The Yellow Wallpaper

**by Charlotte Perkins Gilman written in 1892**

With a partner, divide up the questions and do some research on the author, the attitudes towards women’s mental health in the 1800’s, and the genre of Gothic literature. **Point form is encouraged!**

1. What significant events would have influenced the author’s writing? <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/charlotte-anna-perkins-gilman>

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1. Read the sections on 1. *The Nervous Breakdown* 2. *Hysteria* 3. *The Resting Cure* and answer the following questions: (*note: the terms and particular scientists are not relevant. We are only looking to understand the historical and scientific context of which the story takes place)* [*https://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk*](https://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/objects-and-stories/medicine/nerves-neuroses#:~:text=The%20rest%20cure%20was%20a,rich%20in%20milk%20and%20meat.)
   1. What was *hysteria*? Why were women considered prone to this condition and what was the common treatment?
   2. What is the *resting cure*?
   3. How did society view women in the 17th and 18th century?

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**Focus Concepts**: Point of view, imagery, symbolism, Feminist lens, irony

**Discuss and then answer in writing. Please bold or use a different font colour so your answer stands out from the question. A mix of point form and full sentences is encouraged.**

1. Record at least 5 key words or phrases that reflect a traditional gothic **setting**.
2. What **elements** of Gothic fiction is exhibited in this story?
3. The yellow wallpaper is a central image in the story. Explain its significance and its symbolism including the colour yellow. What is the relationship of light and dark in the story?
4. Discuss the style of writing and the point of view. Why use first person narrative? Given her condition, can any of the protagonist’s opinions about John and Jennie be trusted?
5. What comments does the story seem to offer on the “resting cure” when treating depression?
6. How does the text reinforce or undermine gender stereotypes? How does the text reflect social gender codes in 1892? Find quotes that reflect your answer and copy THREE of your best examples below then answer the question.

Post Writing

One essential question for our Gothic unit is “*How does Gothic literature reflect the human condition*?” So, how does this story reflect the human condition? Answer in a detailed, but short paragraph. Word count is between 100-150 words with one correct MLA formatted quote.

**Optional Challenge:**

Can you synthesize the poem [The Sick Rose](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/48634/eldorado-56d22a0920778) with this story? How do these sources reflect the feminine experience in the Victorian era? *(Try deconstructing this poem on your own first, then feel free to do some google searches to expand your understanding)*