



MISS HAVISHAM

MISS HAVISHAM'S ROLE IN THE NOVEL

Miss Havisham lives in a former brewery called Satis House. In the novel, she:

- wants to take revenge on all men for the wrong that was done by her fiancé, Compeyson, who jilted her just before their marriage.
- sits in the clothes she wore for her wedding and is surrounded by decaying things in a darkened room.
- adopts a young girl, Estella, whom she plans to use to take her revenge on all men.
- delights in the way that Estella torments Pip and likes to keep her relatives guessing as to whom she will leave her money.
- allows Pip to believe that she is his mysterious benefactor.
- has a terrible impact on Pip and Estella.
- tries to undo some of the harm she has done by helping Pip with his plan for Herbert and leaves her cousin Matthew a legacy.
- is distraught with guilt for what she has done to Estella and to Pip at the end of her life, although Pip forgives her.
- dies when her ruined wedding dress catches fire.

EXAM FOCUS: WRITING ABOUT MISS HAVISHAM

A01



Key point	Evidence/Further meaning
Miss Havisham has become mentally unstable before the start of the novel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Her confusion manifests itself by the state of Satis House: permanently closed windows and the left-over wedding feast full of beetles. • Pip says, 'the bride within the bridal dress had withered like the dress' (Ch. 8, p. 55).
She has almost no interaction with the outside world.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She tells Pip, 'I know nothing of the days of the week' (Ch. 8, p. 59). • Miss Havisham never leaves Satis House.
She brings up Estella to break men's hearts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is why she forces Pip and Estella to play together as children. • Estella cannot make normal friendships because of her upbringing. • As an adult, Estella says, 'I am what you have made me' (Ch. 38, p. 298).
Miss Havisham eventually realises she treated Pip and Estella badly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Miss Havisham confesses to Pip, 'But as she grew, and promised to be very beautiful, I gradually did worse' (Ch. 49, p. 391). • Miss Havisham's last request to Pip is to write 'I forgive her', which he does (Ch. 49, p. 394).



ESTELLA

ESTELLA'S ROLE IN THE NOVEL

Estella is a beautiful young girl, brought up as a young lady by Miss Havisham. She uses her education to talk down to Pip and make him feel inferior. In the novel, she:

- does not fully realise, when she is a child, that she is being used by Miss Havisham as an agent for Miss Havisham's revenge.
- is educated as an accomplished and sophisticated young lady.
- warns Pip that she has no heart and can never love anyone.
- tells Pip that he is the only one she can be honest with and that she makes fools of all the other men.
- never finds out that her mother is Molly and her father is Magwitch.
- is self-destructive in her determination to marry the brutal Bentley Drummle – even Miss Havisham tries to dissuade her.
- is a young widow at the end of the novel and has little property left.
- appears softened by her experiences, and implies that she regrets having rejected Pip's love for her but feels that the best she can hope for is that they are friends.

EXAM FOCUS: WRITING ABOUT ESTELLA

A01



Key point	Evidence/Further meaning
Estella's character is cruel and cold right from her childhood.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We first see Estella in the role of gatekeeper, shutting Pumblechook out as she lets Pip into Satis House. • Estella repeatedly calls Pip 'boy' (Ch. 8, p. 53) even though she is not much older than him. Pip says she is 'scornful' of him (p. 54).
Her beauty bewitches Pip.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The name Estella means 'star'. • Pip quickly tells Miss Havisham that Estella is 'very pretty' (Ch. 8, p. 58).
She always tells Pip that he is the only person with whom she is honest.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When Pip argues with Estella about flirting with Drummle, she says she will 'deceive and entrap' others – 'all of them but you' (Ch. 38, p. 305). • She tells Pip that she will not be 'a blessing' to Drummle (Ch. 44, p. 355). • Even at the conclusion of the novel, Estella cannot pretend that all will be well between her and Pip.
Estella's cold nature has been created by Miss Havisham.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estella tells Pip that when he says he loves her, she understands that 'as a form of words' (Ch. 44, p. 353) and cannot understand the emotion. • When Miss Havisham tells Estella it is not in her nature to marry Drummle, Estella says, 'It is in the nature formed within me' (Ch. 44, p. 354). She makes it clear to Miss Havisham that this marriage results from Estella's own misery and loneliness.

RESPONDING TO WRITERS' EFFECTS

The two most important assessment objectives are **AO1** and **AO2**. They are about *what* writers do (the choices they make, and the effects these create), *what* your ideas are (your analysis and interpretation), and *how* you write about them (how well you explain your ideas).

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVE 1

What does it say?	What does it mean?	Dos and Don'ts
Read, understand and respond to texts. Students should be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maintain a critical style and develop an informed personal response ● Use textual references, including quotations, to support and illustrate interpretations 	You must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use some of the literary terms you have learned (correctly!) ● Write in a professional way (not a sloppy, chatty way) ● Show you have thought for yourself ● Back up your ideas with examples, including quotations 	Don't write: <i>Miss Havisham is a bit weird. Dickens uses lots of different words to describe her, like 'wild'.</i> Do write: <i>Dickens presents Miss Havisham as a complex and frightening figure. When Pip meets her she is domineering and powerful: "'Call Estella," she repeated, flashing a look at me' (Ch. 8, p. 57). At the end of her life Dickens uses the adjectives 'wild' (Ch. 49, p. 390) and 'afraid' (Ch. 49, p. 387) to describe her.</i>

IMPROVING YOUR CRITICAL STYLE

Use a variety of words and phrases to show effects. For example:

Dickens suggests ..., conveys ..., implies..., presents ..., explores ...

I/we (as readers) infer ..., recognise ..., understand ..., question ...

For example, look at these two alternative paragraphs by different students about Jaggers. Note the difference in the quality of expression:

Student A:

This sounds as if Charles Dickens is speaking!

It could 'mean' this, but there are other possibilities

'Bothered about' could mean lots of things and is unhelpful

Dickens says that Jaggers is really mean to Molly at the dinner party in Chapter 48. Jaggers says, 'Molly, Molly, Molly, Molly, how slow you are today!' This means that Jaggers is cross with Molly and he is trying to show off in front of Pip, Drummle and the other guests. Dickens is saying Jaggers isn't bothered about Molly.

This language is too chatty and informal

It is better to use an alternative word or phrase, other than 'saying'

Student B:

The word 'presents' shows awareness of Dickens as a writer

This helps the student introduce an interpretation – he/she is not saying 'this is what it means'

Dickens presents Jaggers in an unpleasant light in Chapter 48 in the way that he treats Molly the housekeeper. Dickens describes Jaggers as being 'sharp' with Molly – this suggests that Jaggers is rude to her. We are also shown Jaggers being more sensitive to Pip's feelings, as he went on with dinner and does not reveal that Pip has guessed that Molly is Estella's mother. This implies that Jaggers has both a kind and a menacing side to him.

This is a helpful use of an embedded quote

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVE 2

What does it say?	What does it mean?	Dos and Don'ts
Analyse the language, form and structure used by the writer to create meanings and effects, using relevant subject terminology where appropriate.	'Analyse' = comment in detail on particular aspects of the text or language. 'Language' = vocabulary, imagery , variety of sentences, dialogue/speech, etc. 'Form' = how the story is told (e.g. first person narrative, letters, diaries) 'Structure' = the order in which events are revealed, or in which characters appear 'Create meaning' = What can we, as readers, infer from what the writer tells us? What is implied by particular descriptions, or events? 'Subject terminology' = words you should use when writing about novels , such as character, protagonist , imagery , setting , etc.	Don't write: <i>The writing is really descriptive in this bit so I get a picture of the Marshes.</i> Do write: <i>Dickens conveys the sense that the setting of the forge on the Kent marshes reflects some of the hardships that the main narrator Pip has to face. It is a lonely and dangerous place and there is a Gothic element to the 'tombstones'.</i>

THE THREE 'I'S

- The best analysis focuses on specific ideas, events or uses of language and thinks about what is implied.
- This means looking beyond the obvious and beginning to draw **inferences**. On the surface, the marshes tell us that Pip lives a relatively poor life as an orphan with a sister who treats him cruelly. But what role does the setting of the marshes play in developing the story of Pip's 'great expectations' and his attitudes towards wealth and social class, for example?
- From the inferences you make across the text as a whole, you can arrive at your own **interpretation** – a sense of the bigger picture, a wider evaluation of a person, relationship or idea.