

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper"

1. What is the situation that the narrator finds herself in at the beginning of the story?
2. What is John's attitude toward his wife, especially in terms of her illness? In the course of thinking about this issue, consider the symbolism of the "nursery."
3. Identify some of the ways in which the conflict between the narrator and her husband are established. Provide at least two examples from the story.
4. What are the narrator's feelings toward her husband? Provide textual references.
5. Do you think John is *trying* to drive his wife crazy?
6. Are there any clues that suggest that the woman in the story is not an entirely "reliable" narrator? Is there any irony to this fact?
7. Consider the multiple functions that the wallpaper plays in the story. Also, does the wallpaper remain the same throughout the story, or does it change?

8. What does the creeping figure in the wallpaper represent?

9. What is the principal social institution against which the narrator of the story struggles?

10. In what ways might the ending of the story be seen as both a victory *and* a defeat for the narrator? In what ways is her situation both similar to and different from that of the woman in the wallpaper?

Active Reading Chart Use the worksheet to take notes on how the narrator discusses the world around her. Pay close attention to her description, noting how her tone and perception of her surroundings and situation change during the story. Use the Reader Interpretation column to offer thoughts about the possible significance of the items you note.

How does the author describe:	Examples/Descriptions from "The Yellow Wall-paper"	Reader Interpretation (possible symbolic meanings, oddities in descriptions, etc.)
Her room?		
The wall-paper?		
Her illness?		
Her husband?		
Her other caretakers and/or family?		
Herself?		
Her journal?		
Other notes or observations:		