

Education is an important theme throughout the novel. The following activities will help you understand the presentation of Jane's education at Lowood, a 19<sup>th</sup>-century charity school.

## Chapter 5

Find examples from Chapter 5 that illustrate how harsh school life is at Lowood and write them below.

Aspect of life at Lowood	Examples from Chapter 5
<b>Christian duties (religious rituals and beliefs)</b> Read the paragraph that opens with 'Business now began ...'	
<b>Plain fare (food and drink)</b> Find at least one of Jane's usual four meals a day, e.g. from 'Ravenous, and now very faint ...' NB A lunch of bread and cheese, ordered by Miss Temple, is a rare treat to compensate for so much burnt porridge.	
<b>Simple attire (clothing and hairstyle)</b> Read from 'Discipline prevailed ...'	
<b>Unsophisticated accommodations (where the girls sleep, wash, live, eat and learn)</b> Read from 'The night passed quickly ...'	
<b>Hardy and active habits (their daily routine, activities and pastimes)</b> Read from 'The garden was a wide enclosure'	

Chapter 6

Why and how is Helen Burns punished in Chapter 6? Choose the correct action and the punishment she is given from the lists below.

Helen has:	Miss Scatcherd:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• talked to Jane in class when she should have been silent</li><li>• dirty fingernails because the water for washing in the morning was frozen</li><li>• disobeyed the teacher by not following an order</li><li>• curly hair, which is not allowed</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• sends her to Mr Brocklehurst</li><li>• makes her write an essay on being clean</li><li>• orders her to clean the classroom floor</li><li>• beats her with a bundle of twigs tied together at one end</li></ul>

Chapter 7

1. a. How does Mr Brocklehurst humiliate Jane in Chapter 7? Below is an example of a 'summary in your own words':

*Jane draws Mr Brocklehurst's attention to her by dropping her slate. He makes her stand on a stool, warns the whole school to avoid her because she is a liar and says no one should speak to her for the rest of the day.*

Find two or three quotations to support this summary:

- b. Brontë shows the other girls react. They try to find a reason to pass Jane so they can smile at her. Explain the imagery Brontë uses in her description and the effect this has on Jane:

**'It was as if a martyr, a hero, had passed a slave or victim, and imparted strength in the transit.'**

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2. What must happen to all the girls because of Julia Severn's naturally curly hair? Use the following three quotations to help you explain in your own words:

'that girl's hair must be cut off entirely; I will send a barber tomorrow'

'Tell all the first form to rise up and direct their faces to the wall.'

'All those top knots must be cut off.'

Because of Julia Severn's naturally curly hair, all the girls ...

3. Prepare for a discussion on how schools are different now. Make notes on the following.

- What do you think of Lowood and the way its students were treated?
- Would students be punished for the same reasons now? If so, how would they be punished?
- 'The superintendent of Lowood ... commenced giving a lesson on geography; the lower classes were called by the teachers: repetitions in history, grammar, etc., went on for an hour; writing and arithmetic succeeded, and music lessons were given by Miss Temple to some of the elder girls. The duration of each lesson was measured by the clock which at last struck twelve.' (Chapter 5)

How similar were subjects and lesson organisation then compared to now?

Suggested answers

Chapter 5

Aspect of life at Lowood	Examples from Chapter 5
<b>Christian duties (religious rituals and beliefs)</b> Read the paragraph that opens with 'Business now began ...'	Before breakfast there was 'a protracted reading of chapters in the Bible, which lasted an hour' 'A long grace was said and a hymn sung; then ... the meal began'
<b>Plain fare (food and drink)</b> Find at least one of Jane's usual four meals a day, e.g. from 'Ravenous, and now very faint ...' NB A lunch of bread and cheese, ordered by Miss Temple, is a rare treat to compensate for so much burnt porridge.	Breakfast: 'a nauseous mess: burnt porridge' dinner 'indifferent potatoes and strange shreds of rusty meat' 5pm 'a small mug of coffee, and half a slice of brown bread'; supper water and 'a thin oaten cake, shared into fragments'
<b>Simple attire (clothing and hairstyle)</b> Read from 'Discipline prevailed ...'	'uniformly dressed in brown stuff frocks of quaint fashion and long holland pinafores', 'plain locks combed from their faces, not a curl visible' and 'woollen stockings and country-made shoes'
<b>Unsophisticated accommodations (where the girls sleep, wash, live, eat and learn)</b> Read from 'The night passed quickly ...'	'long rows of beds, each of which was quickly filled with two occupant', 'there was but one basin to six girls, on the stands down the middle of the room', 'the cold and dimly lit schoolroom'
<b>Hardy and active habits (their daily routine, activities and pastimes)</b> Read from 'The garden was a wide enclosure'	The garden seems like a prison, 'surrounded with walls so high as to exclude every glimpse of prospect' where the girls must work, play, walk or sit every day, even in rain or fog.

Chapter 6

Helen has: dirty fingernails because the water for washing in the morning was frozen.  
 Miss Scatcherd: beats her with a bundle of twigs tied together at one end.

Chapter 7

Examples of supporting quotations:

'my treacherous slate somehow happened to slip from my hand'  
 'they had hoisted me up to the height of Mr Brocklehurst's nose'  
 'this girl ... is a little castaway ... an interloper and an alien'  
 'avoid her company, exclude her from your sports and shut her out from your converse.'  
 'this girl is - a liar!'  
 'Let her stand half an hour longer on that stool, and let no-one speak to her during the remainder of the day.'