

# YEAR 8 AUTUMN TERM KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER:







## THE MONSTER IN THE MIRROR

### THE YELLOW WALLPAPER BY CHARLOTTE PERKINS-GILMAN



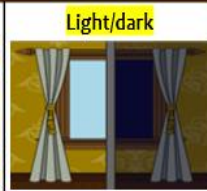


**Plot Overview:** Set in 1890's New England, Charlotte Perkins Gilman's classic short story, "The Yellow Wallpaper" tells the story of a young woman's gradual descent into psychosis.

#### Key Characters

Plot Summary	
<b>Beginning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The unnamed narrator begins her journal entry describing at the house and grounds her husband has taken her to for the summer due to her nervous depression.</li> <li>The narrator writes that John, the narrator's husband and doctor, mocks her illness and her perspective.</li> <li>John has prescribed the 'rest cure' treatment.</li> <li>The narrator reveals that she disagrees, and feels that activity, freedom and interesting work would help her condition. She begins her secret journal for this reason.</li> <li>The narrator notes how the house used to be beautiful but has been neglected for years due to its emptiness.</li> <li>At the very top floor of the house, the narrator finds what she assumes is a nursery with yellow wallpaper. The strange pattern disturbs the narrator.</li> </ul>
<b>Middle</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As the weeks pass, the narrator manages to hide her journal from her husband.</li> <li>The narrator writes about her frustration with John's treatment choice- the rest cure. She takes a new interest in the yellow wallpaper.</li> <li>John worries about her strange obsession and refuses to re-paper the room.</li> <li>The narrator describes her bedroom and assumes it was used as a nursery due to the paper being torn off in spots, the huge scratches on the floor and the furniture being fixed to the wall.</li> <li>John's sister, Jennie, who is also staying with them as a housekeeper and nurse, keeps interrupting the narrator's writing.</li> <li>The Fourth of July passes. The narrator writes that her family came to visit which made her very tired.</li> <li>John threatens to send her to Weir Mitchell: the fearsome real-life doctor who treated the author and caused her great suffering.</li> <li>The narrator reveals in her journal that she is alone most of the time and often studies the wallpaper because she finds it entertaining.</li> <li>The narrator shares that she starts to see a woman 'stooping down and creeping' behind the pattern on the wallpaper which, at nighttime, looks like the bars of a cage.</li> <li>John thinks his wife's condition is improving but the narrator is barely sleeping and believes she can smell the wallpaper over the house.</li> <li>The narrator reaches the conclusion that there is a woman trapped in the wallpaper at night and escapes during the day.</li> </ul>
<b>End</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suspecting that John and Jennie know of her obsession, the narrator decides to destroy the wallpaper by peeling it off during the night.</li> <li>The next day, the narrator goes mad: she bites and tears the paper in order to free the trapped woman.</li> <li>The narrator is hopelessly insane and is convinced that there are many women creeping in the wallpaper. She grabs a chair and a rope to reach more of the paper.</li> <li>The narrator starts to think she has also come out of the wallpaper.</li> <li>John breaks into the locked room and sees her insanity.</li> <li>John faints in the doorway.</li> <li>The narrator 'creeps over him.'</li> </ul>

 <p><b>The Narrator (Jane)</b> Protagonist / narrator / young married woman / a new mother / upper-middle class / suffers with postnatal depression / manipulated / highly imaginative / obsessive.</p>	 <p><b>Doctor John</b> Husband / doctor / practical and logical / attempts to control his wife / dominant / believes in the rest-cure.</p>
 <p><b>Jennie</b> John's sister / housekeeper / traditional / content with performing a domestic role / suspects the narrator is more troubled than she lets on.</p>	 <p><b>The Woman in the Wallpaper</b> A figment of the narrator's imagination / trapped / desperate / prisoner of the wallpaper.</p>
 <p><b>Mary</b> Nurse who looks after the narrator's baby / embraces her domestic role / subservient.</p>	 <p><b>Weir Mitchell</b> Real-life doctor / created the rest-cure / cruel / lack of empathy for women / treated the author in real life.</p>

#### Key Symbols

<b>Wallpaper</b>	<b>Journal</b>	<b>Light/dark</b>
		
<b>The Woman</b>	<b>The Bedroom</b>	
		

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### THE YELLOW WALLPAPER BY CHARLOTTE PERKINS-GILMAN

Context – *The Yellow Wallpaper* written by Charlotte Perkins-Gilman is a semi-autobiographical short story and was published in 1892.

#### Charlotte Perkins-Gilman:

Author / born in 1860 in Connecticut, USA / lived in poverty after her father abandoned her family / moved all over America during her childhood and teenage years / she wasn't allowed to make friends or read books to keep her 'domesticated' for her future husband / eventually, she attended the Rhode Island School of Design and worked briefly as an artist / she suffered from a 'nervous condition' (poor mental health) after the birth of her daughter – we now know this to be postpartum depression / she was prescribed the rest cure / Charlotte Perkins-Gilman used her personal experience to create *The Yellow Wallpaper*



#### Gothic Literature:

Gothic literature is a genre of fiction. Many of the most famous Gothic novels were written during the Victorian period (1900s). Gothic literature can be recognised by the following conventions: darkness / night, power vs powerlessness, imprisonment, uncertainty, death, madness, phobias, an innocent victim, good vs evil, an isolated or abandoned setting, supernatural beings, romance and the uncanny.

*The Yellow Wallpaper* is Gothic story, as it includes the following conventions: an isolated setting, imprisonment, power vs powerlessness, the uncanny, uncertainty and madness.



#### Silas Weir Mitchell:

An American doctor, scientist, novelist and poet. He pioneered the rest-cure to treat women who suffered from 'nervous conditions' such as melancholia and hysteria.

Weir Mitchell treated Charlotte Perkins-Gilman using the rest cure. Gilman described leaving Mitchell's treatment as a 'narrow escape' and used *The Yellow Wallpaper* to expose the truth about this damaging treatment.



#### The Rest Cure:

A form of treatment developed by Weir Mitchell in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and prescribed to women who suffered from 'nervous conditions,' such as melancholia and hysteria. It was a strictly enforced regime of six to eight weeks of bed rest, isolation and forced feeding. No creative or intellectual activity were allowed. Most patients considered the 'cure' to be worse than their original illness.

In *The Yellow Wallpaper*, the rest cure is used forced upon the narrator and has an oppressive and harmful impact on her mental health.



#### Melancholia:

Melancholia / melancholy means a feeling of deep and extreme sadness. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was a term used to describe a 'nervous condition' (what we now know as mental health conditions). It was an illness that caused delusions and hallucinations which often led to the patient being diagnosed with psychosis (insanity). Today, we could refer to this illness as chronic depression or other forms of mental health conditions such as bipolar disorder or schizophrenia.

In *The Yellow Wallpaper*, the narrator suffers from a 'nervous condition', which was based on Charlotte Perkins-Gilman's own experience of 'melancholia'.



#### The Uncanny:

The uncanny is a critical theory that was developed by Sigmund Freud. It refers to a psychological experience where something familiar becomes unfamiliar. This means that the 'familiar' becomes strange, unsettling, or frightening and gives a sense of unease and dread.



#### 19<sup>th</sup> Century Attitudes Towards Mental Health:

Mental health conditions were misunderstood during the 1800s. Society had negative and fearful attitudes towards mental health: people who suffered from poor mental health were stigmatized, thought of as 'mad', 'insane' and often seen as less than human.

Women experiencing poor mental health often experienced the worst treatment. Many were forced to confinement in asylums. Other women were subjected to the rest cure. As a result, treatment was harsh, barbaric and harmful. In *The Yellow Wallpaper*, the narrator is stigmatized and experiences the rest cure.



#### Hysteria:

An outdated medical term for what we now understand to be mild depression or anxiety. Some symptoms included: anxiety, shortness of breath, fainting, nervousness, insomnia, fluid retention, irritability and loss of appetite.

The term 'hysteria' originates from the Greek word 'hystera', meaning 'womb' or 'uterus', reflecting the belief that the uterus was responsible for mental health conditions. We now understand this to be a misogynistic (prejudiced against women) diagnosis, as it led to the belief that women were emotionally fragile. This condition was associated with female patients. The controversial Hysteria Theory was created by Sigmund Freud, the famous Austrian psychoanalyst.

In *The Yellow Wallpaper*, the narrator's behaviour is often described as 'hysterical' by her husband.



#### Big Ideas

##### Patriarchy

A system of society or government in which men hold the power and women are excluded from it.



##### Manipulation

To influence or control another, Usually in an unfair or cruel way.



##### Deceit

The act of convincing one or many people of untrue information by concealing or misrepresenting the facts.



##### Perception

The way in which something is regarded, understood, or interpreted.



##### Trauma

A distressing or Disturbing experience that is overwhelming and leaves a lasting negative impact.









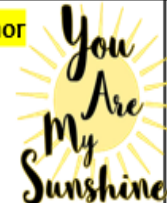




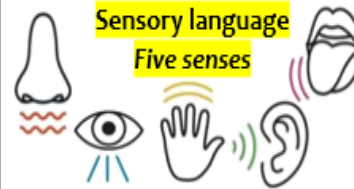


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## TECHNICAL ACCURACY & KEY DEVICES

### 'FOUR FOR MORE'-THE 4-PART SUCCESS STORY

Part	Key Features
<b>SETTING</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce your story by focusing on the <b>setting</b></li> <li>Describe the <b>weather</b> / environment / surroundings / <b>objects</b></li> <li>DEVICES: <b>Personification</b> / <b>pathetic fallacy</b> / symbolism / <b>prepositions</b></li> </ul>
<b>CHARACTER</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe your <b>character(s)</b> within your setting</li> <li><b>One or two characters</b> – keep it minimal</li> <li><b>Craft their actions</b> / behaviour to reflect their personality and emotions</li> <li>DEVICES: <b>Sensory language</b> / <b>similes</b> / <b>metaphors</b> / minimal dialogue</li> </ul>
<b>FLASHBACK</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include a flashback to teach the reader something about your character and / or their world</li> <li><b>Begin this section with a trigger</b></li> <li>This memory should contrast your character's current situation</li> <li>DEVICES: <b>Sensory language</b> / <b>juxtaposition</b> / light imagery / <b>similes</b> / <b>metaphors</b> / symbolism</li> </ul>
<b>RETURN TO THE SCENE</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Begin this section with a trigger that forces your character back to their current world</b></li> <li><b>Offer a glimpse of change</b> / a subtle change to end your story</li> <li>Return to something that you described in your opening paragraph to create a cyclical structure</li> <li>DEVICES: <b>Sensory language</b> / <b>personification</b> / <b>pathetic fallacy</b> / symbolism / <b>cyclical structure</b></li> </ul>







### Device / Feature/ Skill

<b>Metaphor</b> <b>Describing something by stating it is something else</b> 	<b>Anthropomorphism</b> <b>Giving human characteristics or behaviour to a god, animal, or object.</b> 
<b>Juxtaposition</b> <b>Contrasting ideas / images</b> 	<b>Personification</b> <b>Giving living qualities to something non-human</b> 
<b>Show Not Tell</b> <b>Describing a character through their actions and facial expressions</b> 	<b>Sensory language</b> <b>Five senses</b> 
<b>Temporal Reference</b> <b>Using a time reference to indicate a flashback</b> 	<b>Simile</b> <b>Comparing something to something else: 'as', 'like'</b> 



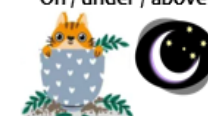



### Tenses

<b>PAST</b> <b>Something that has already happened</b> <b>Had / went / said / walked</b>
<b>PRESENT</b> <b>Something that is currently happening</b> <b>Have / go / say / walk</b>
<b>FUTURE</b> <b>Something that will happen</b> <b>Will have / will go / will say / will walk</b>

### Common Homophones

<b>The</b>  <b>There</b> 
<b>They're</b>
<b>Your</b>  <b>You're</b> 
<b>Its</b>  <b>It's</b> 

### Word Classes

<b>Adjective</b> <b>Describes a noun or pronoun.</b> <b>Blue / young / powerful</b> 	<b>Adverb</b> <b>How, when or where something happens.</b> <b>Furiously / yesterday / here</b> 	<b>Preposition</b> <b>Where something is; the time, direction or cause of something.</b> <b>On / under / above</b> 	<b>Pronoun</b> <b>Words that replace nouns or noun phrases.</b> <b>She / he / they</b> 	<b>Noun</b> <b>Person, place, thing, idea or state of being.</b> <b>Manchester / cat / love</b> 	<b>Verb</b> <b>An action or state of being.</b> <b>Jump / write / be</b> 
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<b>Which</b>  <b>Witch</b> 
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## TECHNICAL ACCURACY & KEY DEVICES

### Sentences are created by using different types of clauses

#### Main clause

A main clause contains one subject and one verb. It has one main idea and it forms a complete sentence (it makes sense on its own).



#### Subordinate clause

A subordinate clause adds extra information to a sentence and does not function as a complete sentence (it does not make sense on its own). It depends on the main clause to make sense and is usually separated by a comma.



#### Sentence Structure

#### Example

**Simple sentence:** one main clause



The prisoner escaped.

**Compound sentence:** two main clauses linked with a connective / conjunction



The prisoner escaped and he never returned.

**Complex sentence:** one or two main clauses with embedded dependent / subordinate clauses



The prisoner escaped despite the elaborate security system.

**2V/3V:** use two or three verbs



The prisoner anxiously **sprinted**, **jumped** and **climbed** over any barrier that blocked his way.

**2A/3A:** use two or three adjectives



The road was **long**, **empty** and **bewildering**.

**Fronted adverbial:** begin your sentence with an adverb



**Quickly**, he leapt over the wall.

**As / When / Although:** use any of these words at the beginning of your sentence to introduce a subordinate clause



**Although** sweat trickled down her face, she continued to climb.

### Punctuation

#### Capital Letters

- Start of a sentence
- Proper nouns: names of places, people or things
- The pronoun 'I'
- Months and days of the week



#### Commas

- Separate three or more items in a list
- After a fronted adverbial
- Before and after a subordinate clause (like brackets)
- After subordinate clauses and phrases that begin a sentence
- Separate question tags
- Separate direct speech from non-speech
- Before and after a relative clause



#### Apostrophes

- To show that letters are missing in a word
- To show possession



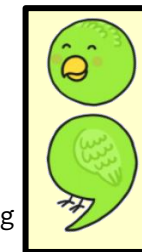
#### Full Stops

- To end a sentence



#### Semicolons

- Separate two main clauses that are closely connected to each other but could stand alone as two separate sentences
- To replace a coordinating conjunction
- To break up a list using longer phrases to signal which items are together



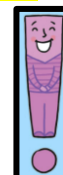
#### Colons

- At the end of a clause to elaborate / give more details
- At the end of a clause to give an explanation
- At the end of a clause to show an answer



#### Exclamation Mark

- To show strong feelings
- To show a raised voice



#### Question Mark

- After a direct question



#### Speech Marks

- Around direct speech (after the punctuation)

