

Jane Eyre Synthesis Essay

Respond to one (1) of the following prompts with a thoughtful, well-supported multi-paragraph essay:

Option #1

In the novel *Jane Eyre*, Jane constantly describes herself as “plain,” yet Edward Rochester doesn’t see her that way at all. We hear that “Beauty is in the eye of the beholder,” but there appears to be a standard of beauty that most people seem to agree on in any particular culture or context. (In the Victorian era, that standard had more to do with the size and shape of one’s forehead than it does today, but we still seem to have a cultural obsession with the size and shape of other body parts.) **How do people determine beauty? What is beautiful? Write an essay in which you define beauty.** Use information presented in the novel and the supporting texts to support your definition and reasons and to provide examples. Make sure to use evidence from multiple sources (not just the novel), and make sure you cite the sources when you use them.

Option #2

“You can’t judge a book by its cover.” We hear that all the time, yet the truth seems to be that many people *do* judge others by appearance. However, beauty can be both a blessing and a curse. **Write an essay in which you explain how appearance contributes to the way people are perceived and treated, in both positive and negative ways.** Use information presented in the novel and the supporting texts to support your points and to provide examples. Make sure to use evidence from multiple sources (not just the novel), and make sure you cite the sources when you use them.

Option #3

Often there is a conflict between intellect and beauty. For example, we have all heard the “dumb blonde” jokes where the beautiful blonde lacks understanding of the world around her because she just isn’t smart enough. Jane Eyre is not a beautiful woman, yet she is witty, intelligent, and passionate. **Write an essay in which you address this question: Is the conflict between beauty and intelligence impossible to avoid?** If you believe it is impossible to avoid, explain why. If you believe it can be avoided, explain how. Either way, use information from the novel and the supporting texts to support your points and to provide examples. Make sure to use evidence from multiple sources (not just the novel), and make sure you cite the sources when you use them.

Sources:

Jane Eyre by Charlotte Brontë (novel)
“Pretty Beyond Belief” by Amy Tan (essay)
“Phenomenal Woman” by Maya Angelou

Hints:

Maintain third-person point of view: While this may be a very personal topic, it is not to be an essay about you. It should not merely be an extended journal reflection or narrative from your life.

Teach; don’t preach: This is not an opportunity to tell us how we should behave or how things would be in a perfect world. Avoid the “solemn vapors” of righteous morality and make your point by using logical evidence from the sources and sound reasoning.

While there are certain standards all essays must meet, this one should reflect thinking that goes beyond the “formula” of academic writing. A more thoughtful and creative approach is encouraged! Consider how these texts relate to the modern world and how they might inform our experience. Write something that addresses the prompt completely but does not sound like every other essay in the class.