

GCSE Literature: Jekyll and Hyde: *All You Need to Know*

Characters

Dr Henry Jekyll: Jekyll is a wealthy and respectable doctor and experimental scientist. He has been a sociable person in the past, with a circle of friends including the lawyer, Utterson, and another doctor, Lanyon.

Mr Edward Hyde: He is described as small ('dwarfish') and young. People react with horror and fear when they see him. But there is no single thing about him that is especially unpleasant; it is as if his spirit affects people. He is violent, and has no sense of guilt about his crimes. In Chapter 1, Hyde assaults a young girl, and in Chapter 4 he beats an elderly gentleman to death. He has no motive for either of these attacks. His appearances in the novel are always brief. People only catch impressions of him, before he vanishes into the dark or behind a door. Hyde is very secretive.

Gabriel Utterson: Utterson is an old friend of Jekyll, and his lawyer. He is calm and rational, just as lawyers are supposed to be. Rather like a scientist, his approach in life is to weigh up the evidence. Utterson is 'a lover of the sane and customary sides of life'. Stevenson probably uses him to represent the attitudes of the average reader of his time.

He spends much of the novel trying to advise and help Jekyll, giving advice about his will and avoiding Hyde, and trying to help him when he shuts himself in his room. Jekyll recognises that he is a good friend, but rejects all his offers of help.

At no stage does he suspect Jekyll and Hyde are the same person. However, he makes observations whereby the reader can, looking back, see the evidence. For instance, he asks his chief clerk, Mr Guest, to look at Hyde's handwriting. When Guest sees that Hyde's and Jekyll's writing is strangely similar, though with different directions of slope, Utterson draws the wrong conclusion: that Jekyll has forged Hyde's handwriting to protect him.

In Chapter 8, Utterson goes home to read the documents found in Jekyll's laboratory and promises Jekyll's servant he will return before midnight. The novel ends with two chapters containing the two documents he goes home to read. The reader never discovers Utterson's reaction to them, or what action he takes. He is left as an uncompleted character. This is perhaps Stevenson's way of showing that sensible, rational people do not always have all the answers.

Hastie Lanyon: Lanyon is, like Jekyll, a doctor. He and Jekyll were once close friends and went to medical school together. Lanyon is respectable and conventional. He follows all the rules and obeys the law. He believes in science and the world of real, material things. He is a big contrast with Jekyll, who likes to live dangerously and experiment with the paranormal (what Jekyll calls 'transcendental medicine'). Lanyon disagrees with Jekyll's ideas and calls them 'scientific balderdash'. Dr Jekyll, on the other hand, regards him as 'hidebound' (conventional and unadventurous) in his attitude to medical science.

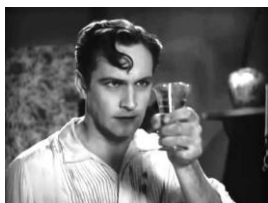
Lanyon is the only person to actually see Hyde transforming into Jekyll, something that does not fit the laws of science. When he sees the change, he cannot cope with the fight between his common-sense view of the world and what Jekyll's experiments reveal. "I ask myself if I believe it, and I cannot answer. My life is shaken to its roots." Not long after he becomes mentally and physically ill, and dies.

Richard Enfield: A distant relative of Utterson, Enfield is a well-known man about town and the complete opposite to Utterson.

Pooler: He is Jekyll's man servant. Pooler appears briefly in the novel from time to time, notably when Utterson goes to visit Jekyll. In Chapter 8, he goes to Utterson's house to report the strange goings on in Jekyll's house. He helps Utterson to break down the door.

Sir Danvers Carew: a distinguished elderly gentleman who is beaten to death by Hyde. This is a turning point in the novel.

Mr Guest: Utterson's secretary and a handwriting expert. In Chapter 5, he comments on the remarkable similarity between Jekyll and Hyde's handwriting.



Plot

On their weekly walk, an eminently sensible, trustworthy lawyer named Mr. Utterson listens as his friend Enfield tells a gruesome tale of violent assault. The tale describes a sinister figure named Mr. Hyde who unexplainably tramples a young girl in the middle of a street. Witnesses to the attack are horrified by its brutal and unprovoked nature, so Hyde disappears into a door on the street, and re-emerges to pay off the girl's relatives with a check signed by a respectable, wealthy gentleman. Since both Utterson and Enfield disapprove of gossip, they agree to speak no further of the matter. It happens, however, that one of Utterson's clients and close friends, Dr. Jekyll, has written a will transferring all of his property to this same Mr. Hyde. Soon, Utterson, confused and worried by this information, begins having dreams in which a faceless figure stalks through a nightmarish version of London. Puzzled, the lawyer visits Mr. Hyde and their mutual friend Dr. Lanyon to try to learn more. Lanyon reports that he no longer sees much of Jekyll, since they had a dispute over the course of Jekyll's research, which Lanyon calls "unscientific balderdash." Curious, Utterson stakes out a building that Hyde visits—which, it turns out, is a laboratory attached to the back of Jekyll's home. Encountering Hyde, Utterson is amazed by how undeniably ugly the man seems, as if deformed, though Utterson cannot say exactly how. Much to Utterson's surprise, Hyde willingly offers Utterson his address. Jekyll tells Utterson not to concern himself with the matter of Hyde.

A year passes uneventfully. Then, one night, a servant girl witnesses Hyde brutally beat to death an elderly and respected gentleman named Sir Danvers Carew, a member of Parliament and a client of Utterson. The police contact Utterson, and Utterson suspects Hyde as the murderer. He leads the officers to Hyde's apartment, feeling a sense of foreboding amid the eerie weather—the morning is dark and wreathed in fog. When they arrive at the apartment, the murderer has vanished, and police searches prove futile, although the cane Hyde used to beat Carew is found partially burnt in the fire grate. Shortly thereafter, Utterson again visits Jekyll, who now claims to have ended all relations with Hyde; he shows Utterson a note, allegedly written to Jekyll by Hyde, apologizing for the trouble he has caused him and saying goodbye. That night, however, Utterson's clerk points out that Hyde's handwriting bears a remarkable similarity to Jekyll's own.

For a few months, Jekyll acts especially friendly and sociably, as if a weight has been lifted from his shoulders. But then Jekyll suddenly begins to refuse visitors, and Lanyon dies from some kind of shock he received in connection with Jekyll. Before dying, however, Lanyon gives Utterson a letter, with instructions that he not open it until after Jekyll's death. Meanwhile, Utterson goes out walking with Enfield again, and they see Jekyll at a window of his laboratory; the three men begin to converse, but a look of horror comes over Jekyll's face, and he slams the window and disappears. Soon afterward, Jekyll's butler, Mr. Poole, visits Utterson in a state of alarm: Utterson has locked himself in his laboratory for several weeks, and now the voice that comes from the room sounds nothing like the doctor's. Utterson and Poole travel to Jekyll's house through empty, windswept, sinister streets; once there, they find the servants huddled together in fear. After arguing for a time, the two of them resolve to break into Jekyll's laboratory. Inside, they find the body of Hyde, wearing Jekyll's clothes and apparently dead by suicide—and a letter from Jekyll to Utterson promising to explain everything.

Utterson takes the document home, where first he reads Lanyon's letter; it reveals that Lanyon's deterioration and eventual death were caused by the shock of seeing Mr. Hyde take a potion and metamorphose into Dr. Jekyll. The second letter constitutes a testament by Jekyll. It explains how Jekyll, seeking to separate his good side from his darker impulses, discovered a way to transform himself periodically into a deformed monster free of conscience—Mr. Hyde. At first, Jekyll reports, he delighted in becoming Hyde and rejoiced in the moral freedom that the creature possessed. In the disguise of Hyde, Jekyll was able to pursue every appetite and impulse he had suppressed to save his public reputation as a respectable gentleman. Eventually, however, he found that he was turning into Hyde involuntarily in his sleep, even without taking the potion. At this point, Jekyll resolved to cease becoming Hyde. One night, however, the urge gripped him too strongly, and after the transformation he immediately rushed out and violently killed Sir Danvers Carew. Horrified, Jekyll tried more adamantly to stop the transformations, and for a time he proved successful; one day, however, while sitting in a park, he suddenly turned into Hyde, the first time that an involuntary metamorphosis had happened while he was awake.

The letter continues describing Jekyll's cry for help. Far from his laboratory and hunted by the police as a murderer, Hyde needed Lanyon's help to get his potions and become Jekyll again—but when he undertook the transformation in Lanyon's presence, the shock of the sight instigated Lanyon's deteriorating health and later death. Meanwhile, Jekyll returned to his home, only to find himself ever more helpless and trapped as the transformations increased in frequency and necessitated even larger doses of potion in order to reverse themselves. It was the onset of one of these spontaneous metamorphoses that caused Jekyll to slam his laboratory window shut in the middle of his conversation with Enfield and Utterson. Eventually, the potion began to run out, and Jekyll was unable to find a key ingredient to make more. His ability to change back from Hyde into Jekyll slowly vanished. Jekyll writes that even as he composes his letter he knows that he will soon become Hyde permanently, and he wonders if Hyde will face execution for his crimes or choose to kill himself. Jekyll notes that, in any case, the end of his letter marks the end of the life of Dr. Jekyll. With these words, both the document and the novel come to a close.

Terminology Relevant to Jekyll and Hyde

Allegory	A symbol or piece of writing which can be interpreted to reveal a hidden message or meaning. Jekyll and Hyde is an allegory of for the fall of man into sin.	Pathetic fallacy	The use of weather to reflect a mood / atmosphere or to foreshadow a later event.
Anthropomorphism		Primitive	a person who belongs to early stage of civilization / human development.
Apocryphal	Of questionable authorship or authenticity.	Psychology	The study of how the human mind works and develops.
Apothecary	One that prepares and sells drugs and other medicines; a pharmacist.	Repression	The act of holding back or restraining desire.
Baize	An cotton or woollen material napped to imitate felt and used chiefly as a cover for gaming tables.	Reputable	Having a good reputation.
Duality	The state of having two parts or two sides. In psychological terms, it means to have two sides to a personality.	Superego	The part of the brain which develops through to adulthood, and gives humans the ability to be moral and critical. It sets very concrete rules and ideals, so it is essential for the ego to help mediate these to more realistic aims.
Figurative Language	This is the overall heading given to devices such as imagery, personification, metaphor and simile. These devices are abundant in Stevenson's language, particularly around Hyde. You should consider the mood, effects and intentions in these descriptions.	Symbolism	The use of colour or objects to represent ideas about a character or place. The colour red is used frequently in reference to Jekyll and Hyde to highlight the danger in Jekyll's experiments and Hyde's character.
First person narrative	This is where the 'voice' telling the story uses the word 'I'. This can have an intimate, believable confessional feel. This is used in Dr Lanyon's account and Jekyll's Letter at the end of the novel.	Third person narrative	This is where the author uses 'he', 'she', 'they' or 'it'. A voice refers to actions, events and circumstances dissociated from both the narrator and the reader. The narrator can be either omniscient (all-knowing) or can merely function to report events as they take place. Writers will often alternate between these modes. It is not uncommon for the narrative to shift from third to first person. This can help us understand the characters from different perspectives; first a detached and objective view, then more personal and intimate. This is used in the chapters reported by Utterson.
Freud	The Austrian neurologist who developed the theory of the unconscious (processes in the mind which occur automatically and over which we have no control, e.g. appetite, fight and flight) and went on to develop a model of psychic structure comprising id, ego and super-ego which describes the functions and development of the human psyche.	Troglodytic	A member of a fabulous or prehistoric race of people that lived in caves, dens, or holes, or a person considered to be reclusive, reactionary, out of date, or brutish.
Hyperbole	Exaggerating details or descriptions to draw attention to them or to create a specific atmosphere.	Zoomorphism	Assigning animalistic characteristics to a character's behaviour or appearance, e.g. Hyde.
Id	The part of the mind which sets instincts, , desire and impulse. This is the first part of the brain to develop in children, and it is essential for survival. It is the most primitive part of the brain, which controls aggression, sexual drive and appetite.		
Oxymoron	Where two opposing words are placed side by side. This is often used to describe aspects of Hyde's appearance and behaviour to illustrate that he is unnatural.		

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Context and Stevenson's Intentions

Scientific development

In the Victorian era, religion was important to communities and individuals. Many people believed that God created the universe and he was the sole creator, therefore the principles and the word of the Bible must be followed. Due to the society's interest in religion, people were afraid of scientific developments and feared what this would do to mankind. Charles Darwin wrote the *Origins of the Species* in 1859. It was a text that shook Victorian society and was condemned and banned due to its theory that God had not created the universe as outlined in the Bible. Consequently, people were cautious of science and its developments. Stevenson's own ambiguous views on Darwinism are shown through the fact that Jekyll and Hyde is a cautionary tale against the quest of man delving too deeply in nature, but his awe and wonder at scientific achievement is also shown mirrored through Utterson's amazement at what Jekyll has achieved, as well as Jekyll's passion for science and the experiment itself.

Duality of human nature

Stevenson writes about the duality of human nature – the idea that every single human being has good and evil within them. Stevenson describes how there is a good and an evil side to everyone's personality, but what is important is how you behave and the decisions you make. The choices people make determine whether a person is good or not. In *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, Dr Jekyll is a well-respected, intelligent scientist who secretly has a dark, immoral side to his personality. This side of his personality is not active, however, he decides to activate it through his experiments. This side becomes active through the persona of Mr Hyde – a criminal man who commits cruel acts of violence against others. Through this change in Jekyll's character, Stevenson shows the duality in human nature – the idea that everyone is capable of good and evil deeds. The pious nature of Victorian society meant that meant people suppressed their desires and feelings. This resulted in many people questioning their 'goodness' as a human being due to the fact that religion condemned these 'evil' thoughts. Stevenson may have wanted to go against this belief to suggest that human nature can't be simply described as being made of good and evil, and that nobody is purely good or bad.

Nature and the supernatural

In the Victorian period, the landscape of Britain was transformed by the Industrial Revolution. Factories were being built and technology was advancing. What was once achieved by hand and manual labour, was now done by machine. This resulted in a shift from the natural 'farming' lifestyle of the countryside, to one of technology and industry in the cities. Stevenson presented this change from nature, to technology and science through Jekyll's experiment to change the natural make-up of his being through science. This is also evidence of the supernatural, as Hyde is something that defies the laws of nature, and as a result is dangerous and viewed with horror by scientists who seek to uphold the traditional, natural order of the world, such as Dr Lanyon.

The Gothic Genre

The Gothic is a literary genre originating from the 18th century, which describes a sinister, grotesque or mysterious atmosphere. Such novels are often set in dark places or ruined buildings. Gothic novels deal with human experience on the margins of normality. They deal with horror, madness and extremes of emotion such as despair and great passion. *Jekyll and Hyde* clearly falls within this tradition. Jekyll and Lanyon are driven mad with despair and horror at what Jekyll has done.

Most Gothic literature has supernatural elements, such as ghosts or psychic experiences. The separation of parts of Jekyll's personality is achieved through a supernatural – or at least paranormal – transformation. Gothic settings are dark and mysterious, often with ornate architecture, such as castles and towers, and dark forests. Although Stevenson sets his novels in London, the perpetual fog and darkness of the backstreets, and his account of a 'district of some city in a nightmare', create a Gothic atmosphere. Stevenson's choice of London as his setting suggests that the rapidly changing city was becoming to some of its inhabitants a strange and frightening place. By writing a gothic novel, Stevenson was also tapping into a growing fascination with the supernatural.

Themes

Duality	Suppression	The Supernatural	Desire / Violence	Respectability	Nature	Science and Discovery	Friendship	The Gothic
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Quotes

Chapter	Character / Setting	Themes	Quote
1	Mr U		... a man of a rugged countenance, that was never lighted by a smile; cold, scanty and embarrassed in discourse; backward in sentiment; lean, long, dusty, dreary, and yet somehow lovable... it was frequently his fortune to be the last reputable acquaintance and the last good influence in the lives of down-going men.
1	Jekyll's House		a certain sinister block of building thrust forward its gable on the street. It was two stories high; showed no window, nothing but a door on the lower story and a blind forehead of discoloured wall on the upper; and bore in every feature, the marks of prolonged and sordid negligence. The door, which was equipped with neither bell nor knocker, was blistered and distained.
1	Mr E		"I was coming home from some place at the end of the world, about three o' clock of a black winter morning..."
1	Hyde		...the man trampled calmly over the child's body and left her screaming on the ground. It sounds nothing to hear, but it was hellish to see. It wasn't like a man; it was like some damned Juggernaut.
1	Hyde		He is not easy to describe. There is something wrong with his appearance; something displeasing, something downright detestable. I never saw a man I so disliked, and yet I scarce know why. He must be deformed somewhere; he gives a strong feeling of deformity, although I couldn't specify the point.
2	Mr U		It was his custom of a Sunday, when this meal was over, to sit close by the fire, a volume of some dry divinity on his reading-desk, until the clock of the neighbouring church rang out the hour of twelve, when he would go soberly and gratefully to bed.
2	Dr L		This was a hearty, healthy, dapper, red-faced gentleman, with a shock of hair prematurely white, and a boisterous and decided manner.
2	Dr L		it is more than ten years since Henry Jekyll became too fanciful for me. He began to go wrong, wrong in mind; ... I see and I have seen devilish little of the man. Such unscientific balderdash," added the doctor, flushing suddenly purple
2	Mr U		now his imagination also was engaged, or rather enslaved; and as he lay and tossed in the gross darkness of the night and the curtained room, Mr. Enfield's tale went by before his mind in a scroll of lighted pictures.
2	Hyde		Mr. Hyde was pale and dwarfish, he gave an impression of deformity without any nameable malformation, he had a displeasing smile, he had borne himself to the lawyer with a sort of murderous mixture of timidity and boldness, and he spoke with a husky, whispering and somewhat broken voice
3	Jekyll		a large, well-made, smooth-faced man of fifty, with something of a stylish cast perhaps, but every mark of capacity and kindness
3	Jekyll		the moment I choose, I can be rid of Mr. Hyde.
4	Carrew		an aged and beautiful gentleman with white hair
4	Hyde		all of a sudden he broke out in a great flame of anger, stamping with his foot, brandishing the cane...Mr. Hyde broke out of all bounds and clubbed him to the earth. And next moment, with apple fury, he was trampling his victim under foot and hailing down a storm of blows, under which the bones were audibly shattered and the body jumped upon the roadway.
4	London / Weather		A great chocolate-coloured pall lowered over heaven, but the wind was continually charging and routing these embattled vapours... a marvellous number of degrees and hues of twilight; ... the fog would be quite broken up, and a haggard shaft of daylight would glance in between the swirling wreaths... this mournful re-invasion of darkness, seemed, in the lawyer's eyes, like a district of some city in a nightmare.

Chapter	Character / Setting	Themes	Quote
5	Jekyll		...Dr. Jekyll, looking deadly sick.
5	Jekyll about Hyde		I am done with him in this world. It is all at an end. And indeed he does not want my help; you do not know him as I do; he is safe, he is quite safe; mark my words, he will never more be heard of.
6	Hyde		Much of his past was unearthed, indeed, and all disreputable: tales came out of the man's cruelty, at once so callous and violent; of his vile life, of his strange associates, of the hatred that seemed to have surrounded his career; but of his present whereabouts, not a whisper.
6	Jekyll		a new life began for Dr. Jekyll. He came out of his seclusion, renewed relations with his friends, became once more their familiar guest and entertainer; and whilst he had always been, known for charities, he was now no less distinguished for religion. He was busy, he was much in the open air, he did good; his face seemed to open and brighten, as if with an inward consciousness of service; and for more than two months, the doctor was at peace.
6	Jekyll's letter		I have brought on myself a punishment and a danger that I cannot name. If I am the chief of sinners, I am the chief of sufferers also.
7	Jekyll at the window		the words were hardly uttered, before the smile was struck out of his face and succeeded by an expression of such abject terror and despair...
8	Weather		It was a wild, cold, seasonable night of March, with a pale moon, lying on her back as though the wind had tilted her, and a flying wrack of the most diaphanous and lacy texture. The wind made talking difficult, and flecked the blood into the face.
8	Poole about Jekyll		there he was at the far end of the room digging among the crates. He looked up when I came in, gave a kind of cry, and whipped up-stairs into the cabinet... why had he a mask upon his face? If it was my master, why did he cry out like a rat, and run from me?
8	Jekyll / Hyde		the red baize door leaped against the lock and hinges. A dismal screech, as of mere animal terror, rang from the cabinet.
9	Hyde -> Jekyll		pale and shaken, and half-fainting, and groping before him with his hands, like a man restored from death—there stood Henry Jekyll!
10	Jekyll		I concealed my pleasures; ... I regarded and hid them with an almost morbid sense of shame.
10	Jekyll		I thus drew steadily nearer to that truth... that man is not truly one, but truly two ... the thorough and primitive duality of man
10	Jekyll		I knew myself, at the first breath of this new life, to be more wicked, tenfold more wicked, sold a slave to my original evil; and the thought, in that moment, braced and delighted me like wine.
10	Jekyll		all human beings, as we meet them, are commingled out of good and evil; and Edward Hyde, alone in the ranks of mankind, was pure
10	Jekyll		a being inherently malign and villainous; his every act and thought centred on self; deriving pleasure with bestial avidity from any degree of torture to another