Overview: Starting in present day, AK is going to tell us a story from his youth. Thus involves him as a young lawyer working under Mr B. He gets sent to Crythyn Gifford to sort through the papers of AD at EMH. On the train AK meets SD. He starts to see flashes of TWIB from the funeral of AD onwards. He stays over in EMH and SD finally tells him the whole story and about the curse. TWIB in actually SD's sister, JH who had a son out of wedlock and who was adopted by AD and hubby as she couldn't have children. The boy and nanny drowned in the marshes in an accident and JH saw the whole thing, Curse = every time we see TWIB a child dies. No child has died yet, so AK hops back to London, marries Stella and has a baby. One day at a fair, the baby and Stella have a pony and trap ride, then AK sees TWIB and she steps out and spoaks the horse. Stella and the baby dies.

1. The Journey North - on a train looking through AD's file, AK meets SD who shows some interest in his file. SD gives him a ride in an automobile.

2. A London Particular - November, 23 year old AK works for Mr B. He is going to EMH to sort out the affairs of AD and attend the funeral. EMH is located just outside the village of Crythyn Gifford. Mr B says, “See you in a day or two.”

3. The Sound of a Pony and Trap - Fog and tide approach, AK can't see EMH or CG. He hears the sound of a pony and trap being sucked into the mud and a child dying. He runs back to EMH. Very scared, AK decides to open a locked door, Kekciwck picks him up at 2am.

4. The Journey North - on a train looking through AD's file, AK meets SD who shows some interest in his file. SD gives him a ride in an automobile.

5. Across the Causeway - Kekciwck arrives with a pony and trap to take AK to EMH. Due to 9LC and the road being hidden, AK decides to get clothes and food and stay over the next day. He sees TWIB again. Seeing all the papers, he realises this will be a much bigger job, so starts to walk back across 9LC.

6. The Journey North - on a train looking through AD's file, AK meets SD who shows some interest in his file. SD gives him a ride in an automobile.

7. Mr Jerome is Afraid - AK decides to pass the AD affairs to Mr J. Mr J says absolutely not and he finds power over AK.

8. Spider - AK has dinner with SD, and decides to spend 2 nights at EMH. SD thinks it's a bad idea, so offers his dog Spider as company.

9. In the Nursery - Mr B okays AK staying longer at EMH. He wakes in the night to Spider growling. He follows her, hears noises. The following day he finds a packet of letters from JH. He's hears the pony and trap sound and Spider starts growling. He realises it's a ghost sound and somehow discovers the locked room is no longer locked… and it's a nursery.

10. Whistle and I'll Come to You - AK wakes up and it's dark and windy, he can't find the light and when he does it's broken. AK feels like someone has died. Spider gets agitated and stuck in the marsh. TWIB is looking at him out the nursery window.

11. A Packet of Letters - AK wakes to find SD at EMH. AK explains the craziness and returns to CG. He finds the death cert of Nathaniel, JH's son. He works the whole thing out and speaks to SD who confirms it. JH got pregnant out of wedlock and AD and her hubby took in child. Boy and nanny die when pony and trap gets sucked into marshes. JH sees whole thing and it drives her insane. She died and haunted the town. Evertime see is seen a child dies.

12. The Woman in Black - He leaves and marries Stella. They have baby Joseph. One day at a fair, the baby and Stella have a pony and trap ride, then AK sees TWIB and she steps out and spoaks the horse. Stella and the baby die.

Character: Arthur Kipps: pragmatic, rational and a little boring. His first response to TWIB is that she's a poor woman with a disease. He relishes the mundane parts of life with Esme. He is a Modern Young Man - often reducing the villager to silly village folk. TWIB will never really leave AK - he's scared.

Jennet Humphrey - angry and filled with vengeance - this is a ghost like no other. She is a woman wronged, or worse - a mother wronged. She didn't want to give up her baby at all. She haunts the town after death for revenge, killing the children of others.

Sam Daily - to AK Sam is a country bumpkin. Sam is friendly however, and keeps an eye for AK. He also has a nice dog. He does appear as AKs saviour when things get freaky.

Alice Drablows - Jennet's sister and owner of EMH. Strong arms Jennet into giving up her baby as AD cannot have any children of her own.

Mr Jerome: we get one sense from Mr J and that's fear. A squirrelly little man who is super scared of TWIB - so much so that all he says is that he can't help AK.

Mr Bentley: AK's employer who sends him on his fateful trip to Crythyn Gifford. Thought AK doesn't blame Mr B, he certainly is a catalyst for the events that follow.

Kekciwck: Driver of the pony and trap, he rarely speaks, however he does represent AK's one connection with the town. He also looks out for AK, like Sam.

Stella: AK's fiancee and moth of Joseph. She is clearly a refugee, something to look forward to during his time in CG. Stella represents everything that is clear, or feel crazy at any rate.

Esme: she represents his second chance at happiness - after all that WIB business. She is a safe place for AK to rebuild his life.

Step children: The family he and Stella never had, but they can never really understand what he went through and he wants it that way.

Symbolism: Innocent death: lots of death, but specifically innocents. Nathaniel, Stella, Joseph. The Pony and Trap: this recurs throughout the book. It represents a flashback for AK, as well as PTSD/trauma, it occurs finally when Stella and Joseph die.

Nature: not just a backdrop here, but a force. Man is small and inconsequential opposed to nature. Tide, marshes., peaceful views from Monk Piece.

Themes: Betrayal - was Jennet betrayed by Alice who forced her to give up Nathaniel? Or was she trying to give Nat a better life? Was Arthur betrayed by JH?

Isolation - set in the middle of nowhere, among bogs and fogs. Arthur finds himself literally separated from society at EMH. It is physically cut off by the tide. Also he finds happiness again with Esme but can even share the hours of his youth.

Revenge - JH is all about revenge. Even though Nat's death was no one's fault. She takes her revenge on other people's children and AK as well.

Fear - What causes it? Who feels it? What does fear prompt us to do? Is it just a fun emotion to evoke while we're sitting safely by the fire, or does it have a more primitive and profound purpose?

Appearances - it's not a story where nothing is as it seems. Appearances matter especially TWIB's and other character details.

Memory and the Past - TWIB is one long trip down memory lane which is live in on AK's memory forever.

Supernatural - TWIB is chock-full of creepy, inexplicable details that point towards the existence of ghosts. It doesn't leave any room for doubt, unless the whole tale is a way for AK to deal with the death of his wife and child?

Man and the Natural World - Mother nature plays a role - London = man made and contained. CG - the elements have power over AK.

Madness - JH's anger and despair actually make her go crazy. Confronting the reality of a ghost, makes AK a little crazy, or feel crazy at any rate.

Exploration - AK may be scared but he is on a quest in CG to find the truth. He has to literally and metaphorically explore EMH and it's inhabitants.

Key Locations:
- London - Where AK lives and works under Mr B. He goes back there to marry Stella.
- Eel Marsh House - Where Alice Drablows and her husband lived with Nathaniel Where most of the creepy stuff happens.
- Monk Piece - Arthur's house that he see's one day with Mr B and then buys and lives in with Esme later on. Opposite to EMH etc.

Nature: not just a backdrop here, but a force. Man is small and inconsequential opposed to nature. Tide, marshes., peaceful views from Monk Piece.
Context:
It may have been written in 1983, but this is not a contemporary novel! Instead Hill has written a pastiche of a Victorian Gothic Horror.

Gothic— These stories traditionally use:
- Grand remote settings
- Large/vast natural but eerie landscapes
- Extreme weather
- Darkness and shadows
- Monstrous creatures or supernatural
- Byronic heroes (a good, but flawed character— often has a troubled past which torments him)
- The persecuted woman— someone who is cast out of society because of something they have done (or been accused of)
- Curses and secrets

Horror— Some‘d’uh’ stuff about to be listed:
- Anticipation— building and breaking tension is as important as the horror itself.
- No happy endings

Victorian— It is a ‘pastiche’ (imitation) of a Victorian gothic, here’s how:
- It is more focused on ghosts, phantoms and spectres rather than any other kind of villain. The Victorians were definitely interested in Ghosts stories more so than any other
- It explores ideas about insanity — the Victorian era was one in which brain science really took off, and mental asylums were built; Bedlam in London was infamous during the Victorian times
- Hill’s style is very similar to Charles Dickens’ writing— very dense description of settings, use of pathetic fallacy, personifying the weather, giving characters/places names which connote their characteristics. Her description of the fog early on in the book is very much like Dickens’ description of fog in A Christmas Carol. It is important to remember she isn’t copying, she is imitating!
- It has a similar name to a well known Victorian classic ‘The Woman in White’ by Wilkie Collins.

Names also provide some context for the story. Alice Drablow: ‘drab’ means dull and unpleasant, ‘low’ connotes depressed or demeaning. ‘Jennet’ is both the name of the daughter of a woman burned as a witch in England’s history, and a word for a small horse (pony and trap?). Mr Jerome: St Jerome was noted for his fear of hell. Arthur Kips: an ordinary name for an everyday character: ‘Kips’ is a character in one of Victorian novelist HG Wells works; he is noted for being ‘ordinary’. Eel Marsh House, Nine Lives Causeway, Crythyn Gifford – all sound unpleasant and potentially dangerous in some way.

Can you see how The Woman in Black has the conventions of Victorian Gothic Horrors?

Structure:
Whatever the question, you need to able to relate it somehow to structure. Here’s a bunch of stuff that you can link in to whatever you’re talking about.

- 1st person narrative— this means that we can become closer to Arthur Kips as we hear the story from his perspective. It also means that events are revealed through him, and we can grow and change with him.
- The use of letters and notes from Alice Drablow and Jennet Humfrye means that we get to see the story from their points of view when it is relevant. This is important so that we can see The Woman in Black as a real character, and perhaps even begin to empathise with her.
- It is all written in the past tense— these are memories of terrifying events.
- It isn’t chronological. It opens with a middle-aged Arthur as the ‘Byronic Hero’ who describes his decision to write his memoir to rid himself of his demons. From Chapter 2 onwards, we meet Arthur as a young man. Occasionally the middle-aged Arthur’s voice interrupts the story of young Arthur, this is usually when he wants to prove or emphasize how he wasn’t superstitious at all! This makes the reader believe him more— his ghost story is much more credible.
- The beginning sets the scene in Monk’s piece, we don’t spend much time here but it helps to make Eel Marsh House all the more terrifying and sinister through contrast.
- Foreshadowing occurs throughout the novel with hints that something spooky is going to happen soon before it does. In Chapter 1 for example, there are many hints that he is going to tell us a story which will feature supernatural events.
- Hill uses long and complex sentences to build up dramatic detail before a spooky event. The long sentences are tension building because they create a sense of anticipation and perhaps frustration. Sentences become shorter when the situation becomes more tense. The chapter ‘In the Nursery’ is a good chapter for seeing this in action! Using the shorter sentences creates dramatic pace and mimics a panicked heartbeat!
- The ending is abrupt— it uses blunt, factual language and the one word sentence “Enough.” is so that the impact from the final scene isn’t lost, but the middle-aged Arthur has the final word; it makes it a more believable memoir. It also has the dramatic effect of making the reader recognise how upsetting the memories are for Arthur; it shocks the reader!

Writing Style:
This is where language and imagery comes in:
- Susan Hill uses the technique of pathetic fallacy so that the weather often reflects the mood/human emotions of the characters. We learn from the beginning how weather is important to Arthur, “My spirits have for many years now been excessively affected by the ways of the weather.” In London the fog is given the colloquial term ‘London Peasoppper’ and is described as ‘menacing and sinister’ which sets an ominous tone for Kips’ journey to Crythyn Gifford. Furthermore, throughout the novel the sea frets or mists, great gales and howling winds add to Kips’ fears when he is stranded at Eel Marsh House.
- Metaphor (describes something IS something else) — ‘That great cavern of a railway station’ is like saying that King’s Cross Station is an enormous cave. Hills name places are sort of metaphoric as well— Eel Marsh House makes us think the house will be creepy and sinister like Eels and Marshes.
- Simile (compares something by saying it IS AS or LIKE something else) — ‘It was a mist like a damp, clinging cobwebby thing.’ She uses these to create a vivid picture for the reader. To talk about the effect of each simile, you have to think about how it makes you feel. In this example, she chose cobweb as a comparison to make it sound creepy and play on a common phobia: spiders!
- Personification (gives human qualities to something inanimate) — ‘The wind will blow itself out and take the rain off it by morning,’ says Samuel Daily to Arthur making the wind and rain sound almost like a human couple.
- Hill uses a few comparisons which reference hell. In London he describes the streets with images that sound like fiery pits with ‘evil red smoke’. Later, at Eel Marsh House he describe “satanic” birds. This creates a sinister tone and leaves the reader in no doubt as to whether they are reading a horror!
- Hill uses symbols throughout: the colour black, yew trees, church bells, ravens and vultures — all symbols of death! Graveyard outside Eel Marsh House is also a symbol of death and very much part of the gothic style. Spider the dog represents safety and protection.
- Hill uses the senses throughout— but perhaps what is most interesting is her use of ‘the sixth sense’ through Spider. This allows her to build even more tension and expectation as Spider prompts us to fear the arrival of The Woman in Black.
- Important descriptions in the novel: The London fog in chapter 2, the Woman in Black at Alice Drablow’s funeral, the description of Eel Marsh house when Arthur first sees it.

REMEMBER: The question might ask you about just one specific chapter, but your knowledge of the WHOLE story should be clear. For example, you might be asked about the description of Eel Marsh house in chapter 5, but you could compare it to Monk’s Piece in chapter 1, and use details from later in the book— perhaps the chapter titled ‘In the Nursery’ where Arthur definitely stops viewing it as a ‘romantic’ or ‘handsome’ venue!
Isolation
Being isolated is usually seen as a negative thing - not something you really choose. In Wib isolation is definitely a negative! A few things contribute to the theme:
- Setting - Eel Marsh house especially. It is quite a distance from other buildings, and only reached by treacherous Nine Lives Causeway. When the tide is in, it is completely cut off from the town and the sea-mists isolate the people at the house even more - they can't even see beyond it. "When the tide came in, it would quickly be quite submerged and untraceable."
- Conspiracy of silence - Mr Bentley, Keckwick, Jerome, The Landlord and Samuel Daily all withhold information about The Woman in Black from Arthur - it is like they have all silently agreed not to talk about her - a bit like they don't want to 'tempt fate'. The silence is achieved by avoiding the topic, ignoring questions or giving vague answers.
- Jennet Humfrye - she was isolated from her child by family, and the consequences were terrible.

Revenge and Justice
Jennet Humfrye is seeking revenge for the death of her bastard son (who had been adopted by her sister in secret). The death of Nathaniel Drablow and his nursemaid and Keckwick's father were the fault of no-one in particular, just a tragic event. She is also seeking revenge for her sister taking her child and refusing to let her see him. Jennet was going to run away with Nathaniel on the day he was drowned. When Kipp sees the Woman in Black for the second time at Eel Marsh House he recognises in her expression that she is vengeful and wants to inflict harm on others, "What I saw - as a desperate, yearning malevolence." He later goes on to describe her as, "A poor, crazed, troubled woman, dead of grief and distress, filled with hatred and desire for revenge." As Kipp learns about her story, he actually becomes sympathetic towards her.
Justice is important to consider because the novel does look at religion and God a lot. This is after all, about afterlife! Jennet does not go to heaven, instead haunts Eel Marsh. She is disconnected from God - "still not holding a prayer book". The question is: Was the death of her child religious justice for her sinful behaviour? Is her fate as a doomed spectre who will always be angry and separated from her child justice? Or is the deaths of other people’s children justice for what happened to her?

Fear
There are two types of fear in the novel:
1. The individual's fear of the unknown (e.g. Arthur)
2. The collective fear of what is known (e.g. the residents of Crathin Gifford)

Arthur resents feeling fear, and tries to conquer it as much as is possible, when he sees the Wib for the 2nd time, he says he felt "angry, yes, angry, with her for the emotion she had aroused in me".

Arthur's fear is made all the worse because no-one will share it with him, he is forced to experience it on his own. When Arthur is an older man, we can see the effect of the fear on him - and perhaps understand why the residents of Crathin Gifford were so extremely affected.

The residents of Crathin Gifford are clearly frightened of the Wib - When Kipp first mentions his sighting of the 'young woman with the wasted face' to Mr Jerome at the funeral of Mrs Drablow, there is a 'silence so deep' that he can hear his own pulse and see Mr Jerome's inability to speak, later described as having a 'sickly greyish pallor' when discussing the sighting of the woman.

The ghost of Jennet Humfrye is the source of all the fear and repulsion in the novel: her appearance is repulsive, her very presence paralyses people, the idea of her being responsible for the deaths of many children is terrible. Hill presents fear as a very solitary thing - even the conspiracy don't really share their fear in order to conquer it, they let it grow silently around them.

Nature and the Supernatural
These two things are in conflict throughout the novel. Arthur considers himself to be sensible and rational - not the type to believe in ghosts - he criticises the "half-hints and dark mutterings made by grown men". As a result he focuses on the nature surrounding him, finding beauty in it as much as he can: "mysterious, shimmering beauty". The descriptions of nature are dense and detailed - Hill uses the senses to give the reader a true sense of being there. The focus on nature contrasts with the supernatural ghost of The Woman in Black. Arthur tries to rationally explain her presence but early on admits he finds her "ghostly". He reassures himself "Did not believe in ghosts. What other rational explanation was there?"

Arthur believes in the natural, and disbelieves in the supernatural. When he can physically see the Woman in Black, he tries hard to explain her presence and sudden disappearances but is conflicted when he struggles to do so.
He tries to explain supernatural events right through to his final days at Eel Marsh House - when he desperately tries to see where the 'burglars' gained entrance to destroy the nursery room - even though he had been haunted all evening! We do see him transform however, from someone who is very sceptical of ghosts, to someone who clearly believes.

Can you think of any other themes?
A Christmas Tale
The set-up is pretty cheery for such a dark tale. It opens with Arthur Kipps at home with his family and enjoying a pleasant Christmas Eve. However, when the talk of the evening turns to ghost stories, the real tale begins—and the real exposition. Arthur Kipps is a young solicitor who's heading off on a business trip to tie up the affairs of a newly deceased Mrs. Drablow. He's bound for a small town called Crythin Gifford, where he'll be sorting papers at the creepily named Eel Marsh House. And, with all the info we need for a truly nail-biting story, we're off!

To the Countryside
When Arthur gets to Crythin Gifford, he encounters lots of fog and uneasy townsfolk who don't want anything to do with (1) him, or (2) talk of Mrs. Drablow. We know that something is afoot, and we know it even more when all sorts of creepy things start happening at the house after Arthur spies a scary-looking woman in black at Mrs. Drablow's funeral.

As Arthur explores Eel Marsh House, things start to go bump in the night (literally). It all comes to a head when he

When Arthur brings up his findings to Sam Daily, the whole story falls into place. We find out that the ghost is of a woman named Jennet Humfrye who haunts Eel Marsh House and Crythin Gifford because she's super angry about the death of her child. Every time she's seen, a child dies… except for this time. Whew! Arthur heads

Not exactly. The actual resolution happens a couple years later, when Arthur has married his girlfriend Stella and had a child named Joseph. He sees the woman in black again and his wife and child get into a terrible accident and die. That's when everything really gets resolved—with a bitter old ghost's revenge.
**CHARACTER TABLE**

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<td>AK's fiancee and moth of Joseph. She is clearly a refuge, something to look forward to during his time in CG. Stella represents everything that is safe and normal. She represents to us, that the past can reach you wherever you are and Arthur spends 10 long months watching her die and grieving for Joe.</td>
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The Woman in Black Character Web

- Jennet Humfrey
- Nathaniel
- Alice Drablow
- Mr. Jerome
- Mr. Bentley
- Keckwick
- Spider
- Stella
- Esme
- Joseph
- Step Children
- Landlord
- Sam Daily
- Arthur Kipps
- The Woman in Black
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<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Thinking Point</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Betrayal</strong></td>
<td>Jennet feels so betrayed by her own family and community for not allowing her to raise her son that she takes it out on the community even in death. Arthur thinks he’s safe and sound after he leaves Crythin Gifford, so he experiences the death of Stella and his son as betrayals of his sense of safety and security.</td>
<td>Is Jennet’s anger justified? Who is she really angry with? What would make her feel better? Why does Jennet take out her vengeance on other people’s children? Does the ending make sense? Was Arthur really deserving of “revenge”?</td>
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<td><strong>Isolation</strong></td>
<td>In the book, Eel Marsh House represents both physical and emotional isolation from the real world. Jennet can’t find peace as a ghost and continues with the cycle of alienation and isolation even in death.</td>
<td>What is the significance of Eel Marsh House being cut off by the causeway? Would this story work as well if the house were on a tall mountain instead of in a marsh? How is Jennet isolated in life? How is she isolated in death? Are there other isolated characters? Why does Arthur keep returning to Eel Marsh House by himself? Why doesn’t he go back to town at the end of the day? How does the isolated setting reflect Arthur’s inner thoughts?</td>
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<td><strong>Revenge</strong></td>
<td>Jennet is taking revenge on the community that would not allow her to raise her own son. In taking revenge on Arthur, the woman in black brings resolution to the whole story... even if it’s kind of bleak.</td>
<td>Why is Jennet so bent on revenge when her sister is already dead? Is she mad at her sister, or is she mad at her whole society? Is Jennet taking revenge on people for what happened before or after Nathaniel died? Why is she taking it out on people who may not even have been alive when her son died? Does Arthur want to get revenge on the woman in black? How could you get revenge on a ghost?</td>
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### Themes

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| **Appearances**  
This isn't one of those horror stories where things aren't always what they seem, and Jennet is no disembodied ghost going bump in the night. She's fully embodied, with eyes, clothes, and skin—even if that skin does look like bone. In *The Woman in Black*, appearances matter. From Sam Daily's beefy hands to the gaunt, empty house, what's outside gives us a pretty good clue to what's inside. And it's not always good.  
In true gothic fashion, the woman in black's ghastly appearance is an accurate reflection of her inside. Sam Daily is one character that does not match with his appearance; he turns out to be far more insightful and thoughtful than Arthur initially thought. | What does the woman in black's appearance tell us about her character? Would she have looked different during her life?  
Is Sam Daily what Arthur expected when he met him? Does his appearance match up with his character?  
How does Eel Marsh House's appearance relate to other haunted house clichés? Is it pretty much what we expect from a haunted house? If so, why? |
| **Memory and the Past**  
*The Woman in Black* is one long trip down memory lane, but it's not the memory lane that happens to be lined with rose bushes and chirping birds and lazy afternoons at the beach. It's more a memory lane that's lined with boggy marshes and skeletons. Not so pleasant. The whole tale of the woman in black is one that will live forever in Arthur's memory, for better or for worse (hint: it's totally for worse).  
The woman in black could represent anyone who is so stuck in the past that he or she can't move on with life. No matter how much Arthur tries to leave the past behind—both in the sense of his personal past and a historical past—it always catches up to him. | What is the relationship between Arthur's current life and his past life and family?  
Is Arthur the only character living in the past?  
What's the difference between the way Jennet lives in the past and the way Arthur lives in the past?  
Why can't Jennet let go of what happened to her?  
Is there any way she could find peace except by murdering children?  
Is Arthur still haunted by the events that happened to him as a young man? |
| **Supernatural**  
What's more supernatural than ghosts and phantom noises and self-rocking chairs? *The Woman in Black* is chock-full of creepy, inexplicable details that point to one thing: the existence of ghosts. And it doesn't leave us any room for doubt. Unless—we're just going to throw this out there—unless the whole story is a way for Arthur to make sense of the otherwise senseless deaths of his wife and child. Could that be possible?  
Arthur comes to Crythin Gifford not believing in anything irrational such as the supernatural, but his opinions slowly change as the evidence piles up. At first, Arthur thinks that the residents of Crythin Gifford are backwards and ignorant, but it turns out that he's the ignorant one. | Are there really ghosts in the story or are they a figment of Arthur's imagination? Do the villagers' spooky tales get to him after all?  
Why do you think Jennet chooses to haunt Eel Marsh House and Crythin Gifford? Or does she even have a choice?  
Is the sound of the child crying out on the marsh the same kind of ghost as the woman in black?  
Why is Arthur not haunted by Stella and Joseph—or is he? |
| **Madness**  
We can come up with a word or two for Jennet Humfrye, but "sane" isn't one of them. In *The Woman In Black*, her anger and despair actually make her go crazy—so crazy that she wants to destroy everyone. And confronting the reality of her ghost makes Arthur go a little crazy, too, or at least feel like he's going crazy. Wandering around a big haunted house will do that to a guy.  
As Arthur stays at Eel Marsh House, he starts to lose his grip on reality, mirroring Jennet Humfrye's deterioration. Jennet Humfrye's madness keeps her trapped at Eel Marsh House. She went so crazy following Nathaniel's death that she could not rest even in death. | Was Jennet Humfrye always crazy? What set off her madness?  
Why does she continue to act out even in death?  
What compels her to keep wreaking revenge?  
Does Arthur lose his grip on reality as he stays at Eel Marsh House? |
<table>
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<th>Theme</th>
<th>Thinking Point</th>
<th>Questions</th>
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<td><strong>Man and the Natural World</strong>&lt;br&gt;Good old Mother Nature plays a huge role in <em>The Woman in Black</em>. The crazy, murderous kind of mother, like Jennet. He may come from London, where everything is man-made and contained, but out in the countryside Arthur's on his own and left to the power of the elements. The bleak, powerful, indifferent elements. This might even be scarier than the ghost.</td>
<td>Despite all the modern technological advances in the story, such as the steam train and the telephone, the power and complexity of nature eventually wins out.&lt;br&gt;Nature dictates Arthur's entire trip at Eel Marsh House, even cutting him off from human society against his will.</td>
<td>In what ways does nature overpower man in <em>The Woman in Black</em>?&lt;br&gt;What's more impressive and oppressive: Eel Marsh House or the surrounding areas?&lt;br&gt;What is the difference between the kind of nature that surrounds Monk's Piece and the kind that surrounds Crythin Gifford?&lt;br&gt;Is Arthur at peace with nature, or does he fear it?</td>
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<td><strong>Exploration</strong>&lt;br&gt;Even though Arthur is shaking in his boots throughout his whole miserable trip to Crythin Gifford and Eel Marsh House, he's still on a quest to find the truth. <em>The Woman in Black</em> gives us plenty of mysterious loose ends, and Arthur is the slightly terrified man for the job. He has to both literally and metaphorically explore Eel Marsh House and its former inhabitants to find out the who, what, where, and why of Crythin Gifford's haunted past.</td>
<td>Even though Arthur could have come up with an excuse to leave Eel Marsh House and Crythin Gifford, he stays because he wants to solve the mystery of the old house.&lt;br&gt;Arthur is as much the victim of a horror movie as he is a protagonist of a mystery; he spends as much time running through the house in terror as he does sorting through papers to find the truth.</td>
<td>Does Arthur's view of his business trip change once he arrives in Crythin Gifford?&lt;br&gt;What does Arthur find on his own when he explores Eel Marsh House?&lt;br&gt;How important is Spider to Arthur's adventure? Would he have been able to proceed without her company? What about Sam and Keckwick?</td>
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<td><strong>Fear</strong>&lt;br&gt;<em>The Woman in Black</em> is interested in a lot of things—nature, the Sublime, revenge—but it's definitely interested in fear. What causes it? Who feels it? What does it prompt us to do? Is it just a fun emotion to evoke while we're sitting safely by the fire, or does it have a more primitive and profound purpose?</td>
<td>By making everyone afraid of her, the woman in black holds a kind of power that she did not have when she was alive.&lt;br&gt;Arthur starts off unafraid, but he becomes afraid as he begins to understand what's going on. Proper fear is a type of maturity.</td>
<td>Is Arthur afraid of the woman in black from the very beginning? When does he begin to fear her?&lt;br&gt;Seriously, why doesn't Arthur leave? Or at least refuse to sleep at the house?&lt;br&gt;Why does the woman in black want people to be afraid of her? What makes her so frightening, beside her spooky costume?&lt;br&gt;Why do you think the villagers are so afraid of talking about the woman in black? Is there any reason to think that talking about her will make her worse?</td>
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Moreover, that the intensity of her grief and distress together with her pent-up hatred and desire for revenge permeated the air all around. (11.72)

The woman in black wants to make someone, anyone pay for what she's been through—and she wants it so badly that it leaves a mark on the whole house.

In Scotland, a son was born to her and she wrote of him with a desperate, clinging affection. (9.35)

Jennet was once a normal human, even a fond and affectionate mother. And now look at what she's become. Hint: it's not pretty.

Who she was—or what—and how she had vanished, such questions I did not ask myself. (5.28)

On the one hand, okay, we're not sure we'd want to know the answers to those questions either. On the other hand—come on, show a little curiosity, Arthur!

Minutes later, they were receding across the causeway, smaller and smaller figures in the immensity and wideness of marsh and sky... (5.15)

Even though Keckwick is a tight-lipped kind of fellow, it must still be hard on Arthur to see him go. He's another normal living soul, after all.

Behind me, out on the marshes, all was still and silent; save for that movement of the water, the pony and trap might never have existed. (6.9)

Talk about the setting having an effect on a narrator. The marshy, creepy goodness of Eel Marsh House adds to the tension that we feel as Arthur goes exploring.

But for today I had had enough. Enough of solitude and no sound save the water and the moaning wind and the melancholy calls of the birds, enough of monotonous grayness, enough of this gloomy old house. (5.39)

The empty and lonely surroundings at Eel Marsh House are starting to get to Arthur. Guess that's what happens when you're wandering around an ancient burial plot by yourself.
“it was as though she was searching for something she wanted, needed—must have, more than life itself, and which had been taken from her.” (5.24)

You know those people who feel like life has done them wrong, even though life doesn’t exactly have a consciousness or will to do individual people wrong? Yeah. That’s Jennet. And people who feel betrayed by life always find a way to take it out on the world.

I stood absolutely helpless in the mist that clouded me and everything from my sight, almost weeping in an agony of fear and frustration, and I knew that I was hearing... appalling last noises of a pony and trap, carrying a child in it... (6.6)

Arthur feels completely helpless and frozen with fear when he hears the pony and trap, which he assumes to be real. But it's even scarier when he realizes that the sounds aren't real.

But to harm who? Was not everyone connected with that sad story now dead? (11.73)

Come to think of it, Arthur has a point. Why is the woman in black still seeking revenge? It's not like there's anyone still around who directly wronged her. Can it really be called revenge if she's not hurting the people who hurt her.

Doubtless, in such a place as this, with its eerie marshes, sudden fogs, moaning winds... any poor old woman might be looked at askance; once upon a time, after all, she would have been branded as a witch... (4.19)

At first, Arthur thinks that people were afraid of Mrs. Drablow because she was an old woman. Silly yokels, right? Surprise! She's not the one they're afraid of.

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At first, Arthur thinks that people were afraid of Mrs. Drablow because she was an old woman. Silly yokels, right? Surprise! She's not the one they're afraid of.
[It was] a modest house and yet sure of itself, and then looking across at the country beyond. I had no sense of having been here before, but an absolute conviction that I would come here again (1.10)

Arthur makes serious real estate decisions based off of how much he likes the way the outside of a cottage looks. Good thing that one worked out.

I decided that he was a man who had made, or come into, money late and unexpectedly, and was happy for the world to know it. (3.13)

For such a young guy, Arthur Kipps makes some pretty snap judgments about people. Good thing Mr. Daily doesn't write him off in the same manner.

The business was beginning to sound like something from a Victorian novel, with a reclusive old woman having hidden a lot of ancient documents somewhere in the depths of her cluttered home. (2.62)

I was the one who, to judge by my agitation of this evening, was still affected by it deeply, it was from me alone that the ghost must be driven. (1.65)

Even after all these years, Arthur still feels the need to exorcise his demons. He can't quite get over what happened to him. (And we can't really blame him. Seriously, the guy watched his wife and child die.)

LOL, right? This little quip is a joke on Arthur, because (1) it's supposed to show us how Arthur thinks of himself as oh-so-modern even though the Victorian era is probably only a few years behind him, and (2) it turns out that he is in a Victorian-esque novel.

Could I not be free of it at least for that blessed time, was there no way of keeping the memory, and the effects it had upon me, at bay... (1.64)

Like an old wound, it gave off a faint twinge now and again, but less and less often, less and less painfully... Of late, it had been like the outermost ripple of a pool, merely the faint memory of a memory. (1.62)

The thing about memories is that they never go away completely. Well, except for a convenient bout of amnesia. Wonder if Arthur could acquire one?

Arthur wants to never think back on that memory again, but it keeps resurfacing. Like an especially stubborn rubber ducky in the bathtub of life.
I did not believe in ghosts. Or rather, until this day, I had not done so, and whatever stories I had heard of them I had, like most rational, sensible young men, dismissed as nothing more than stories indeed. (5.30)

Even though the facts are staring him in the face, Arthur refuses to believe that the woman is a ghost. But if your conclusion (ghosts) is rationally impossible, then maybe your facts are wrong?

The business was beginning to sound like something from a Victorian novel, with a reclusive old woman having hidden a lot of ancient documents somewhere in the depths of her cluttered home. (2.62)

LOL, right? This little quip is a joke on Arthur, because (1) it's supposed to show us how Arthur thinks of himself as oh-so-modern even though the Victorian era is probably only a few years behind him, and (2) it turns out that he is in a Victorian-esque novel.

Behind me, in the house, I knew that I must have left the family in a state of consternation and bewilderment... (1.60)

All the kids want to do is spook each other a little bit, and dad goes rushing off into the night. Way to spoil everyone's fun, dad. (Only Arthur knows that there's nothing fun about ghost stories.)

But what was "real"? At that moment I began to doubt my own reality. (10.10)

Even the so proudly rational Arthur has trouble keeping track of what's what when he's wandering around Eel Marsh House. We get the feeling that he's never going to look at a ghost story the same way again.

Her face, in its extreme pallor, her eyes, sunken but unnaturally bright, were burning with the concentration of passionate emotion which was within her and which streamed from her. (5.24)

Crazy eyes, Shmoopers. Stay away from the people with crazy eyes.

she would have been branded as a witch and local legends and tales were still abroad and some extravagant folklore still half-believed in. (4.19)

Arthur dismisses the villagers as steeped in silly folklore, but who's the one believing in ghosts by the end?
To one side of it, a stream ran between the banks toward the meadow beyond, whence it made its meandering way down to the river. (1.11)

The pleasant, beautiful aspects of Monk's Piece attract Arthur—maybe because it's about the exact opposite of Eel Marsh house.

But I did not go inside. I did not want to, yet awhile. I wanted to drink in all the silence and the mysterious, shimmering beauty, to smell the strange, salt smell that was borne faintly on the wind, to listen for the slightest murmur. (5.16)

There's a certain kind of joy in exploring a new landscape, even if it turns out to be one infested with terrifying ghost people.

I felt nothing other than curiosity, a professional interest... coupled with a mild sense of adventure. (2.6)

Young Arthur goes on a business trip, with no idea as to what he's going to encounter. He's in for adventure, that's sure, but the foreshadowing here doesn't give us any hints of what kind of terror he's in for.

In fact, I was not by any means unattracted to the idea of the expedition... (2.70)

The idea of traveling to a different part of the country and sorting through the affairs of a dead woman sounds a little romantic, no?
## SYMBOLISM

<table>
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<th>NATURE</th>
<th>INNOCENT DEATH</th>
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<td>In this book, nature isn’t just a backdrop—it’s a force of, well, nature. Man is small and almost inconsequential in comparison to the natural force of the tide, the dangerous marshes, and even the calm and beautiful setting of Monk’s Piece. And Arthur will not zip it about the power of nature: I had never been quite so alone, nor felt quite so small and insignificant in a vast landscape before, and I fell into a not unpleasant brooding, philosophical frame of mind, struck by the absolute indifference of water and sky to my presence. (6.2) He says &quot;indifference&quot;: we say that it almost seems like nature is out to get him. The causeway cuts him off from the town when the tide is high; the wind wakes him up in the middle of the night and makes the whole house whistle; it wakes him up in the middle of the night and makes the whole house whistle; and the boggy marsh nearly kills him when he goes to rescue Spider. This is also true to go into the sublime, which is the feeling of terror and awe that you get when you encounter nature in its human-crushing form, like a super scary thunderstorm or a powerful waterfall. (Think Wuthering Heights and all those broken hearts wandering through the desolate moors.) Arthur may have smarts, a modern job and a rational attitude, but he's no match for the brutality and beauty of nature. And he knows it. Yeah, there's a lot of death. But these are specific types of deaths: they're the deaths of innocent people, like Jennet Humfrye's son Nathaniel who dies in an accident along with his nursermaid and the driver of the pony trap, Keckwick Sr. It's no one's fault and the dead themselves are innocent, but Jennet goes insane with grief and begins wreaking havoc on other people's children. Innocent children. As Arthur asks, and Sam explains: &quot;You mean any child? A child of the town?&quot; &quot;Any child. Jerome's child.&quot; (11.127-128) The ghost of Jennet Humfrye is none too picky. She'll pretty much kill off whatever child is around, even if the child is innocent and has nothing to do with her own sad story. This culminates in the end scene, where Arthur watches on in horror as Stella and Joseph die. Talk about blameless: they never even knew about the woman in black. Babes in the Wood - It's not just the literal death of innocent babies that we're talking about here, though. It's also the death of Arthur's innocence: For I see that then I was still all in a state of innocence, but that innocence, once lost, is lost forever. (4.22) At the beginning of the story, Arthur is young and living in a world that he believes to be rational and good. He is cured of those innocent ideas when he meets the woman in black and she effectively ruins his life, despite his unwillingness to believe in her. And (we think) that's the thing about the past: it's illogical. It hurts people who had nothing to do with it. It flies in the face of reason and rationality. Like nature, it's terrifying—and ultimately indifferent to any individual lives it hurts along the way. If you noticed the pony and trap recurring and thought, &quot;gee, anything that shows up so often just has to be a symbol,&quot; well, you'd be right. For Arthur, the pony and trap are a flashback to the past. He arrives expecting a car, but: No car appeared. Instead there drew up outside the Gifford Arms a rather worn and shabby pony and trap. (5.1) For Arthur, this goofy mode of transportation represents an old-school England in which cars and trains are not relevant and everyone travels in carriages and on ponies. It lets him think that the villagers are just a bunch of hicks who probably go muddin' and cow-tipping—and he might be right about that. But the pony and trap also comes to represent a lot more. Post-Traumatic Stress - Specifically, it represents being stuck in the past. When he comes to Eel Marsh House, he begins hearing the sounds of the pony and trap on the causeway, but it's not a cheerful trotting sound: It had somehow lost the causeway path and had fallen into the marshes and was being dragged under by the quicksand and the pull of the incoming tide. (6.6) He hears this again and again before realizing that it's not real; it's a memory that repeats itself. The pony and trap represents the event that Jennet, the woman in black, cannot get over—the death of her child. We have a name for this in the 20th and 21st centuries, although the 19th century didn’t: trauma. What Arthur hears is a traumatic event repeating itself over and over, because Jennet can’t figure out how to process it. She's compelled to relieve the event, almost like a war veteran who can't adjust to civilian life again. Will Arthur be doomed to the same fate? Or will telling this story act like a support group, letting him move on from his traumatic past? Back to the Past - One more thing. The pony and trap also comes up again in a very unfortunate way—it is the contraption that kills Arthur’s wife and child. In this circumstance, the pony and trap still represents the pull of the past, because even with all the modern modes of transportation, Stella and Joseph still want to ride the pony and trap as a kind of old-school carnival ride—like wanting to ride on a steam engine train, or go for a drive in a Model T. But the ride turns out to be the exact opposite of charmingly nostalgic: They had almost come to a halt when they passed the tree beside which the woman in black was still standing and, as they did so, she moved quickly, her skirts rustling as if to step into the pony's path. (12.25) In a truly horrifying instance of the past coming back to haunt Arthur, Stella and Joseph die in a pony and trap accident—almost, but not quite, repeating history. 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Unlike Jennet, Arthur will be able to move on from this awful accident without bringing dozens of innocent children down with him. |
If there’s one way to characterise this book, it’s to say that it’s a good old-fashioned ghost story, complete with the death of a reclusive old lady, a big creepy mansion, and a ghost that keeps appearing at the most spine-tingling moments. On top of that, it’s told in old-school British gothic fashion, with a focus on the environment’s ability to inspire dread and fear. From a damp, eerie old house to the things that go bump in the night, *The Woman in Black* gives every fright fest film a run for its money, and without shedding a drop of blood.

**Narrator and Tone**

Who is the narrator, can she or he read minds, and, more importantly, can we trust her or him? **First Person (Central Narrator)** *The Woman in Black* is Arthur Kipps’s story. He makes this clear at the end of the first chapter of the book, when he commits to telling the story:

*I decided at once that it should be, at least during my lifetime, a story for my eyes only. I was the one who had been haunted and who had suffered—not the only one, no, but surely, I thought, the only one left alive…* (1.65)

The entire story is told from Arthur’s point of view, which makes us experience all the confusion, realisation, and terror at the same time as he does. We aren’t privy to the larger picture, just as Arthur is not privy to it until it is far too late. Even though he’s telling the story from the present, we almost get to experience the mystery and horror of the journey ourselves.

There is some hindsight involved. Arthur is older and wiser now, which means that he can see the whole arc of the story. And in that story—a story that the woman in black seems to be controlling, even in Arthur is the one telling it—Stella and Joseph had to die.

This is one uptight narrator. Arthur can’t even say that bad weather makes him depressed without mincing around, we suspect with his nose in the air:

*My spirits have for many years now been excessively affected by the ways of the weather, and I confess that, had it not been for the air of cheerfulness and bustle that prevailed in the rest of the house, I should have been quite cast down in gloom and lethargy* (1.4)

Throughout the whole book, Arthur talks in his very British way about everything, avoiding the fact that he’s going through some really rough stuff. There are no expletives, no choppy sentences, no exclamations of despair—just stiff upper lip, even when he’s facing down a ghost.

We can also see this in the way that he handles his new family when they bring up ghost stories: he deflects like a pro. Instead of explaining to them his horrid past, he excuses himself and goes for a walk. Just like a man. A British man.

**Genre**

**Historical Fiction**

In addition to scare factor, *The Woman in Black* takes the reader on a trip back to the past. Though the time period is a little hazy, the old-timey language, steam trains, and pony and trap rides let us know right away that we’re not in the 21st century, or even in 1983 when the book was written. Instead, the story seems like it’s set in the 19th or early 20th century, which helpfully adds to the spooky factor because things were totally more creepy and ghostly in the past, right? The whole story has the feel of a 19th-century, *Turn of the Screw* era tale. And that’s exactly what it is.

**Mystery**

Every good ghost story is at least a little mysterious, as the characters try to figure out what’s happening—and why it’s happening to them. *The Woman in Black* is no different. Arthur arrives in Crythin Gifford innocent of the village’s dire events, and ignorant of the very fact that ghosts even exist. Over the course of the book, he starts to piece things together in true detective style, gleaning hints from the townspeople and the massive stack of papers he finds in Eel Marsh House. And the secrets he unravels are not happy ones.
## Setting

The whole story of *The Woman in Black* is set in some indeterminate historical setting. Though it seems like historical fiction because of the pony and trap and the steam train, we never get a clear sense of the date.

This could be a deliberate choice because of the pull between the past and the present that is pervasive throughout the book. Arthur is just a modern young man when he comes to Crythin Gifford, doing fancy modern things like using telephones and expecting cars to come pick him up. How silly of him! On the flip side, the woman in black represents the past—she’s all about the pony and trap times and rotting away in a big old house in outdated funeral attire. The fact that we can’t quite pinpoint the setting also makes the whole story a little more unsettling, and maybe makes us think about how the story’s themes might play out in our own time.

### Crythin Gifford

Sam Daily gives a charming description of Crythin Gifford to Arthur as they sit on the train together:

“... There's the drowned churches and the swallowed-up village,” he chuckled. "Those are particularly fine examples of 'nothing to see.' And we've a good wild run of an abbey with a handsome graveyard—you can get to it at low tide." (3.37)

And that’s about it. Crythin Gifford is a dreary, bleak town filled with secrets, somewhere on the coast of England. The surrounding wilderness all but swallows up the town—and literally swallows some things, like the pony and trap. Humans and human buildings are overshadowed by the sheer force of nature, and by the sheer force of the past.

Frankly, we’re just surprised anyone is still living there.

### Eel Marsh House

Come on. Eel Marsh House, the large, forbidding house where Alice Drablow lived out the last of her days, is obviously haunted. It’s big, unoccupied, filled with mysterious papers, and cut off from the mainland. That’s kind of a recipe for heart-pounding unfortunate encounters.

Arthur describes it thus when he first happens upon it:

Then, as it was so bright that it hurt my eyes to go on staring at it, I looked up ahead and saw, as if rising out of the water itself, a tall, gaunt house of gray stone with a slate roof, that now gleamed steelily in the light. (5.6)

Check out how the house is described: it does actions, like "rising" and "gleaming"; and it even looks "gaunt," exactly like a person. These descriptive words give the house a presence and a personality. Like nature, and like the past itself, the house appears to have a malevolent kind of presence. You know, like a vengeful ghost.

### Monk Piece

The novel opens in Monk Piece, although we hardly get to spend any time there at all. It’s the place where Arthur Kipps—now all grown up—currently resides with his new family, and it’s about as opposite Eel Marsh House and Crythin Gifford as you can imagine. In fact, it’s a "tiny hamlet... tucked snugly into a bend of the river below, white walls basking in the afternoon sunshine" (1.8).

Arthur lives a pleasant, safe family life in this pleasant, safe village and in the warm, busy cottage. He’s clearly come a long way since his journey to Eel Marsh House both metaphorically and literally… and he’d like to keep it that way.
Chapter 1: Christmas Eve

‘My spirits have for many years now been excessively affected by the ways of the weather …’

1. Find three key images from pp.9-10 and explain how each one is effective in establishing the reader’s interest.
2. How does Hill engage the reader’s interest in the first ten pages? Think about foreshadowing, hints, characterisation, setting etc.
3. Why do you think Arthur reacts as he does to the requests for a story?
4. What do you think is the relevance of the poem on p.23?
5. How effective is Chapter 1, in your opinion? Link your ideas to specific quotations.

Chapter 2: A London Particular

‘It was a yellow fog, a filthy, evil-smelling fog …’

1. What sort of tone is established on pp.25–26 of the novel? Give evidence for your ideas, and explain how you came to your conclusions.
2. What do we learn about Arthur’s work life in this chapter?
3. Find three quotations that build tension from pp.26–31. For each one, explain how it works and why it is effective.

Chapter 3: The Journey North

‘I shuddered, all the more because of the openness of his gaze and the directness of his manner.’

1. How does Hill use the train journey to convey a growing sense of unease?
2. Sketch out the description of Samuel Daily on pp.36-7. Label with key quotations from the chapter, describing his personality as well as his appearance.
3. How do you respond to this character? Give reasons for your ideas.
4. What do we learn about Mrs Drablow in this chapter?
5. Pick four quotations you feel help to illustrate the character of Arthur in this chapter. Explain each one.
Chapter 4: The Funeral of Mrs Drablow

‘I was still all in a state of innocence, but that innocence, once lost, is lost forever.’

1. How does the description of the Gifford Arms contrast with the settings used so far in the novel?

2. ‘His face flickered with … what? Alarm, was it? Suspicion? I could not tell, but the name had stirred some strong emotion in him, all signs of which he endeavoured to suppress at once.’ (p. 42)
   How does Hill build tension for the reader in this quotation?

3. How does Hill create a sense of the isolation of Crythin Gifford, and why is this important?

4. What do we learn about Mr Jerome in this chapter?

5. Sketch the woman described on pp.48-49. Add quotations and comment on the way the reader responds to the character in this chapter.

6. What new information do we get about Samuel Daily in this chapter? How do you think we’re supposed to feel about this character at this point?

Chapter 5: Across the Causeway

‘I felt a strange sensation, an excitement mingled with alarm.’

1. Find two quotations that show the marshes in a positive way. Explain the effect of each.

2. What effect do these natural images have?
   - sand/grass
   - the pony
   - birds/birdsounds
   - water
   - fish

3. What is the impact of the woman’s second appearance on a) Arthur and b) the reader?

4. In what ways does Hill present the house as a sanctuary?
Chapter 6: The Sound of a Pony and Trap

‘I stumbled, praying to reach the house, which was farther away than I had imagined.’

1. Explore how Hill uses each of the following to establish and raise the tension in this chapter. Include a key quotation and explain the impact it has on the reader:
   - fog
   - noises
   - isolation.

2. Do you think Arthur is himself to blame for what happens to him in this chapter? Explain your answer.

3. How is Keckwick presented in Chapter 6? Include key quotations and an exploration of the impact he had.

4. How does the character of Arthur change in this chapter?

Chapter 7: Mr Jerome is Afraid

‘His pale domed forehead was beaded with perspiration.’

1. Why does Arthur decide to stay? Does this seem like a good decision?

2. How is Mr Jerome presented in this chapter? How does he react when Arthur asks him for help?

3. Why does Arthur decide to go back to the house even if it does mean going alone?

Chapter 8:

‘At my feet stood a sturdy little terrier with a rough brindle coat and bright eyes.’

1. Is the description of Arthur as a ‘fool’ fair in your opinion?

2. What does Daily’s house tell us about his character?

3. Why do you think Arthur shows so much trust in Daily?

4. What clues are there that Daily is concerned about Arthur?

5. Why do you think Daily offers Spider to Arthur? What good will she be?
Chapter 9: In the Nursery

‘When I awoke - or was awakened - very suddenly, I felt somewhat stunned, uncertain …’

1. What does Arthur do to try to limit his fear in the house?

2. In what ways is Spider an important character in this chapter?

3. Pick two details from pp.108-109 that help to build tension and explain how they work.

4. What are the key pieces of information from the letters?

5. Why is the open door scary?

6. Create a labelled sketch of the nursery.

7. Why did Arthur find the sound of the pony and trap worse than seeing the woman?

Chapter 10: Whistle and I’ll Come to You

‘I ran as I have never run before, heedless of my own safety, desperate to go to the aid of the brave, bright little creature …’

1. What effect does the description of the storm have?

2. Why is Arthur glad of Spider’s company on p.126?

3. Why does he return to the nursery? How is the reader supposed to react?

4. What effect does the nursery have on Arthur? Why do you think this is?

5. How does Spider get into danger and how does Arthur react? Pick a vivid image from this scene and explore its effect.

6. How do you respond to the final sentence of the chapter?
Chapter 11: A Packet of Letters

‘If I could uncover the truth, perhaps I might in some way put an end to it all forever.’

1. What is the effect of Daily’s return upon Arthur?
2. Why did Daily return? Do you find this a convincing reason?
3. What has happened to the nursery? What effect is this intended to have on the reader?
4. What new information does Arthur learn in this chapter?
5. Why do you think Daily still avoids telling Arthur everything he knows?
6. What do we learn about Jennet from Daily?

Chapter 12: The Woman in Black

‘They asked for my story. I have told it. Enough.’

1. How does Hill want us to feel when Arthur leaves Crythin Gifford?
2. What details does Hill use to make links between the opening and ending of the novel?
3. Why does the happiness described on pp.156-157 seem out of place for this story?
5. Why do you think this story ends so abruptly?
6. Is this a satisfying ending to the novel? Explain your answer.
How to answer exam questions:

You have **45 minutes** to answer the question:
**5 minutes** to read and annotate the extract.
**5 minutes** planning.
**35 minutes** writing an essay style answer with PEE answers and embedded quotes.
You **MUST** refer to the extract and your knowledge of the **WHOLE** novel.

Step 1. Break down the question: what exactly is it asking?

**How does Hill leave the reader with a sense of horror at the end of the novel? (40 marks)**

Step 2. **Read** the extract several times, **highlight** and **annotate** any PEE parts that are useful or you want to include in your answer.

Step 3. **Plan** your answer - jot down notes for your PEE paragraphs and also jot down the **whole text references** you are going to use in your answer.

Step 4. **Write** your answer, ensuring you do a brief introduction, followed by a series of PEE paragraphs. Each should contain a **point** that refers to a **technique or subject terminology**; at least one piece of **evidence** from the text; and a sound **explanation** of how the evidence proves your point and **answers the question**. You may wish to include a short conclusions as well.

Step 5: **Reread** your answer, checking that you have made **relevant** points with **supporting evidence** with good explanations that **answer the question**. Check spelling, grammar and word order/sense. Ensure you have give **enough information** for the marks available. You should be looking for around 6-7 PEE paragraphs. Remember you are also marked on **AO4 Vocab**, spelling, sentence structure and punctuation.
**Important things to consider:**

Answers should:
- be relevant – you don’t need to write everything you know about the text, only the things that relate to the question
- be sufficiently detailed – it is better to give a lot of detail about a small part of the text than trying to cover lots of different points
- be well structured – with a clear introduction which addresses the question and a clear conclusion that returns to the question
- use effective vocabulary – including literary terms where relevant
- use well-chosen evidence/quotations to support points.

---

**PLAN**

I know, I know, "it's a waste of time"! If only I got a pound for every time someone telepathically told me that (because you never say it to my actual face, I see it in your eyes though!) I'd buy some shoes.

It ISN'T a waste of time though– because it helps you do the following:
- Check your points are varied;
- Give yourself a sense of direction – you know what you have to move onto and when you’ve finished overall;
- Keeps you focused and prevents ‘going off on a tangent’;
- Helps the examiner see what points you _would_ have made if time isn’t on your side....

---

**Getting started- Getting points across- Getting to the end**

**Introduction** - I would simply get on with the first point you **HAVE** planned (subtle aren’t I), but open the whole thing with a repetition of the question e.g. *Throughout the novel The Woman in Black, Hill uses eerie and remote settings to create a sense of isolation. In London, the fog isolates the city dwellers and...*  
**Middle** – hopefully you make a few points here. What I do want to remind you of is that you are not a genius creative writing critic reviewing Hill’s novel i.e. *Hill could make this scarier if only she...* Errr **no**.

You can of course say stuff like: *Hill successfully creates a really creepy atmosphere when she describes the ‘satanic birds’... And stuff like: The description of the ‘satanic birds’ certainly prepared me for a horror scene as they sounded grotesque and added to the creepy and lonely atmosphere...* Just don’t go writing her a guide on how to be awesome. Massive cringe.

**Conclusion** - This should be a summary of your main points. Basically you are repeating yourself, but whacking all those good points into one final list. E.g. *In conclusion, it is Hill’s use of remote settings, the conspiracy of silence in Crythin Gifford and the lonely character of Jennet Humfrye herself that contribute to the sense of isolation throughout the novel.*

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**Quick notes**

- Foreshadowing – Arthur in Ch 1 sets us up for horror story
- References to hell– clear sense of evil
- Prepared for horror
- Symbols of death– black, ravens, church bells, graveyards
- Weather changes– mists, rain, gale winds.
Exam Mark Scheme:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVE</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AO1:1a</td>
<td>Read, understand and respond to texts to maintain a critical style.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AO1:1b</td>
<td>Read, understand and respond to texts to develop an informed personal response.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AO1:2</td>
<td>Use textual references, including quotations, to support and illustrate interpretations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AO2</td>
<td>Analyse the language, form and structure used by a writer to create meanings and effects, using relevant subject terminology where appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AO4</td>
<td>Use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEVEL</th>
<th>AO4</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High performance 4–5</td>
<td></td>
<td>In the context of the Level of Demand of the question, Learners spell and punctuate with consistent accuracy, and consistently use vocabulary and sentence structures to achieve effective control of meaning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate performance 2–3 marks</td>
<td></td>
<td>In the context of the Level of Demand of the question, Learners spell and punctuate with considerable accuracy, and use a considerable range of vocabulary and sentence structures to achieve general control of meaning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threshold performance 1 mark</td>
<td></td>
<td>In the context of the Level of Demand of the question, Learners spell and punctuate with reasonable accuracy, and use a reasonable range of vocabulary and sentence structures; any errors do not hinder meaning in the response.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 marks</td>
<td></td>
<td>Candidates do not reach the threshold performance outlined in the performance descriptor above.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Exam Mark Scheme:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BAND</th>
<th>AO1: 1a+b, AO1:2</th>
<th>AO2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Candidates: sustain focus on the task, including overview, convey ideas with consistent coherence and use an appropriate register; use a sensitive and evaluative approach to the task and analyse the extract and wider text critically; show a perceptive understanding of the extract and wider text, engaging fully, perhaps with some originality in their personal response; their responses include pertinent, direct references from across the extract and wider text, including quotations.</td>
<td>Candidates: analyse and appreciate writers’ use of language, form and structure; make assured reference to meanings and effects exploring and evaluating the way meaning and ideas are conveyed through language structure and form; use precise subject terminology in an appropriate context.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Candidates: sustain focus on the task, convey ideas with considerable coherence and use an appropriate register; use a thoughtful approach to the task; show a secure understanding of key aspects of the extract and wider text, with considerable engagement; support and justify their responses by well-chosen direct reference to the extract and wider text, including quotations.</td>
<td>Candidates: discuss and increasingly analyse writers’ use of language, form and structure; make thoughtful reference to the meanings and effects of stylistic features used by the writer; use apt subject terminology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Candidates: focus on the task, convey ideas with general coherence and use a mostly appropriate register; use a straightforward approach to the task; show an understanding of key aspects of the extract and wider text, with engagement; support and justify their responses by appropriate direct reference to the extract and wider text, including quotations.</td>
<td>Candidates: comment on and begin to analyse writers’ use of language, form and structure; make some reference to meanings and effects; use relevant subject terminology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Candidates: have some focus on the task, convey ideas with some coherence and sometimes use an appropriate register; use a limited approach to the task; show some understanding of key aspects of the extract and wider text, with some engagement; support and justify their responses by some direct reference to the extract and wider text, including some quotations.</td>
<td>Candidates: recognise and make simple comments on writers’ use of language, form and structure; may make limited reference to meanings and effects; may use some relevant subject terminology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Candidates: have limited focus on the task, convey ideas with occasional coherence and may sometimes use an appropriate register; use a simple approach to the task; show a basic understanding of some key aspects of the extract and wider text, with a little engagement; may support and justify their responses by some general reference to the extract and wider text, perhaps including some quotations.</td>
<td>Candidates: may make generalised comments on writers’ use of language, form and structure; may make basic reference to meanings and effects; may use some subject terminology but not always accurately.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Nothing worthy of credit.</td>
<td>Nothing worthy of credit.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
They lift Stella gently from the cart. Her body was broken, her neck and legs fractured, though she was still conscious. The pony has only stunned itself but the cart was overturned and its harness tangled. So that it could not move, but lay on the ground whinnying and snorting with fright.

Our baby son had been thrown clear against another tree. He lay crumpled on the grass below it, dead.

This time there was no merciful loss of consciousness, I was forced to live through it all, every minute and then every day after, for ten long months until Stella, too, died from her terrible injuries.

I had seen the ghost of Jennet Humfrye and she had had her revenge.

They asked for my story. I have told it. Enough.
# Essay Structure Support

**How does Hill leave the reader with a sense of horror at the end of the novel? (40 marks)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paragraph</th>
<th>Point - technique used</th>
<th>Evidence - example of this from the text</th>
<th>Explanation - effect on the reader</th>
<th>Link - answer the question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paragraph 1</td>
<td>Hill chooses horrifying verbs such as</td>
<td>‘shrieking’ (p.159) and …</td>
<td>This creates a feeling of…</td>
<td>This creates a sense of horror because…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paragraph 2</td>
<td>Hill uses pauses in the conversations between the characters such as</td>
<td>“You told me that night - ‘I took a deep breath to try and calm myself” (p.155).</td>
<td>This creates a feeling of…</td>
<td>This creates a sense of horror because…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paragraph 3</td>
<td>Hill repeats images from earlier in the novel, forewarning the reader of approaching horror.</td>
<td>For example, Stella “holding up the baby” in the pony and trap may remind the reader of Nathaniel Drablow’s death (p.158).</td>
<td>This creates a feeling of…</td>
<td>This creates a sense of horror because…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paragraph 4</td>
<td>In contrast to the pathetic fallacy used earlier in the novel, the horror of this chapter occurs on a sunny day:</td>
<td>“Families strolled in the sunshine, children tumbled about upon the grass.”</td>
<td>This creates a feeling of…</td>
<td>This creates a sense of horror because…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paragraph 5</td>
<td>Add your own from: Varied sentence length; hesitation; sound imagery; or anything else you spot.</td>
<td></td>
<td>This creates a feeling of…</td>
<td>This creates a sense of horror because…</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Extract Challenge! Find an extract of the book you could refer to for each of these exam questions.

Arthur describes his story as one of "haunting and evil.

How successful do you find The Woman in Black as a ghost story and how does Hill make you think as you do by the ways she writes?

How does Hill create a sense of threat and danger in her presentation of Eel Marsh House?

How do you think Hill creates sympathy for the character of Arthur?

How does Hill present Samuel Daily in The Woman in Black?

How do you respond to Hill's presentation of the woman in black in the novel?

In Chapter 3, The Journey North, how does Hill's description of the train journey from London to Crythin Gifford prepare the reader for what is to come in the novel?

Hill writes that setting is so important in a ghost story. How does Hill present the setting of Eel Marsh House and why do you think it is important?

How does Hill create a sense of isolation in the novel?

How does Hill use weather to create atmosphere in The Woman in Black?
Read the passage below from The Woman in Black and then answer the question that follows.

“It was a Monday afternoon in November and already growing dark, not because of the lateness of the hour - it was barely three o’clock - but because of the fog, the thickest of London pea-soupers, which had hemmed us in on all sides since dawn - if, indeed, there had been a dawn, for the fog had scarcely allowed any daylight to penetrate the foul gloom of the atmosphere.

Fog was outdoors, hanging over the river, creeping in and out of alleyways and passages, swirling thickly between the bare trees of all the parks and gardens of the city, and indoors, too, seething through cracks and crannies like sour breath, gaining a sly entrance at every opening of a door. It was a yellow fog, a filthy, evil-smelling fog, a fog that choked and blinded, smeared and stained. Groping their way blindly across roads, men and women took their lives in their hands, stumbling along the pavements, they clutched at railings and at one another, for guidance.

Sounds were deadened, shapes blurred. It was a fog that had come three days before, and did not seem inclined to go away and it had, I suppose, the quality of all such fogs - it was menacing and sinister, disguising the familiar world and confusing the people in it, as they were confused by having their eyes covered and being turned about, in a game of Blind Man’s Buff.”

How does Hill use the fog in Chapter 2, ‘A London Particular’, to create tension and to show what is to come in the rest of the novel?
Mr Jerome pg 47

And yet he told me nothing at all, nothing personal, nothing revelatory, nothing very interesting.

'I take it she is to be buried in the churchyard?' I asked. Mr Jerome glanced at me sideways, and I noted that he had very large, and slightly protuberant and pale eyes of a colour somewhere between blue and grey, that reminded me of gulls' eggs.

'That is so, yes'
'Is there a family grave?'

He was silent for a moment, glancing at me closely again, as if trying to discover whether there were any meaning behind the apparent straightforwardness of the question. Then he said, 'No. At least... Not here, not in this churchyard.'

'Somewhere else?'

'It is... no longer in use,' he said, after some deliberation. 'The area is unsuitable.'

Mr Samuel Daily pg 37-38

'Ah! Bound for the funeral?'
'I am.'

'You'll be about the only one who is.' In spite of myself, I wanted to find out more about the business, and clearly my companion knew it.

'I gather she had no friends—or immediate family—that she was something of a recluse? Well, that is sometimes the way with old ladies. They turn inwards-grow eccentric. I suppose it comes from living alone.'

'I daresay that it does, Mr... ?'
'Kipps. Arthur Kipps.'
'Samuel Daily.'

We nodded.

'And, when you live alone in such as place as that, it comes a good deal easier.'

'Come,' I said smiling, 'you're not going to start telling me strange tales of lonely houses?'

He gave me a straight look. 'No,' he said, at last,

Keckwick pg 80-81

He had turned away abruptly and was climbing into the driving seat. There, looking straight ahead of him, huddled into his greatcoat with the collar turned to cover his neck and chin, and he waited. That he was fully aware of my state, knew something had happened to me and was quite unsurprised, was clear, and his manner also told me unmistakably that he did not wish to hear what it was, to ask or answer questions, to discuss the business at all. He would fetch and carry and that reliably and at any hour and he would do no more.

The landlord pg 42

'Here to attend a funeral—Mrs Drablow, of Eel Marsh House. Perhaps you knew of her?'

His face flickered with... what? Alarm, was it? Suspicion? I could not tell, but the name had stirred some strong emotion in him, all signs of which he endeavoured to suppress at once.

'I knew of her,' he said evenly.

'Ve come representing her firm of solicitors. I never met her. I take it she kept rather out of the way, for the most part?'

'She could hardly do otherwise, living there,' and he turned away abruptly in the direction of the public bar.
1. How effective is the first chapter, ‘Christmas Eve’ in introducing characters and ideas which are important to the novel as a whole?

2. Write about two places in the novel where setting is important to the story.
   * Describe these places and briefly say what happens in each of them.
   * Say why they are important to the story, explain the atmosphere of each place and what the writer wants the reader to think or feel.
   * Explain how successful she has been. Give your reasons.

3. Explore how Hill creates fear in the chapter ‘Whistle and I’ll Come To You’?

4. How does Susan Hill explore the theme of revenge in this novel? You should make detailed reference to Christian beliefs and moral attitudes of the time and the language used to express these ideas in the novel.

5. Arthur Kipps is both the narrator and a central character in the ghost story. How does he change from the young lawyer about to travel to Crythin Gifford to the middle-aged step-father who feels compelled to write his story?

6. Consider Kipps’ role in The Woman In Black and how effectively Hill portrays him.

7. Choose two of the following characters and write about their importance in the novel:
   * Mr Bentley, Mr Samuel Daily, the landlord of the Gifford Arms, Keckwick.
   * Write about their role in the novel, referring to what they say or do.
   * Write about what Kipps thinks about them.
   * Write about what you think about them and their role.

8. Why do you think Susan Hill called her story ‘The Woman In Black’? How effective is it as a title?
   * Write about the appearance and the importance of the ghost in the story.
   * Write about religious beliefs at the time.
   * Explain your feelings about what she does and her intentions.

9. A critic described ‘The Woman In Black’ as a ‘rattling good yarn, the sort that chills the mind as well as the spine.’ What methods does Hill use to create suspense and tensions in the novel?
1. Write about two episodes in the novel that you think are frightening.

Write about:
- What happens
- The techniques used by Hill to frighten the reader.
- Why you think these events are important.

11. Near the start of the novel Arthur Kipps says ‘I did not believe in ghosts.’ How does Hill show the way Arthur changes during the novel?

Write about:
- What happens to Arthur and how these things change him
- The methods Hill uses to show the changes in Arthur.
- Like every other horror story or movie protagonist ever, Arthur Kipps just won't leave the site of the haunting. Why do you think he decides to stay on?
- Why does Jennet think it’s okay to exact revenge on other people's children? Does she think they were actually responsible for the death of her son, or is she just messing with everyone?
- What does the Eel Marsh House represent? Why is the location such a central part of the story?
- Why is the story framed as something that happened in the past? Is it more or less effective than if it were told in the recent past or in the present?
- Do you think the woman in black will always haunt Arthur? Has he fully moved on?
- What is the deal with Sam Daily? Why is he so intent on helping Arthur out?
- Why doesn't anyone tell Arthur the whole story about the house and the haunting when he arrives?
- What makes this a good old-fashioned British ghost story? What elements are more modern?
- By the end, do you believe that the woman in black has found peace? Will she continue to haunt other people?
- What's the significance of Stella and her son's death? Is there a reason they're killed in a similar situation to Jennet's son?
- How does the book build up suspense? Does it rely on creating a sense of atmosphere, or on shocking events?