

Writing a Critical Essay

What? To write a critical essay comparing both Mr Hyde and Kurtz

How?

- 1) Read the extract from the essay on slide 2 this is an essay you have seen before written by William Golding (Lord of the Flies) author. Answer the questions about how it could apply to the topic we have covered this week. Then, check your ideas with the information on slide 3.
- 2) Slide 4 gives you the question you will be writing your essay on. Read it carefully and feel free to write down any initial ideas you might have using the bullet points to help you.
- 3) Using the Point and Evidence you put together last lesson, you need to make these boxes on your tables more specific to the question. Use the questions on slide 5 to help you to complete the first two.
- 4) Use the guidance on slide 6 to support you in your analysis focussing on the quotes used and how this helps to support your point.
- 5) Read the information on slide 7 it helps to show how these steps you have taken are related to the A Level mark scheme.
- 6) Read slides 9 and 10 very carefully, this is the complicated part. Feel free to make notes to help you to understand what a literary theory is and why it can be applied to both novels.
- 7) Using the template layout on slide 11 and the example paragraph on slide 12 to support you in writing one of your comparative paragraphs answering the question on slide 4.

Why? This lesson enables students to see what is required to write at the level expected for A Level, it ensures they include key elements such as literary theory and are able to apply it to Victorian literature.

What? To write a critical essay comparing both Mr Hyde and Kurtz

Below is a part of an essay written by William Golding which you may have seen in Year 10.



Task: Read this section of the essay.

What does it suggest about civilisation and the good in people?

How can you link this to Mr Hyde and Kurtz from this week?

Write your ideas down in your book.



Are men and women born with cruelty as a deep component of their nature? Is civilisation largely a heroic struggle to build layer upon layer of varnish upon the rough and splintered raw material of humankind? Or does it make a truer picture if we imagine the new-born child as a blank slate upon which the harshness of experience soon prints its indelible and frightening patterns?

We are born with evil in us and cruelty is part of this. (Though there is also a capacity for selflessness and love, otherwise we are denying part of our human nature.) But what must be true is that we can be twisted and distorted beyond recognition by the guidance - or lack of it - that we absorb directly from our families.

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We are born with evil in us and cruelty is part of this. (Though there is also a capacity for selflessness and love, otherwise we are denying part of our human nature.) But what must be true is that we can be twisted and distorted beyond recognition by the guidance - or lack of it - that we absorb directly from our families.



Why is this relevant?

Both Kurtz and Hyde choose to remove themselves from civilised Victorian society in a way.

Kurtz is far away in Africa and as a result is no longer required to follow the rules of Victorian society, as a result he becomes 'uncivilised' as he becomes more like a native of Africa.

Hyde is the opposite of Dr Jekyll who follows the influences of Victorian society, Hyde is everything Jekyll wants to do but cannot. Therefore Hyde is ignoring what is expected of a Victorian gentleman and doing the opposite.

HINT – Bear this in mind when we begin to put together our arguments from your table.

The Question:

“Savagery is the natural state of all men”

How are men presented as savage in Heart of Darkness and The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll & Mr Hyde?

Our task for this question is to consider how both Kurtz and Mr Hyde are shown as savage.

We need to consider:

- How we can show they are savage.
- What has made them savage and why is this natural.
- How the two are shown to be savage in different ways.

We will now approach this question step-by-step.

Let's start with the table we started to complete last lesson...

Step 1 – Taking our evidence and relating it to the question.

First, look at your comparative point and your evidence.

Now, think how it can relate to the question.

Comparison 1 – Both men start off civilised	
	Point & Evidence
	Analysis
Mr Hyde	Hyde begins as just an idea of Dr Jekyll who is a respected man in society. "I had been safe of all men's respect'.
Kurtz	Kurtz was respected by his colleagues in Victorian London who respected him. "First-class agent" "in charge of a trading point"

If Dr Jekyll starts off as a civilised and not a savage man, what is it that's making him like this? What is preventing him from being savage to start off with?

How is Hyde different to Dr Jekyll? What makes him uncivilised?

What has made Kurtz civilised at the beginning of the novel? What changes?

How is he different to Marlow who is our example of civilised?

TASK – Using these questions, try to complete the 'analysis' boxes on your table for this evidence. I have started this for you on the next slide. Can you finish this off?

“Savagery is the natural state of all men”

How are men presented as savage in Heart of Darkness and The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll & Mr Hyde?

	Comparison 1 – Both men start off civilised	
	Point & Evidence	Analysis
Mr Hyde	Hyde begins as just an idea of Dr Jekyll who is a respected man in society. “I had been safe of all men’s respect’.	At the start of the novel, Dr Jekyll is respected by society as he following the rules of what a ‘civilised’ person should do. Therefore it could be argued that it is the place he lives and his surroundings that are making him ‘civilised’....
Kurtz	Kurtz was respected by his colleagues in Victorian London who respected him. “First-class agent” “in charge of a trading point”	At the beginning of the novel, we learn that Kurtz is in Africa, but are given accounts of him by people who knew him when he was in London. This one from the accountant at the company shows what they knew of Kurtz when he was part of Victorian society in his home country...

If Dr Jekyll starts off as a civilised and not a savage man, what is it that’s making him like this? What is preventing him from being savage to start off with?
How is Hyde different to Dr Jekyll? What makes him uncivilised?

What has made Kurtz civilised at the beginning of the novel? What changes?
How is he different to Marlow who is our example of civilised?

We can now see that it was Victorian society in London that was making the men ‘civilised’ and preventing their savagery. This is our comparison between the two!

Developing your analysis further

When you move up towards the A-Level 'level' of analysis, you need to ensure your analysis is detailed, but also 'critical'.

This is taken from the A Level overview.

This is what we are doing now, looking at two texts written just 13 years apart.

- Both are written during the time of the British Empire.
- Both describe how Victorian society can affect someone.
 - Both are comments on life during this time period.

We have just explored their relationship between the two texts by looking at how Victorian society at the time has influenced both characters! Well done!

English Literature A's historicist approach to the study of literature rests upon reading texts within a shared context. Working from the belief that no text exists in isolation but is the product of the time in which it was produced, English Literature A encourages students to **explore the relationships that exist between texts and the contexts within which they are written**, received and understood. Studying texts within a shared context enables students to investigate and connect them, drawing out patterns of similarity and difference using a **variety of reading strategies and perspectives**.

We need to now consider different interpretations of the text, we can do this using something called literary theory...

Additional Challenge – Literary Theory

Read the information on the next two slides.

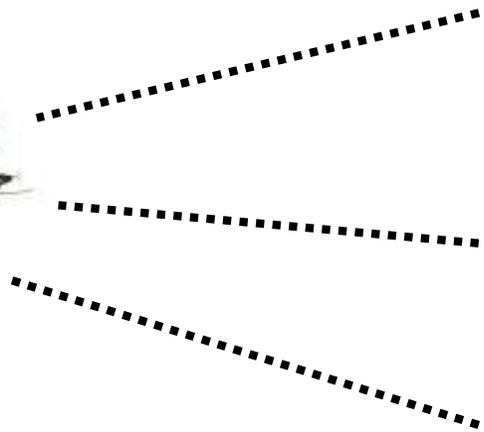
This information is about Literary Theory and how it can be used to analyse both Heart of Darkness and Jekyll & Hyde from the perspective of a 'different' kind of reader.

Read the information and add this as part of your analysis in your response to the question on slide 4.

What is Literary Theory?

A Literary theory is a specific way of looking at a text.

For example, imagine picking up a pair of glasses and looking at an object. You can see that object through the glasses. Now, imagine three different pairs of glasses with three different coloured lenses. Each one would make you see the object slightly differently. One might make it appear more purple, another darker, another might be brighter...



Literary theory works in the same way!

You could look at the same text from the perspective of a different gender, a different race or someone with a different lifestyle.

The literary theory we are going to use is called 'Post-colonialism' which means 'after the British Empire'.

Post-Colonial Theory



As we just discovered, Post-Colonial means 'After the British Empire' or 'After the colonies'.

This means, we are looking at the two texts we have just read through the eyes of a modern reader who understands how Victorians were racist towards people from these countries and didn't treat them well.

Post-Colonial Theory – Heart of Darkness

What can we notice looking at the story this way?

We can see how Marlow describes the African people as though they are below him and different.

We can see how the more Kurtz acts like a native, the more he is considered 'uncivilised' and becomes more confusing to Marlow who is a white man from the west.

Post-Colonial Theory – Jekyll & Hyde

What can we notice looking at the story this way?

We can see that when Utterson and others describe Hyde, they use terms that are similar to how people would describe people from the colonies.

Hyde has a 'savagely' laugh.
Jekyll describes Hyde as his 'primitive' side, similar to how Marlow describes Kurtz at the end of the novel.

Task:

How might this perspective be different to the readers at the time?

Those living within the British Empire?

Why do you think both Conrad and Stevenson feel it is ok to describe these characters in this way?

Write down your ideas.



Writing your response



“Savagery is the natural state of all men”

How are men presented as savage in Heart of Darkness and The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll & Mr Hyde?

POINT FROM HEART OF DARKNESS

EVIDENCE

ANALYSIS & CONTEXT

LINK TO POST-COLONIAL THEORY *(if possible)*

COMPARE TO JEKYLL & HYDE

EVIDENCE

ANALYSIS & CONTEXT

LINK TO POST-COLONIAL THEORY *(if possible)*

Here is how you can take all the different components we have covered over the last few lessons, and put them into an essay structure.

On the next slide is an example to help you, using the first comparison we did from our table.

You will then write your own paragraph.

Writing your response

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COMPARE TO JEKYLL & HYDE

EVIDENCE

ANALYSIS & CONTEXT

LINK TO POST-COLONIAL THEORY (*if possible*)

In ‘Heart of Darkness’ we learn that Kurtz is a respectable gentleman at the start of the novel. As Marlow meets with his accountant for the company before leaving London, he is described as a ‘first-class agent’ which suggests that Kurtz is a respectable and decent man as he is highly regarded by his peers. The accountant then goes on to mention that Kurtz is ‘in charge’ of the station where he works suggesting that Kurtz must be respected as he is being trusted by the company to run the station. This suggests that Kurtz was a civilised member of Victorian society in London and that his move away from this society, to a less developed part of the world might have caused him to become savage. A post-colonial perspective of this situation could argue that Conrad sought to show that the more Kurtz became more like the natives of Africa, the more savage he became, suggesting that the natural world had an influence over Kurtz, rather than the other way around as the Victorians considered themselves to be a powerful source. In comparison to this, Dr Jekyll considers himself to be a respectable man in Victorian society, stating “I had been safe of all men’s respect”, suggesting that it is important to Dr Jekyll to be seen in this way. Therefore, Mr Hyde was created to act outside the restrictions Dr Jekyll felt from society describing how ‘my devil had been long caged’. This suggests that, like Kurtz, Mr Hyde acts in a more ‘natural’ and savage way as he is also outside the rules and regulations of a restrictive Victorian society.

Using this as a template, can you write another paragraph comparing the two texts?