

The Yellow Wallpaper

Charlotte Perkins Gilman

When should we trust the narrator?

TOTAL TIME

PASSAGE

30 minutes	John and Jennie examine the wallpaper
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FIND THE ANCHOR TEXT

Use the Anchor Text Table of Contents in the Enhanced Reader to open the START anchor. Then use the dropdown to select the END anchor.

SECTION / LOCATION	Short story - after the narrator identifies the woman behind the pattern
START	The fact is, I am getting a little afraid of John.
END	But I am here, and no person touches this paper but me—not alive!
PASSAGE ID	sec-01-the-yellow-wallpaper

THE MOVE

Separate observation from interpretation

WHY THIS PASSAGE

The narrator notices real things about John, Jennie, the room, and the wallpaper, but she also interprets those details through fear, secrecy, and increasing obsession. The passage is useful because students can separate what she directly observes from what only she concludes.

MARK

Put O beside details the narrator directly observes about John, Jennie, or the wallpaper. Put I beside conclusions about motives, danger, or hidden meaning. Star the place where an observation most strongly tempts you to accept her interpretation.

NOTICE

- Which details could another person in the room verify?

- Which claims depend entirely on the narrator’s reading of those details?
- What would make you trust—or distrust—an interpretation when the observations themselves are real?

THINK

Answer provisionally: When should we trust the narrator? Choose the strongest interpretation you can defend from this passage alone.

WRITE

Write a short evidence-based response to: When should we trust the narrator? Use at least two details from the assigned passage and explain how they support your interpretation.

CLOSE

Name the single detail that most changed or sharpened your interpretation, and explain why.

STRONG ANSWER	Trust the narrator most when she reports observable behavior or physical details, and less when she assigns motives or hidden meaning to them. A strong answer should distinguish the fact that John and Jennie examine the wallpaper from her increasingly certain belief that others share or threaten her secret understanding of it.
EVIDENCE	Use at least one verifiable observation about John/Jennie or the wallpaper, then contrast it with one conclusion about what those observations supposedly mean. Strong evidence includes her secrecy, her fear of John, and her claim that no one may touch the paper.
WATCH FOR	Do not answer simply that the narrator is 'crazy' or 'unreliable.' The lesson asks where trust is earned and where interpretation outruns observation.
SOLO	Read the exact passage independently.
SUPPORTED	Use narration and sentence highlighting while reading the same passage.
LISTENING	Listen to the exact passage; visual following is optional. Same question and evidence demand.

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END ANCHOR	But I am here, and no person touches this paper but me—not alive!

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OPEN THE MARKED PASSAGE IN TUMBLELIT

SOLO: read independently. SUPPORTED: use narration + highlighting. LISTENING: listen to the exact passage. The question and evidence task stay the same.

1. MARK - Put O beside details the narrator directly observes about John, Jennie, or the wallpaper. Put I beside conclusions about motives, danger, or hidden meaning. Star the place where an observation most strongly tempts you to accept her interpretation.
2. NOTICE - Which details could another person in the room verify? Which claims depend entirely on the narrator's reading of those details? What would make you trust—or distrust—an interpretation when the observations themselves are real?
3. THINK - Answer provisionally: When should we trust the narrator?
4. WRITE - Write a short response using at least two pieces of evidence from this passage.

Use evidence from the assigned passage. Show what you noticed and how the text supports your interpretation.