

AQA English Literature GCSE

Jekyll and Hyde: Themes *Silence*

This work by [PMT Education](https://www.pmt.education) is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/)



Silence

When thinking about the theme of silence it is best to consider what is left **uncommunicated** between characters. Silence can be seen to be the product of a repressive Victorian society which champions repression over honesty.

The form of the novella exemplifies the theme of silence. Despite the characters being given the role of narrators within the text they are ultimately silent about what is taking place. **Most information is revealed in documents** and not through the main narrative characters. Indeed, most of the revelations are in the last two chapters rather than through conversations such as the speculations of Enfield and Utterson.



Characters often refuse to discuss anything that might be damaging to their or someone else's reputation.

- Mr Enfield says that **“the more it looks like Queer Street, the less I ask”**. If someone is on Queer Street then they are facing difficulty of some form, usually financial. Mr Enfield is saying that the more it looks like someone is facing difficulty, the less he prys. “Queer street” is an example of a colloquialism so shows that the sentiment is an intrinsic aspect of Mr Enfield to the point that it has entered his idiolect.
- Later in the chapter, Mr Enfield chastises his **“long tongue”**. This phrase shows he is criticising himself for gossiping and should instead stay silent with his opinions. This shows that whilst many characters claim to avoid gossiping and prying into other people's business they will do so anyway, especially in the presence of people they trust.

Can you find more examples of where silence is present between characters?

