

***Dr Jekyll & Mr Hyde* Revision lesson 3. Study focus: language**

Learning context

Students often approach a question on language with a prepared list of devices they are determined to identify in what they read. This can help weaker students to remember some technical features that may show some specialist knowledge. However, more successful responses show the ability to connect expression with purpose, meaning and effect. Students need to show why the writer has made specific language choices and what effect those choices have on the text and on the reader.

Teaching focus

This lesson reinforces the skills progression from the core skills of *select and retrieve* to the more developed skill of *explain*, then to the more sophisticated skills of *exploration, interpretation and analysis*.

The lesson prompts students to notice Stevenson's purposeful patterning in words and ideas, and in words and feelings. It also reinforces their understanding of how dialogue can be made a strong feature of individual characterization. By highlighting the key skills of literary reading assessment, the lesson prepares them to answer examination questions on language as part of Stevenson's craft and presentation.

Lesson sequence

1 Students read the passage silently, annotating anything they don't understand*, then teacher reads aloud. (*This could be homework preparation for the lesson.)

2 Students discuss in pairs/groups anything they found difficult to understand. Teacher explains.

Inside Mr Hyde's house from Chapter 4

It was by this time about nine in the morning, and the first fog of the season. A great chocolate-coloured pall lowered over heaven, but the wind was continually charging and routing these embattled vapours; so that as the cab crawled from street to street, Mr. Utterson beheld a marvellous number of degrees and hues of twilight; for here it would be dark like the back-end of evening; and there would be a glow of a rich, lurid brown, like the light of some strange conflagration; and here, for a moment, the fog would be quite broken up, and a haggard shaft of daylight would glance in between the swirling wreaths. The dismal quarter of Soho seen under these changing glimpses, with its muddy ways, and slatternly passengers, and its lamps, which had never been extinguished or had been kindled afresh to combat this mournful re-invasion of darkness, seemed, in the lawyer's eyes, like a district of some city in a nightmare. The thoughts of his mind, besides, were of the gloomiest dye; and when he glanced at the companion of his drive, he was conscious of some touch of that terror of the law and the law's officers, which may at times assail the most honest.

As the cab drew up before the address indicated, the fog lifted a little and showed him a dingy street, a gin palace, a low French eating-house, a shop for the retail of penny numbers and twopenny salads, many ragged children huddled in the doorways, and many women of different nationalities passing out, key in hand, to have a morning glass; and the next moment the fog settled down again upon that part, as brown as umber, and cut him off from his blackguardly surroundings. This was the home of Henry Jekyll's favourite; of a man who was heir to a quarter of a million sterling.

An ivory-faced and silvery-haired old woman opened the door. She had an evil face, smoothed by hypocrisy; but her manners were excellent. Yes, she said, this was Mr. Hyde's, but he was not at home; he had been in that night very late, but had gone away again in less than an hour; there was nothing strange in that; his habits were very irregular, and he was often absent; for instance, it was nearly two months since she had seen him till yesterday.

"Very well, then, we wish to see his rooms," said the lawyer; and when the woman began to declare it was impossible, "I had better tell you who this person is," he added. "This is Inspector Newcomen of Scotland Yard." A flash of odious joy appeared upon the woman's face. "Ah!" said she, "he is in trouble! What has he done?" Mr. Utterson and the inspector exchanged glances. "He don't seem a very popular character," observed the latter. "And now, my good woman, just let me and this gentleman have a look about us."

In the whole extent of the house, which but for the old woman remained otherwise empty, Mr. Hyde had only used a couple of rooms; but these were furnished with luxury and good taste. A closet was filled with wine; the plate was of silver, the napery elegant; a good picture hung upon the walls, a gift (as Utterson supposed) from Henry Jekyll, who was much of a connoisseur; and the carpets were of many plies and agreeable in colour. At this moment, however, the rooms bore every mark of having been recently and hurriedly ransacked; clothes lay about the floor, with their pockets inside out; lock-fast drawers stood open; and on the hearth there lay a pile of grey ashes, as though many papers had been burned. From these embers the inspector disinterred the butt-end of a green cheque-book, which had resisted the action of the fire; the other half of the stick was found behind the door; and as this clinched his suspicions, the officer declared himself delighted. A visit to the bank, where several thousand pounds were found to be lying to the murderer's credit, completed his gratification.

"You may depend upon it, sir," he told Mr. Utterson: "I have him in my hand. He must have lost his head, or he never would have left the stick or, above all, burned the cheque-book. Why, money's life to the man. We have nothing to do but wait for him at the bank, and get out the handbills."

This last, however, was not so easy of accomplishment; for Mr. Hyde had numbered few familiars—even the master of the servant-maid had only seen him twice; his family could nowhere be traced; he had never been photographed; and the few who could describe him differed widely, as common observers will. Only on one point, were they agreed; and that was the haunting sense of unexpressed deformity with which the fugitive impressed his beholders.

Discuss or Write about the following:

3 Select and retrieve (textual detail)

3a) Which words in paragraph 1 suggest a war-like violence in the weather?

3b) Which phrase in paragraph 1 conveys the weakness of the light in getting through the fog?

4 Explain (extended textual detail)

4a) What impression does Stevenson create by describing "ragged" children "huddling" in doorways?

4b) What details support the description of the rooms as "furnished with luxury and good taste"?

Explain (language, purpose and effect)

4c) How does Stevenson create a "dismal" impression of Soho?

4d) How does Stevenson convey the housekeeper's dislike of Mr Hyde?

Interpret, explore, analyse (writer's craft and effects on readers)

5a) Language in narrative

What is the common feature of narrative sentence structure in the following three sentences from the extract?

1 A great chocolate-coloured pall lowered over heaven, but the wind was continually charging and routing these embattled vapours; so that as the cab crawled from street to street, Mr. Utterson beheld a marvellous number of degrees and hues of twilight; for here it would be dark like the back-end of evening; and there would be a glow of a rich, lurid brown, like the light of some strange conflagration; and here, for a moment, the fog would be quite broken up, and a haggard shaft of daylight would glance in between the swirling wreaths.

2 A closet was filled with wine; the plate was of silver, the napery elegant; a good picture hung upon the walls, a gift (as Utterson supposed) from Henry Jekyll, who was much of a connoisseur; and the carpets were of many plies and agreeable in colour.

3 This last, however, was not so easy of accomplishment; for Mr. Hyde had numbered few familiars—even the master of the servant-maid had only seen him twice; his family could nowhere be traced; he had never been photographed; and the few who could describe him differed widely, as common observers will.

5b) Language in dialogue:

What is the common feature of dialogue sentence structure in the following three sentences from the extract?

"Very well, then, we wish to see his rooms,"

"I had better tell you who this person is. This is Inspector Newcomen of Scotland Yard."

"Ah! he is in trouble! What has he done?"

"He don't seem a very popular character,"

"And now, my good woman, just let me and this gentleman have a look about us."

Support (knowledge & understanding)

Gloss: conflagration – big fire, swirling wreaths – moving round patches of fog, slatternly – like a dirty and untidy woman, haggard – worn out and unwell, blackguardly – criminal, kindled – lit up, ignited, assail - attack, penny numbers and twopenny salads – cheap magazines and cheap takeaway snacks, napery – household linen, odious – repulsive, ugly and unpleasant, connoisseur – an expert, disinterred – dug up.

Fill background: Look up Soho as an area Victorian London's West End with a history of entertainment, prostitution and cheap housing for poor immigrants.

Reinforce: Select details from three internal settings which Stevenson describes in the novella.

Stretch (independently developed knowledge & understanding)

Compare the description of London weather in this extract with the description of the same in Dickens' *Bleak House* (Chapter 1)