

Edexcel English Literature GCSE

Dr Jekyll & Mr Hyde

Glossary of Key Terms



Jekyll & Hyde Glossary - Edexcel English Lit GCSE

Techniques - Language

Allusion - An indirect reference to a concept or theme without explicit mention.

[Stevenson uses allusions, both biblical - "I incline to Cain's heresy" (Utterson) - and classical - "captives of Philippi" in order to resonate with his readership and convey new meanings]

Antithesis - Rhetorical device where contrasting concepts are placed together in a text, typically a sentence, to highlight how opposite they are.

Conjecture - Formulating a conclusion based on incomplete information.

[Utterson makes several incorrect assumptions throughout the text, especially about Jekyll's situation.]

Connotation - Using text to create implied meaning without explicitly referring to said meaning.

[Stevenson attaches ominous and gothic connotations to the character's names, the settings, and events throughout his book, so that the reader can create assumptions about the characters and occurrences in the novel.]

Euphemism - Replacement of a crude or offensive expression with a vague / mild one.

Interjection - Sudden remark, used often as an interruption or aside in the text.

["God forgive us" - Utterson; "Foul Play!" - Utterson; "Ay!" - Utterson.]

Hyperbole - Use of exaggerated statements.

[Utterson uses a lot of hyperbole in his speech, which contrasts with his supposedly rational, logical mindset as a lawyer, which emphasises his observations.]

Mythopoetic - Reference to myths; the use of storytelling to lead to self-understanding for a group or individual.

Semantic Field - A writer uses words which are linked by a theme or topic throughout a text or passage.

Pathetic Fallacy - Attributing human qualities to nonhuman things.

Metonymy - A figure of speech used to refer to an object, concept or person.

[For example, 'long tongue' is used by Utterson to refer to his story.]

Foreshadowing - An indication that an event will occur later in the narrative.

[For example, Lanyon could be argued to be used as a tool to foreshadow the end of the novella, when he mentions how "Jekyll became too fanciful for me."]



Symbolism - Using one object or character to represent a wider concept running throughout the novel.

[For example, the laboratory cabinet door could symbolize transformation.]

Epitome - The perfect / ultimate embodiment of a quality.

Irony - Embedding a meaning by using language typically implying the opposite of what the writer is intending to express, often for a humorous effect.

Satire - Criticizing people through the use of humour or irony.

Sibilance - Repetition of 's' sounds.

Juxtaposition - Comparing two concepts, characters, or clauses, in close proximity in a passage for the effect of contrast.

Foreboding - Apprehension that a bad event will occur.

Tricolon - Three parallel phrases / words are placed in succession within a text, without interruption.

Biblical - Relating to the bible; religious connotations.

Syntactic - Relating to the arrangement of words within a sentence within a text.

Auditory imagery - Language which appeals to the reader's hearing.

Temporal deixis - Language which references or manipulates time.

Olfactory imagery - Appeals to the reader's sense of smell.

Oxymoron - Two opposing terms are placed next to each other.

Alliteration - Repetition of the same sound, usually letter in close succession.

Archetype - A common character type who possesses traits typical of their role.

Colloquialism - An informal phrase common at its time of utterance.

Anaphora - A word which refers to a previously used word.



Techniques - Structure

Unreliable narrator - A biased narrator character who provides information which is not necessarily correct.

[In Jekyll & Hyde, the majority of the novel is told from the point of view of Utterson, alongside the accounts and letters of other characters.]

Epistolary - A narrative told through letters and diary entries.

[There is an element of the epistolary format in Stevenson's novel, as Utterson's perspective is supplemented by Enfield's story of the door, maid's account of the Carew incident, Lanyon's story, and Jekyll's confession.]

Parallelism - The use of grammatically identical / similar components repeated in a sentence or multiple sentences.

[For example, "Jekyll, My life, my honour, my reason, depend on you [...] Lanyon, my life, my honour, my reason, are all at your mercy" - however there is an overarching parallelism in the form of the contrast of Jekyll: good and Hyde: Evil.]

Dichotomy - Contrast of two beings that are opposed or distinctly different.

[In Jekyll & Hyde, Stevenson uses Dichotomy to highlight how the evil and good side of humans need to exist in balance - Hyde is unable to survive as a purely evil character.]

Novella - Short novel, roughly 20,000 - 40,000 words.

[Jekyll & Hyde has roughly 27,500 words so fits into this length bracket.]

Foil - A character which serves to contrast another, to emphasise certain characteristics of the other character.

[Hyde qualifies as Jekyll's literary foil, but also Lanyon is a foil to Jekyll, showing that there are disagreements within science, and Enfield is a foil to Utterson, showing that people can be inactive and not tempted to follow their curiosity. This adds diversity to the character ensemble.]

Fin de siècle - End of a century.

[Jekyll & Hyde has been written as part of the fin de siècle gothic genre]

Conventional Detective Novel - Subgenre of mystery & crime fiction, typically featuring a hero who is the investigator of the case and who eventually uncovers the truth.

Expository tool - Providing all the background information required to understand the forthcoming plot and the characters involved.

Inverse iconic word order - This is basically an inverted sentence, for example having the subject placed before the verb, normally used to structure a question.

Nonlinear narrative - The events are depicted in a non-chronological order.



Key Vocabulary

Debased - Reduced in value.

[Jekyll becomes increasingly debased as he becomes morally corrupt and merges into Hyde throughout the novella.]

Terror - A feeling of anticipation and dread observed before an experience which induces horror.

Horror - Feeling of revulsion after a frightening experience.

Moral - Awareness of the principles of right and wrong conduct.

[Morality is a key theme which Stevenson explores and encourages his readership to consider.]

Duality - Simultaneously displaying two halves, with the two halves often being opposite meanings.

[Key theme in Jekyll & Hyde - Stevenson particularly engages with the duality of good and evil.]

Duplicitous - State of being deceitful.

Moral Myopia - Being unable to see ethical issues clearly.

Multifaceted - Having many outlets.

Dissociate - Separate.

Gemellology - Scientific study of twins.

[A lot of research into the nature of twins and the connection between twins can be applied to the characters of Jekyll and Hyde, and their relationship.]

Shilling Shocker - Cheap fiction popular in late Victorian England, which typically dealt with themes of crime / violence.

[When Jekyll & Hyde was initially released, many critics declared it to be simply a Shilling Shocker.]

Darwinism - Theory of evolution of species.

Agnostic - Thinking that nothing is known to prove or disprove the existence of God.

Pious - Devoutly religious.

Victorian Gentleman - A man in Victorian society who didn't have to work, and was required to adhere to a strict set of social rules.



[By setting Jekyll & Hyde against the background of high Victorian society, moral questions, instead of basic questions relating to survival, can be forced into the limelight, such as the struggle between good and evil.]

Doppelganger - The double of someone already living.

Basal - Essential or fundamental.

Contemporary reader - Someone reading the book at the time it was published.

Catharsis - Relief derived from releasing repressed emotion.

Gothic convention - Stylistic characteristics of some texts, such as horror, terror, and the supernatural, which place it in the gothic genre.

Fatalistic - All events are inevitable as they have been predetermined.

Omnipotent - All powerful.

Troglodytic - A repulsive person who is solitary and acts eccentrically within a society.

Human Psyche - All of the human mind, inclusive of the conscious and unconscious.

Augment - Increase the value of something.

Subsume - Absorb one thing into something else.

Idiosyncrasies - Behaviour of an individual which is peculiar.

[It could be thought that a lot of Jekyll & Hydes individual behaviours are very strange, so that they have idiosyncratic personalities.]

Transmorphism - A transformation from one thing to another.

Hedonistic - The self-indulgent life, which is dedicated to seeking pleasure.

Physiognomy - The practice of viewing an individual's facial expression or characteristics as indicative of their character.

Atavism - Reverting to something primitive.

[In Jekyll & Hyde, this is used in the sense of criminology - Hyde displays atavistic traits.]

Freudian slip - An error, usually in speech but sometimes in action, which reveals unconscious thoughts and desires.

Liminality - Used to describe something in an intermediate state, unable to be defined as one or the other.

