks for students to form a personal interpretation of the text.	2. This activity asks for students to form a personal interpretation of the text. A change or an expansion might look like: analysing literary techniques to further explore Frida's feelings about the neutral words she uses to describe Harriet's feelings instead of something stronger like <i>demanded</i> . 3. Examples of additional paragraph headings might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Motherhood and beauty standards</li><li>• Use of narrative voice</li><li>• Tension between mother and daughter</li></ul>			
	Close-reading Skills	1. Students are asked to form a personal interpretation of the text, such as context, e.g. real-world support groups and the contrast between the supportive circle and the behaviour of Ms Gibson; or gender norms and forming groups and supporting one another. 2. Students might consider how language choice, or physical actions inform character. They might also consider the perspective as the narrator affects presentation, whether her language towards them is positive or negative. 3. An example response might look like: 'the school for good mothers' focuses on the concept of the nuclear family as they are not seen to fit the norm – centred on a fictitious, exaggerated way. 4. <b>Extension Task:</b> Points of analysis might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Presenting women/mothers with unmet needs</li><li>• Creates an atmosphere of judgement and control</li><li>• Reflects societal (in-text and real-world) expectations and their relationship with their children</li></ul>			
	Links to Topic Conventions	1. An example of a row in a table might be: <table><tr><th>Quotation</th><th>Links to other texts</th></tr><tr><td>'Ms. Gibson asks Alicia and Margaret to confess'</td><td><i>Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit</i> Jeanette and Melanie face pressure from their religious community over their relationship</td></tr></table> 2. This activity asks students to form a personal interpretation of the connotations to different terms of address for and make extra connections about the character based on how they are treated in society from the mothers she's lecturing. Student responses will vary depending on their secondary text they use for comparison. An obvious example is <i>Handmaid's Tale</i> , and of the set and suggested texts are <i>Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit</i> or <i>The Bluest Eye</i> and motherhood, community and conformity, and language.	Quotation	Links to other texts	'Ms. Gibson asks Alicia and Margaret to confess'
Quotation	Links to other texts				
'Ms. Gibson asks Alicia and Margaret to confess'	<i>Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit</i> Jeanette and Melanie face pressure from their religious community over their relationship				

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<div>Unseen Extract 2</div> <div>– <i>Wuthering Heights</i></div> <div></div>	Analysis in Action	<div><ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. An example of a suitable subheading might be ‘<u>Victorian women</u>’ or ‘<u>language choice and character</u>’.</li><li>2. Descriptors students might highlight include: ‘<u>misery</u>’, ‘<u>singing, laughing, and plaguing</u>’, ‘<u>little mistress</u>’, ‘<u>look</u>’, ‘<u>pretended insolence</u>’, or suitable quotation.</li><li>3. An example of how students might expand on good discussions of class, of Cathy being upper class (Nelly) being one of those servants, and how expectations are created in the Victorian era.</li></ol></div>				
	Close-reading Skills	<div><ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Some examples of what students might summarise about: marriage, Cathy’s motivations or expectations or <u>societal expectations</u> towards women, men and children.</li><li>2. Students might consider ideas such as literary analysis, structure of the passage, and language choice, etc. (students might find an analysis in the shift from the conversation progresses), or the use of punctuation <u>exclamative</u> phrases while Nelly does not).</li><li>3. Examples of bullet points might include:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ‘will you keep a secret’ creates a feeling of secrecy, which presents Cathy as still being in the past.</li><li>• ‘handsome and pleasant to be with’ presents her as shallow and concerned with appearances.</li><li>• ‘I have only to do with the present’ suggests Cathy as carefree or even irresponsible when she has the funds and standing to get away from the past.</li></ul></li><li>4. <b>Extension Task:</b> Students might consider ideas such as the relationship, with Cathy turning to Nelly for guidance, station (and, alternatively, having the power to control her own fate), which tells us about Cathy’s character and how she is different from Nelly and needing help or reassurance.</li></ol></div>				
	Link to Prior Learning / Conventions	<div><ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Students might consider ideas such as love, marriage, female relationships/friendships, relationships between men, etc. in the <u>context</u> of the time period.</li><li>2. An example of a row in a table might be:</li></ol><table><tr><th>Feature of Women in Literature</th><th>Relevant Quotation</th></tr><tr><td>Marriage as a key to good social standing</td><td>‘I shall like to be the greatest woman of the neighbourhood’</td></tr></table><div><ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>3. Student responses will vary, but they should remain in paragraphs in a clear and logical manner and use evidence to support their ideas.</li></ol></div></div>	Feature of Women in Literature	Relevant Quotation	Marriage as a key to good social standing	‘I shall like to be the greatest woman of the neighbourhood’
	Feature of Women in Literature	Relevant Quotation				
Marriage as a key to good social standing	‘I shall like to be the greatest woman of the neighbourhood’					



<p><b>Unseen Extract 3</b> – <i>The Bread the Devil Knead</i></p>	<p>Analysis in Action</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. PEE is achieved in the sentence: <i>Her defiance is in statements such as ‘I don’t care’ and ‘if he beats the use of first-person perspective inviting the reader to share intimate thoughts and circumstances. (Explanation example analysis that paragraphs don’t always follow the (Point→Evidence→Explanation) but will still contain a point.)</i></li> <li>2. Examples might look like: AO2: Fronting and justification of personal response towards <i>[Alethea]</i> AO1: Exploration of quotations or accurate use of language: <i>will “depreciate” in the eyes of society, a statement that</i> AO3: Links to wider themes within <i>Women in Literature</i>: <i>Alethea can’t fight against is the beauty industry</i></li> <li>3. This activity asks for a personal response from students such as the context of the society Alethea lives in; her ideas and sensibilities (AO3); or expanding on the products and focusing on beauty standards given in an abusive relationship (AO2), perhaps as defined by Leo’s treatment that displays an ownership of her in a patriarchal society’s expectations.</li> </ol>
	<p>Close-reading Skills</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. An example analysis might look like: Jankie – ‘grabbing she breast like two grapefruit’ Jankie has had cosmetic work done. The casualness of her close, comfortable relationship with Alethea about her body.</li> <li>2. Students are asked to form and plan a personal response to consider ideas or conventions such as: control of her brother taking a possessive ownership of her body, the role and importance of marriage in providing a woman with a job and whether it is worth going through difficult decisions surrounding the role and impact of, and childbirth and motherhood on a woman’s life.</li> <li>3. Student responses will vary depending on their interpretation. They should be encouraged to discuss differing interpretations of their ideas.</li> <li>4. <b>Extension Task:</b> Student responses and interpretations should be compared to their previous answers.</li> </ol>
	<p>Links to Topic Conventions</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. An example quotation might be: ‘is either she marries the both of them’ (demonstrating a lack of agency and a sense of ownership over her body from her brother). This shows ideas about women’s bodies, sexuality and agency.</li> <li>2. Student responses will vary depending on their interpretation of the text. They might identify a common thread of men controlling or abusive; or consider ideas such as the role of a husband and how this drives women to stay in abusive relationships, which is reflected in the men in <i>Alethea</i>. They may also have any other ideas or interpretations they have.</li> <li>3. Student responses will vary depending on where they are from. They should use reliable and varied sources.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Unseen Extract 4</b> – <i>The Well of Loneliness</i></p>	<p>Analysis in Action</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students might use the other annotations of the text. An example of an idea students might consider is: <i>Stella’s ‘almost amounting to worship’, which subverts the traditional idea of fathers / men of the house being compared to God or angels.</i></li> <li>2. Students are asked to form and discuss a personal response to the text.</li> </ol>



Unseen Extract 4 – <i>The Well of Loneliness</i> 	Close-reading Skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students are asked to form a personal opinion and justify their response.</li> <li>An example of an analysis students might make is that the text is animalistic and violent with the word choices of 'clawed' and 'bit' in comparison to the women's gentler and more tentative word choices. <u>Societal expectations</u> and <u>gender norms</u>, where men are aggressive and women are the pursuer.</li> <li>An example of an analysis might look like: Stephen is 'strong' in her 'strong' arms, with 'strong' highlighting her physical strength and her position as a source of strength in the scene. However, 'unhappy' suggests an unwillingness to conform with the aggressive description of Roger.</li> <li>Extension Task: Students are asked to form and justify their own interpretation. They should be able to use evidence from the text to support their response.</li> </ol>
	Links to Topic Conventions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student responses may vary. Some themes they might consider include: motherhood; daughterhood; relationships between women; sexuality; exploration of religion; love; forbidden love; and any others that students can identify.</li> <li>Students are asked to form a personal interpretation and justify their response.</li> <li>An example of a comparison might look like: you might compare her to herself – 'she would long to blurt all this out to her tongue-tied, saying nothing at all' – compared to her with Angela as an adult, and the ease with which she can now do so. 'If our love is a sin, then heaven must be full of sins like ours.'</li> </ol>
Unseen Extract 5 – <i>Little Women</i> 	Analysis in Action	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An example of a quotation students could choose is 'The departed kitten, and Meg refused to defend her, only empathising with her and condemning Amy.'</li> <li>Students are asked to form their own interpretation and justify their response.</li> </ol>
	Close-reading Skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some themes students might identify include: the rule of three: 'planning stories, dreaming dreams, and making plans'; Hyperbole: 'An old maid, that's what I'm to be. A spinster, that's what I'm to be.' Direct address: 'Don't laugh at the spinsters, dear! They're just like you, and you'll be one too!'</li> <li>Students are asked to form a personal interpretation and justify their response.</li> <li>Students are asked to form a personal interpretation and justify their response.</li> <li>Students are asked to form and justify an interpretation. Possible responses might consider include: the inclusion of religion in the passage or wider novel; or <u>societal expectations</u> and <u>sacrifice</u>.</li> </ol>
	Links to Topic Conventions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students might consider ideas such as: fixation on marriage; diminishing of a woman's prospects or personhood; <u>expectations</u> for young men and women.</li> <li>Students are asked to form and justify a critical analysis.</li> <li>Student responses will vary depending on where they focus their analysis. They should remember to use reliable and varied sources to support their response.</li> </ol>
Unseen Extract 6 – <i>The House of Mirth</i> 	Analysis in Action	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students are asked to form and justify their own interpretation. They might consider ideas such as: the importance of social context, or providing more context to the text.</li> <li>Students are asked to form their own interpretation and justify their response.</li> <li>Student responses may vary, but they may consider ideas such as: representing wealth or high standing; or the similarity to Selden's (a male character's) perspective.</li> </ol>
	Close-reading Skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An example of an analysis might look like: 'like a cat' creates a sense of insignificance as it presents her as small and insignificant despite searching for it, never able to touch or truly connect.</li> <li>Student responses will vary depending on previous knowledge and understanding for coherence and logical flow in their paragraph plan their argument.</li> <li>This activity asks for a personal interpretation from the text.</li> </ol>

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<p>Unseen Extract 6 – <i>The House of Mirth</i></p>	<p>Links to Topic Conventions</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lily's character arc demonstrates a convention where women are expected to conform to the norms of American high society. It is a statement on the impact of rigid <u>societal expectations</u> on them to isolation and social ruin. It is a statement on the American high society.</li> <li>2. Students are asked to discuss and form a personal interpretation of the <u>conventions</u> of Women's literature such as <u>conventions of society</u>, romance, or relationships.</li> <li>3. Students are asked to discuss and form a personal interpretation of the <u>conventions</u> of Women's literature such as <u>conventions of society</u>, romance, or relationships.</li> </ol>
<p>Unseen Extract 7 – <i>A Girl of the Limberlost</i></p>	<p>Analysis in Action</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students are asked to develop a personal interpretation of the <u>conventions</u> of Women's literature such as <u>conventions of society</u>, romance, or relationships.</li> <li>2. Students are asked to develop a personal interpretation of the <u>conventions</u> of Women's literature such as <u>conventions of society</u>, romance, or relationships.</li> <li>3. Students are asked to develop a personal interpretation of the <u>conventions</u> of Women's literature such as <u>conventions of society</u>, romance, or relationships.</li> </ol>
	<p>Close-reading Skills</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students are asked to develop a personal interpretation of the <u>conventions</u> of Women's literature such as <u>conventions of society</u>, romance, or relationships.</li> <li>2. Students are asked to develop and discuss personal interpretations of the <u>conventions</u> of Women's literature such as <u>conventions of society</u>, romance, or relationships.</li> <li>3. Students are asked to develop a personal interpretation of the <u>conventions</u> of Women's literature such as <u>conventions of society</u>, romance, or relationships.</li> </ol>
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<p>Unseen Extract 8 – <i>The Yellow Wallpaper</i></p>	<p>Analysis in Action</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Examples might look like: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) 'style and structure often play a key role in the portrayal'</li> <li>b) 'This, combined with the <u>epistolary</u> style, makes the most intimate thoughts'</li> <li>c) 'the historical precedent of women being more in a manner of ailments'</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. This question asks students to develop and discuss personal interpretations of the <u>conventions</u> of Women's literature such as <u>conventions of society</u>, romance, or relationships.</li> </ol>
	<p>Close-reading Skills</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Student discussions may vary, but an example might be 'no wonder!' creates a sense of forceful vindication (is) proved right despite her theories clearly having passed.</li> <li>2. Students are asked to form a personal interpretation of the <u>conventions</u> of Women's literature such as <u>conventions of society</u>, romance, or relationships.</li> <li>3. Student responses will vary depending on the topic to explore in a critical appreciation.</li> <li>4. Student responses will vary according to the previous question.</li> </ol>


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Unseen Extract 10 – <i>The Tale of Genji</i>	Links to Topic Conventions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students are asked to develop and discuss their own opinion on any wider discussions they know of about Women in Literature <u>conventions</u>.</li> <li>2. Students are asked to develop and discuss their own opinion on wider discussions about translations and translated works. Wilson's recent translations of <i>The Odyssey</i> and <i>The Iliad</i> ask a woman to write an official translation of these texts, and how this affects translations and the discussions around them.</li> <li>3. Students are asked to develop their own interpretations, with their ideas from the previous activity.</li> </ol>
Essay Practice Questions	Questions 1–10 	There is no additional content provided for these essay questions. The same criteria outlined in the 'Essay Practice' questions are used, as by how well students use textual quotation, interpretation and knowledge of Women in Literature to meet the three assessment objectives outlined in the introduction of this resource (AO1, AO2, AO3).

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